

# Innovative Leadership: A Vision Beyond

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**Abstract** — Leadership is a key process which plays a vital role in any group, organization or society. Since antiquity, the leadership has been concern as one of the major issue for mankind. According to Chester Barnord "leadership refers to the quality of the behavior of the individual whereby they guide people on their activities in organized efforts. In the 'Soda' village of Rajasthan, these lines are executed by means of a dynamic charismatic leader Ms Chhavi Rajawat, who devote herself for her village and creates an history, which is noticed by even United States. Williams Terry stated that "A leader shows the way by his own example." The Chhavi Rajawat creates her own example for the residents of 'Soda' about what an innovative leader does. The present research paper is a small but stagnant and factual "Prayaas" to express a relationship between leadership and innovation. This live case study of Ms Chhavi Rajawat, an MBA postgraduate who left her Corporate job and became a Sarpanch of Soda village, is an unique case of Leadership, Innovation and Women Empowerment.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Innovation, Women Empowerment

## I. INTRODUCTION

### Preamble:-

*"Leaders are not born they are made"*

A very famous controversial statement shows the depth & cultivation methodology behind development of one's leadership. According to various definitions of various contributors to the concept of leadership, we can say that leadership is process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid & support of others in the accomplishment of common goal. Indirectly it means to organize a people & influence them to act accordingly as per your intention. The leader may be formal or informal in nature but the style he uses made him special one than non leaders.

India is citadel of leaders since thousands of years. Again it has been observed that maximum leaders are men's !!!, expect few honorable women leaders like Jijabai, Jhansi ki Rani Laxmibai, Savitribai Fule, Sarojini Naidu, Mother Teresa, Indira Gandhi & so on. The comparative ratio of women empowerment & leadership is always lesser than expectation in India. The Women Empowerment is achieved smoothly if women possess proper leadership skills & styles. On the background of such Indian women empowerment & leadership history, the uniqueness of Ms Chhavi Rajawat is one of the Milestone paradigms of innovation in women leadership.

Chhavi Rajawat is the first women Sarpanch of 'Soda' village of state Rajasthan. The girl belongs to the state which is known for higher ratio of female foeticides than other states in the India. Chhavi is an MBA postgraduate, left her corporate job & city life to develop rural India. Leadership is a style which reflects as well as affects on your subordinate & create your charisma. Chhavi Rajawat is one of the exemplar & real rays of hope for today's India.

## II. LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATION

Innovation is one of those words that we all use, agree is a positive thing and for the most part want more of. However, the term "Innovation" like "Leadership" seems to defy a commonly accepted definition. There is no shared interpretation of what we mean or what we are observing when we use the terms. Moreover, we lack practices for deliberately and consistently producing "leadership" and "innovation". This is evident in the fact that in spite of thousands of books on these subjects, reading and understanding the books doesn't enable us to be leaders or innovators.

Innovation and leadership are closely related. Leadership always has some focus on bringing about a better future. In this sense, leaders are necessarily innovators. We would not normally consider a spectator of the status quo to be a leader. The term innovation also suggests some break with the 'norm' or the status quo. I will show in this text that an 'innovator' and a 'leader' are cut from the same cloth, that these terms are distinguishing different but intersecting dimensions of the same phenomenon.

## III. TEN TIPS FOR THE INNOVATIVE LEADER

The critical importance of creativity and innovation is well understood but many leaders find it difficult to translate those ideas into action. They have successfully developed a culture and processes for efficiency, execution, quality, direction and achieving quarterly goals. By using the following ten tips, leaders can then add the unorthodox thinking and experimentation that will lead to high value innovation.

### 1. Have a Vision for Change

A team cannot be expected to be innovative if they do not know the direction in which they are headed. Innovation must have a purpose. It is up to the leader to set the course and provide a direction for the future – one overarching statement that defines the direction for the business, and which people will readily understand and remember. Great leaders spend time illustrating the vision, the goals and the challenges. They explain to people how their roles are crucial in fulfilling a company's vision and meeting the challenges. They inspire men and women to become passionate entrepreneurs, finding innovative routes to success.

### 2. Fight the Fear of Change

Innovative leaders constantly evangelize the need for change. They replace the comfort of complacency with the hunger of ambition. "We are doing well but we cannot rest on our laurels – we need to do even better." They explain that while trying new ventures is risky, standing still is riskier. Truly innovation leaders must paint a picture that

shows an appealing future that is worth taking risks to achieve. This picture involves perils and opportunities – the only way to get there is by embracing change.

### **3. Think like a Venture Capitalist**

Venture capitalists (VCs) use a portfolio approach so that they balance the risk of losers with the benefits of winners. They like to consider a large number of proposals and are comfortable with the knowledge that many of the ideas they back will fail. These are all important lessons for corporate executives who typically consider only a handful of proposals and who abhor failure.

### **4. Have a Dynamic Suggestions Scheme**

Great suggestion schemes are focused, easy to use, well-resourced, and responsive and open to all. Leaders need not offer huge rewards – recognition and response are generally more important. Above all, innovative leaders must have the whole-hearted commitment of the senior team to keep a company fresh, properly managed and successful.

### **5. Break the Rules**

To achieve radical innovation, leaders must challenge all the assumptions that govern how things "should" look in their organizations. Business is not like sport with well-defined rules and referees – it is more like art. Business is rife with opportunity for the lateral thinker who can create new ways to provide the goods and services that customers want.

### **6. Give Everyone Two Jobs**

Innovative leaders must provide each person on their staffs with two key objectives: 1) ask them to run their current jobs in the most effective way possible and 2) at the same time find completely new ways to do the job. Leaders need to encourage their employees to ask themselves: "What is the essential purpose of my role? What is the outcome that I deliver that is of real value to my clients (internal and external)? Is there a better way to deliver that value or purpose?" The answer to the final question is always yes, but most people never ask the question.

### **7. Collaborate**

Many CEOs see collaboration as key to their success with innovation. They know they cannot do it all using internal resources, so they look outside for other organizations with which to partner.

### **8. Welcome Failure**

The innovative leader encourages a culture of experimentation. Innovative leaders must teach people that each failure is a step along the road to success. To be truly agile, a company must give people the freedom to innovate, the freedom to experiment and the freedom to succeed. That means people must have the freedom to fail, too.

### **9. Build Prototypes**

Leaders should encourage trying new ideas (at low costs in small sections of the marketplace) to learn customers' reactions. A company will learn far more in the real world than in the test laboratory or with focus groups.

### **10. Be Passionate**

Innovative leaders must, obviously, focus on the things that they want to change. But they must also focus on the most important challenges they face, and be passionate about overcoming them. A leader's energy and drive will translate itself into direction and inspiration for the company as a whole. It is no good filling a bus with contented, complacent passengers; an innovative company needs evangelists, passionate supporters – people who believe that reaching the destination is worth the effort. If leaders want to inspire people to innovate, to change the way they do things and to achieve extraordinary results, then the leaders must be passionate about what they believe in and must communicate that passion every time they speak.

### **Leadership Features & Styles:-**

- **Leadership implies the existence of followers:** We appraise the qualities of leader by studying his followers. In a formal organization a leader has to be able to be both a leader as well as follower, & be able to relate him both upward & downward.
- **Leadership involves a community of interest between the leader & his follower:** The objectives of both the leader & his men are one & the same. If the leader strive for one purpose & his team of workers work for some other purpose, that's hardly a sign of leadership.
- **Leadership involves an unequal distribution of authority among leaders & group members:** Leaders can direct some of the activities of group members, i.e., the group members are compelled or are willing to obey most of directions.
- **Leadership is Process of Influence:** leadership implies that leaders can influence their followers or subordinates in addition to being able to give their followers or subordinates legitimate directions.
- **Leadership is the function of simulation :** leadership is the function of motivating people to strive willingly to attain organizational objectives.
- **Leader must be exemplary:** A leader must set an ideal before his followers & stimulate, energize & enable people to surpass themselves. In other words, a leader must set the pace by setting a high personal example for his followers to emulate & admire.
- **A leader ensures absolute justice:** A Leader must be objective & impartial. He should not follow unfair practices like favoritism & nepotism. He must display fair play & absolute justice in all his decision & action.
- **Leadership style & patterns:** The range of possible leadership behavior available to a manager. Each type of action related to the degree of authority used by the boss & degree of freedom available to his subordinates in reaching decision.

### **Leadership Styles:**

- **The manager makes decision & announces it:** it is extreme form of autocratic leadership whereby decision are made by boss who identifies the problem, consider alternative solution, select one of them & then reports his decision to his subordinates for implementation.
- **The manager sells his decision:** It is slightly improved form of leadership wherein the managers take the additional step of persuading the subordinate to accept his decision.
- **The manager presents his ideas & invites question:** the boss arrives at decision, but provides a full opportunity to his subordinates to get fuller explanation of his thinking & intentions.
- **The manager presents a tentative decision subject to change:** herein the decision is tentatively taken by the manager but is amenable to change & influence from the employee.
- **The manager may present the problem, get the suggestion & then take his own decision:** here manager gives sufficient opportunity to the employee to make suggestions that are carefully considered by the manager.
- **The manager may define the limits & request group to make decision:** the manager delegates to the group the right to make the decision. His subordinates are able to take a decision within well defined criteria & limits
- **The manager may permit full involvement of the subordinate in the decision making process:** this is a style of leadership often referred to as 'Democratic' leadership.

#### **Innovative Leadership: Chhabi Rajawat**

For some people goals and aspirations never end and the quest for life goes on. Chhabi Rajawat, a merit finder and an optimist who came out of the box of monotony and went back to her village in Rajasthan to bring about the concept of management to sort out the problems existing there. Born in Jaipur, Rajasthan, Chhabi is from a small village called Soda in Malpura tehsil, Tonk district. She did her schooling from Rishi Valley School (Andhra Pradesh) and Mayo College (Ajmer), and went to Lady Shri Ram College, University of Delhi for graduation. An MBA graduate, Chhabi utilizes her business management degree to take care of her village better.

Before switching her focus towards Soda village, she worked with five companies with various capacities. And today she is accumulating all her experience and applying on the welfare of the village as a Sarpanch. Apart from sorting out various disputes among the farmers and villagers, she is also taking note of the unemployment issues and kind of facilities provided to the villagers of Soda. Chhabi heads the NREGA meetings in the village and believes in taking crucial steps which would help the village to come forward. Besides being the sarpanch of Soda,

Chhabi also runs a hotel that family owns in Jaipur and a horse riding academy.

She also undertook the water conservation project which includes digging afresh and strengthening of the reservoir covering an area of 100 acres. According to her, there are numerous problems and issues in the village which needs to be resolved.

#### **IV. PROBLEMS**

About the panchayat, it is actually a gram-swaraj where the sarpanch is not really a sarpanch. His post is just for namesake. There is a lack of funds and no powers that a panchayat can use for the welfare purpose. The villagers completely depend on the district level government officials. These officials and local politicians are bribe feeders and eaters and thrive on casteism. Therefore without any legal documents or proofs, the legal issues remain tied up in files for years. The only authority a panchayat has is listing down the proposals of projects that village has to undertake. This is then sent to the District headquarters for approval and sanctions.

The estimated cost of the water conservation project is 3.5 crores. The reason the state government gave for not funding this project is that it prohibits the usage of machinery for the rural development. All the water in the village is declared unsafe owing to high levels of natural contamination from fluoride, chloride and other minerals and salinity. Due to the saline nature, the water is not fit for irrigation also. This unsafe water is showing its effects on village kids who most of them are suffering from dental fluorosis. Therefore rainwater is the only source of safe water available in the village. Prior to 2010, Soda has been declared as the drought hit zone which got relief in 2010 after 14 years.

In villages, agriculture is the only source of income which is seasonal. Thus even those who are above poverty line cannot afford to shell out money to construct toilets and take sanitation measures.

Children education in Soda is hindered by the government for not providing options of subjects in which they are interested in. This makes young children indifferent towards their studies and hence they tend to give up

#### **V. MEASURE TAKEN**

According to Chhabi, water conservation project was there top priority, hence now it is running successfully and independently under her assistance and due to the honest effort of villagers of Soda.

Lack of proper sanitation was another issue in Soda, which Chhabi and the villagers are overcoming by seeking funds to build toilets in each and every home in the village (i.e., 1000 households cost per toilet being Rs.500). Apart from this, solar electricity is also promoted in soda village which is a great help to them. If one has to bring some positive change, one has to work very hard in every direction, Chhabi is trying to change mindsets. "Villagers

have got used to not working and taking the partial payments for NREGA, I have to change that, I go for surprise visits and give them a scolding or two if they are not working", says Chhavi. With the help of NREGA and various NGOs, she is focusing on bringing about job opportunities and safe drinking water in the village which is the major concern. She is also involved in improving the education facilities in the village.

Working hard with the villagers of Soda, Chhavi says that she is used to rural life as she grew up playing with kids of farmers. Soda is her home and she believes in doing every good thing for the village welfare. Chhavi took the whole responsibility of the village and says she is paying her debt to the village she grew up in. Villagers of Soda consider Chhavi as their daughter and trust her skills. Girls of the village want to be like her and get inspiration from her work.

More than 90 percent of the educated and skilled people live in cities and become a part of a rat race. And out of that 90 percent educated 20-30 percent settle abroad to make money. They forget the very fact that our country needs them. Chhavi Rajawat is out of those 10 percent educated personalities who give up their comforts and glamorous city lives and work for the cause of welfare of the country and her village Soda. Chhavi Rajawat is an angel of the Soda village and the villagers. At this point of time, the people of Soda not only appreciate her but also feel proud of them. Now Chhavi resides in the Soda village itself and takes all the crucial responsibilities for the improvement of the system which a village sarpanch should take. Chhavi proved to be a heritage saver by being a merit finder which became a boon for Soda village.

## CONCLUSION

*"A women of species is always more efficient than men"*

These famous lines of 'Williams Shakespeare' made true by Ms Chhavi Rajawat. Leadership is always a critical task for any leader & he has to proceed with number of uncertainties & unfavorable situations, but innovative leadership always offers a best solution & suggests an optimum pathway which lends towards success & finally sculptures innovative leadership into charismatic leadership of that leader. The young lady of age 23, postgraduate MBA, left corporate, joins politics at village level, everything is snooping, but the way she shows her innovative leadership is truly mind-blowing.

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