

CIB Mumbai Chapter

Inaugural Meeting Report

February 22, 2014

Venue: IofC flat at Kumaram, Worli Seaface

"I am encouraged with all that has been shared on ethics and the role that business can play to make this possible," said Ms. Asha Verma, a school Principal, "but how can all this reach the grassroots level?"

This query was flanked between a time of sharing from various individuals on their challenges and victories in running their business ethically on one side and the poser as to what can business and industry can do to promote this mindset to a larger group in society on the other.

Such was the participation from most of the 18 persons who had gathered in the IofC flat at Kumaram for CIB's Inaugural Mumbai Chapter Meeting that one left the place with a sense that when like-minded people gather together with a purpose and focus, there is much that can be achieved.



After a round of personal introductions to get the group to know each other, Sarosh Ghandy, Director of CIB explained briefly what CIB is and how its role is to encourage, by gathering others, those who walk this "lonely path", so that all with like purpose could run business ethically while still remaining competitive. Anil Chopra, VP (SCM-IM), Siemens Ltd., Mumbai and Convener of the

CIB Mumbai Chapter then explained the purpose of the meeting before requesting Dr. R. K. Anand, Pediatrician and former Medical Director, Jaslok Hospital to say a few words on the "Charter of an individual" and the conscience of the human soul.

R. N. Mukhija, Advisor to the Chairman, L&T Ltd. then shared how though his company was one that ran its business with a strong policy of ethics, there were always some within the company who were ethical and some who were not. Sharing from his 49 years of experience, he spoke of his tenure with the Switchgears division. He described how he managed to convince his 500-distributor-strong well-wishers who had gathered for an Annual Conference and who knew that it was his birthday, that accepting a gift could set a bad precedent to the timing and purpose that company officials could imitate while holding gatherings.

Neville Gandhi, the Lead Country Compliance Officer, Siemens Ltd., after sharing the story of change that Siemens undertook from being considered a corrupt multi-national to now being ranked a strong ethical company, listed out several steps that Siemens takes in order to keep the company and officials constantly vigilant and ethical. "First," he said, "we constantly have regular batches of officers participating in ethical training programs at Asia Plateau, Panchgani."



Mr. Gandhi speaks as Mr. Venkatesh, Ms. Sharma and Mr. Mukhija listen

"Second," he continued, "we join other Industry confederates to pursue the advantages that are obtained from conducting business transparently and fairly. Third, we conduct programs that teach the young generation the importance of upholding an ethical and upright work culture and fourth, we invest a large amount of money and time to promote collective action groups with the purpose of creating awareness."

Sarosh Ghandy at this point narrated a story of how Tata Steel Ltd., when procuring a huge quantum of material, gained a 7% discount that translated into enormous savings for the Company because the seller who would normally reserve this percentage for pay-offs, now had no need to, since the Tata Company ran its procurement policy above board.

Amar Madnani, a private business entrepreneur, made a passionate request to appeal to the good in people. He said that since every human being was taught to be good, it was this plea that brought people to desist from corrupt practices.

Anup Mathew, the Business Head for Godrej Construction, an affiliate of Godrej & Boyce Mfg. Co. Ltd. revealed how he found it increasingly difficult and challenging to run business in an ethical manner where because of corrupt officials, there was inordinate delay in obtaining permissions and to compound the problem, the competition was not always following rules. Yet he felt encouraged to connect with like-minded people at the CIB Mumbai Chapter.

Ms. Ananya Sharma, a dynamic lawyer of AZB Partners, shared plainly that personal sharing helps while Milind Sanghvi, a trader in shares stated that we must stand for what we believe in and that the giver is as much a cause for corruption as the receiver.

To the concluding question, "Which areas can we work together?" the response came through clearly and almost single-mindedly. It was made known that CIB has strengths and together an agenda could be evolved. To begin with, there could be a focus in the field of education – where persons in business who had achieved much in their career could share with school children that it pays to live honestly and ethically and that a good leader is one who leads by good example. To this end, Dr. R. K. Anand suggested that there was a 22 minute video for children titled, "Be the Change", where young

boys and girls play a critical role in persuading their parents to end corruption. Ms. Rekha Shahani-Jagasia, Principal of Kamla High School, invited the several business persons at the meeting to visit her school and share their experience with the children. Revealing how a visit made by Mr. Ghandy in December 2013 had such a positive impact on her school children and staff, she urged the gathering to consider her invitation seriously.



There was another outcome to the meeting. Because of unfortunate experiences in dealing with unscrupulous business parties or because of a lack of awareness, it was suggested by Anil Chopra that resourceful and experienced persons in various fields could be invited to advice and counsel the public in an attempt to make people more mindful, aware and alert to the

practices around. A few persons of repute, like former Director General of Police, Julio Ribeiro, Amit Kumar Dave, Assistant Commissioner of the Mumbai Municipal Corporation, RTI activists or consumer lawyers including Ms. Ananya Sharma and her learned colleagues of law, were some of the persons that came to mind at the meeting.

The meeting concluded with an announcement that the fourth Saturday of every month would be reserved for the CIB Mumbai Chapter Meetings. Anil Chopra appealed to all those gathered to block their calendar each month to ensure that the momentum gained from this meeting could continue to drive what CIB wants to achieve. Mrs. Asha Anand was praised for the delightful spread she placed on the tea table and for the gracious way that she and Dr. Anand hosted the event at the IofC flat on Worli Sea-face.



*Next Mumbai Chapter Meeting on
Saturday, March 22, 2014 at 4:30 pm*

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