

MADRAS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK (AUTONOMOUS)
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK (AIDED)
HUMAN RELATIONS STUDY CIRCLE
UGC Sponsored National Seminar
THRIVE 19: HR GOES AGILE – INSIGHT TO IMPACT
SEMINAR REPORT – 2nd February 2019

The Human Relations Study Circle (HRSC) of the Department of Social Work (Aided) organized its Annual National-level Seminar titled “THRIVE 19: HR GOES AGILE - INSIGHT TO IMPACT” on 2nd February 2019 (Saturday), Madras Management Association (MMA) Hall, Chennai.

Dr.S. Raja Samuel, Principal MSSW, welcomed the gathering, which included guest on the dias, Mr. B. Venkataramana, Group President HR, Landmark Group, Guests and Senior Alumni off the dias, Participants, Sponsors, coordinating faculty advisor Dr. J. Chandrasekar and Department faculties among all others. Ms. J. Divya, HRSC – President, gave the overview of HRSC activities over the years and introduced the topic for the year, “THRIVE 19: HR Goes Agile – Insight to Impact.”

Mr. B. Venkataramana, Chief Guest and our esteemed senior alumnus asserted that leadership (collective leadership) and agility are not two separate attributes for business and went on to explain the three types of transformation wherein HR acts as a catalyst, introduced acronyms such as ‘ILED’ and ‘CREATE’ explaining desirable leadership behaviours today. Dr. Shakeela Basheer, Head of the Department, felicitated the Chief Guest with a Memento. The inaugural session concluded with the vote of thanks rendered by Ms. M. Anandhi, HRSC - General Secretary.

First session was lead by Ms. Divya Anand, Director HR, Cleartrip.com. Ms. Divya Anand introduced the definition of resilience as “being comfortable with change” and explained why change readiness is a critical attribute of ‘agility’. Ms. Divya explained the framework for change which included essential processes and efforts towards clarifying purpose, planning for change, creating followership, building capacity, reinforcing change, and pursuing alignment and concluded by motivating participants to continuously strive for learning, unlearning and relearning. Dr. J.S. Gunavathy felicitated Ms. Divya Anand.

Panel discussion on ‘Agility in Tracking Daily Employee Pulse’ was moderated by Mr. G.D. Sharma, HR Guru and Mentor for guiding the profession and HR professionals for

over 4 decades. Mr. Sharma introduced the topic by defining agility as awareness about the ground realities through information, data insights, learning and creating the momentum for change through initiatives building trust among employees, which in turn, contributes to organization-wide change success.

Ms. Rajini Sriraman from Pfizer shared both good news and bad news for HR as a function and for aspirants. Ms. Rajini cautioned that HR must move away from traditional approach and become change ready – agile and introduced how decision making happens in Korean Organizations – at the GEMBA, which is the shop floor, and not at the Board room.

Mr. Chandru Chakrapani, our beloved alumnus and a seasoned HR professional, appreciated the efforts of HRSC for its meticulous planning and organization and discussed that agility is all about de-scaling decision making to employees and promoting an environment of trust and leadership based on one's competence and attitude for excellence and not on academic credentials alone. Mr. Chandru gave ample corporate examples to sensitize why it is no more about HR but about empowering employees.

Dr. C. Jaya Kumar, Vice President & Head HR – Divisional Corporate, L & T Constructions, admitted that in today hypercompetitive business environment, the VUCA world, the world of HR is increasingly becoming a complex one. Dr. Jaya Kumar cautioned that HR must remain agile and focus on the business results, which is a predictor of economic growth for individuals, organizations and society by and large.

Mr. V. Balaji, Regional Director HR – South Asia, representing DORMA gave a enthralled the participants with *insightful assertions* and *must do activities* for participating students. Mr. Balaji observed that values are centric to both people and organizational management and it is the duty of HR to make employees understand and appreciate that why organizations exist in the first place.

Mr. G. D. Sharma, the panel moderator, concluded by saying that HR should continuously focus on making real connect with employees, add value to the business, let people grow and ensure that these aspects of business – the people connect - can never be compromised at any point. The session was closed for lunch by 1.45 PM.

Post-lunch session saw the likes of Mr. Saro Velrajan, Chief Strategy Officer, Ginkos India; Ms. Suman Gopalan, Chief HR Officer, Freshworks; Ms. Vasudha Nandal, VP & Head - Human Capital Management, Sulekha.com; and Mr.Sathya Narayana Metha, HR Head -

Retail, CPG & TTH Cluster, TCS, engaging the audience with insightful, intuitive and inspiring deliberation on the topic, “Agile HR: The Next Bandwagon or Breakthrough”.

Mr. Saro Velrajan set the stage on fire by prompting questions on agility with regard to business, HR, whether agility is about a collaborative mind-set, implementation of continuum customer centricity, quick/prompt/continuous feedback, delivering plans, changing roles, data-centricity, risk taking and how the continuous feedback is working while analysing the data?

Ms. Suman Gopalan highlighted that being agile is all about process improvement, how organizations and leaders are responding to employees and it starts with our mind-set, how are we organising, rewarding, motivating the team in all aspects. To Ms. Suman, a competent HR should have tremendous exposure and in-depth understanding in cross-functional aspects of business and management. Agility is really about getting things done in multiple – development – efficient ways for organizations. Agile is definitely a breakthrough.

Mr. Satya Narayana Mehta posited that agility is a business necessity and which can be achieved by using methodologies and differentiating work processes to create positive impacts on people and performance. Awareness, Amplification and Articulation (3A) are crucial for clarifying the purpose, transforming the message properly and ensure no room for ambiguity or confusion among frontline employees, who deliver value to customers.

Ms. Vasudha Nandal sensitized how technological changes in the world of work are disrupting how and where work gets done and why being agile is helpful for HR profession. Ms. Vasudha explained that for agility, the mindset of employees as well as the commitment of management in empowering employees should go in tandem. Collaboration based on trust and support is crucial between and across cross-functional teams and executive leadership is the only way forward for capitalizing on the opportunities provided by disruptive technologies today.

Valedictory session was lead by Mr. Ram Kumar, Chairman, Shanti Gears Ltd and President, MMA. Mr. Ram Kumar dealt in details about how agility have to be understand and principles underlying agility based on his experience of leading teams in various corporate organizations. Principles such as stating the purposes very clearly, promoting value based organization, communicating goals clearly, customer focus & orientation, collaboration & trust building, cross functional team orientation, fair & firm policy, building confidence of

the team, responsibility & accountability, humility, teamwork, competitive rewards & recognition programme are all critical for organizations and leadership for promoting agile organizations. Mr. Ram Kumar observed why HR faces challenges in implementing agile initiatives, methods and processes. Dr. J. Chandrasekar honoured the Guest with a Memento. The day's seminar concluded with a vote of thanks rendered by Ms. R. Akshaya, HRSC – Treasurer.

A day invested well on gaining insights on agility, HR and leadership as well as on appreciating the continuing support of all professionals who were present during the day and who have supported the HRSC team for staging a great show. “THRIVE 19: HR Goes Agile – Insight to Impact,” continue to sing the relevance of Margaret Mead's take on team work, which I strongly believe.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” — Margaret Mead

Thank you all for giving us, HRSC and MSSW, this wonderful experience. Gratitude and appreciation to all our Guests, Alumni, Sponsors, and well-wishers for your continuing support, encouragement and mentoring.

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