

Updated: May 20, 2015

 THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

First time in history, Japanese Corporate hired Indian origin CEO to lead it's business

What does it mean for Indian Workforce?

Mr. Masayoshi Son, Chairman of Softbank Japan announced his successor, Mr. Nikesh Arora – Indian Origin, Ex-Google-ite. For many analysts in Japan it's surprising move. There are 3 dimensions to this strategy, and all of these are expected to be followed by other biggies in corporate world. While some of them even have a view that Softbank may be earlier mover in certain strategy but not always the Japanese Way, as Mr.Son being himself a Korean Origin.

1. Global Mobility, communication Skills: Global Human Resources (global jinzai) is a term has been in traction in Japan for past few years. In one of the report published by Human resources Ministry of Japan, linguistic communication skills for travelling abroad, Working with Global companies, Publishing in Non-Japanese language, Exhibiting skills for bilateral negotiations and other higher level are five different categories that makes person to be Global Workforce in Japan. In Other words called as the person who has Global communication [English in this context] and called as Global Human Resource.

80% of Japanese can read and write in English and learn the language from Primary school as secondary language,however it is the lack of usage in day to day activities either on national level or business level that makes them handicapped on a global communication scale.Given the scenario that Japanese companies are expanding their borderless operation more, the need of Global Skills with inter-cultural, cross border knowledge are highly important to manage and sustain the business. In case of Softbank, Softbank has clearly set out its goal to be 200 trillion yen company in next few years requiring a big lead in the global front.

2. Global Travelling does not mean Business skills: According to Nikkei Report the number of Japanese who have long-term stay abroad is around 83 million people as of 2013. Of this, Asia accounted for about 40%, the North America (about 32%). Private sector officials for the travelling throughout cross border business purpose is accounted for about 54%. However Not all of them are Corporate CEO's or do have exposure to manage big business such as 45 trillion Softbank Company or have exposure at senior management in Global firms such as IT or NON-IT. These factor means decision making and risk taking capability at a given strategy on higher level. Surely Mr.son has an eye for the power and has set his move by selecting the person who can exhibit this capability.

3. New crisis and its` Nature : SUSUMU HAYASHI and TOSHIKI KUROKAWA Affiliate Fellow at Kyoto University identify in their research that the current crisis of workforce non-availability has a difference from the ones in the past. Past 'crises' were not real crisis, as it was just concerns about making a difference either by producing good product or unique product which would save and function

better for consumer, So the workforce was trained to do so, and the workforce was doing so. However, the current issue is not such a 'benign crisis' but a 'real crisis' in which Japan could go into decay due to the lack of human resources in IT skills and resources with global skills.

Also, Number of Japanese students going abroad to study has been falling since 2004, and in particularly a statement widely known as Decline Trend in Overseas Studies is rising to Inwardly Looking Attitudes among youngsters. This leads somewhat mismatch among in-take of new employees with-in Japanese firm and while also achieving global competence. Foreigners coming to Japan not only as tourists but also for the purpose of living in Japan, is increasing. Among the foreigners in Japan, short-term residents and permanent residents, inclusive of students are about 63 million people. All of them are contributing to the Japanese economy either through self-business or working for a Japanese company. By the way even today hardly 2000 plus foreign company exists in Japan inclusive of Mega Global financial institutions. So far hiring foreign people at Japanese companies was to overcome a particular goal –such as shortage of labor, or to substitute for communication skill, technical skill and so on. But there is new crisis and new wave.

In Japan it is widely applauded that Indians make big deals in US [Silicon Valley] and most of the Ventures are success due to bright and highly skilled Indian work force. Though in the past it was seen as Indian Talent and workforce is tough to manage or hard enough to engage them for single goal, it looks like the trend is changing. In the past 3 years there has

been 2,000 people increased who have got the engineer VISA, which means all these people are working in Technical field. The next bigger category is – Cook , Indian cuisine / restaurants are popping up every road of Japan, Example, An India entrepreneur from pune, 15 years back had come to japan through a small company as localization engineer, started his two restaurants, then translation services, moved on to provide software services , currently into building his own products. So there are success stories not always may be the same, however Japan seems started welcoming Indian workforce with new different look. Currently there about 30,000 Indian people staying throughout Japan, that is hardly comparable to the number of Indians staying in US alone. Hope the new wave in Japan brings more Indians to make their mark in Japan as well.

Writer Profile: Junko Nirmla is a Tokyo resident with 16 years of experience in Technology and business consulting services mainly focusing on India-Japan Market and cross border related services. Her diverse background even includes a short stint as a Venturepreneur. During the last few years she has helped several Japanese companies with their India market entry strategies. Writer can be reached at junkonirmla@gmail.com