

REVIEWS

Corporate Image in India by S. K. Roy. New Delhi, Shri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources, 1974. pp. 334.

In this book S. K. Roy has presented a survey of elite group attitudes towards the private and public sectors of Indian Industry. It is a major attempt at understanding the environment of Indian industry. The work assumes greater importance due to the fact that very few studies in this area exist in India.

Researches in management have, during the past decade and more, confirmed the premise that interaction between various parts of the environment impinges on an organization in several ways. In a developing country like India where the politico-legal aspects of the environment are closely connected with the socio-economic conditions, industry must continuously monitor environmental changes. The environment of Indian business has been steadily changing from "placid-randomized" i.e. static and unchanging, to a "turbulent field" where the industry faces an increasing number of legal constraints and social demands. Can this phenomenon be analysed in a scientific way? The solution lies in understanding the environment of Indian business today.

In the first chapter of his book Roy develops a conceptual framework to understand the interactions going on in the Indian environment. He develops the theme by discussing industry as an open system which can utilise feedback from the environment in order to adapt itself for the future. He considers the dimensions of the environment as (1) the Governmental milieu, (2) the Market environment, and (3) Public attitude. This classification is relevant for the reason that the Government constitutes the politico-legal environment while the other two constitute the socio-economic environment. In a democracy, these parts of the environment are in constant interaction, and cumulatively may emerge as an unpredictable entity. Most of the time an industrial enterprise does monitor its market environment and accepts the politico-legal constraints as given. This is the theme that emerges from the discussion on the Governmental milieu where Roy says that "corporate industry's perception of its Governmental environment is perhaps overlaid by the notion of control....." (page 20). He has cited the observations of Indian managers in support of this statement. So far as the market environment is concerned industry seems to be aware of its continuously changing nature. However, industry has not been sensitive enough to public attitude towards itself. This indifference towards public may have been caused by the fact that industry is not aware of the inter-relationships between public attitude and the politico-legal as well as the economic environment. Public attitude interacts with the politico-economic environment through the medium of elite attitudes and

convictions. The intellectual elite influence public policies in various measures and at different levels, viz. municipal, state and central government policies. The respondent groups for this study consist of legislators, government officials, trade unionists, traders, university teachers, journalists, farmers, and small-scale entrepreneurs, and these can be called the industrial elite.

The second chapter defines the problem and the methodology utilised to explore the community environment of Indian corporate industry. "The primary objective of this study is.....(a) assessment of the direction and intensity of the attitude that the community elites hold ; (b) identification of the attributes of industry underlying the favourable and unfavourable attitude ; and (c) examination of the characteristics of the attitude, viz. consistency, structure, influence of ideology etc." (p. 41) Attitudes are a gestalt of cognitively held beliefs, emotional or affective evaluations, and behavioural tendencies. Data on the three components of attitudes have been collected through the use of questionnaires and unstructured interviews. Part-I of the questionnaire uses a combination of Likert's summated ratings approach and the error-choice technique with 50 semifactual belief statements related to various attributes of industry viz. economic performance, efficiency, contribution to national goals, consumer orientation etc. Part-II of the questionnaire is meant to assess the respondent's affect orientation and utilises 24 pairs of bipolar adjectives and was administered a separately for public and private sectors. Part-III of the questionnaire is meant to find out the behavioural component of the respondent's attitude and requires the respondent to carry out the objective task of estimating public behaviour. In the interviews the respondents were asked to recall two pairs of experiences in relation to private and public sectors which critically influenced them in forming favourable or unfavourable impressions about these two sectors.

Chapter three of this book reports the findings of the study. The analysis of data is given under eight broad headings and pertains to the direction of beliefs and evaluations ; inter-relationships between beliefs and evaluations ; intended behaviours ; determinants of attitudes ; structure in attitude systems ; and attitudinal homogeneity of groups. So far as, direction of beliefs is concerned, public attitude is favourable towards the private sector in respect of organizational efficiency, task orientation competence of owner - manager, contribution to industrial development and the private sector's image abroad. The attitude is unfavourable in respect of labour practices, work conditions, political environment and ownership patterns. In case of public sector the attitude is favourable in respect of labour practices, political environment, contribution to industrial development, work conditions, and innovations. The image of private sector is is not generalizable but attributable only to a few corporations. The dimensions of the two sectors of industry for which the evaluations give a clue are the social relations, institutional competence, honesty and trust, responsiveness to community, national identification, sense of responsibility etc. The inter-relationships between evaluations and beliefs show that (a) people's evaluation of private sector's social relations is related more with its internal system viz. excessive profit orientation, unfair labour practices etc., than with its external relations ; (b) people do not divorce competence from other aspects of industry's behaviour ; (c) people's evaluation of industry's honesty and trustworthiness is related to both its internal and external

performance ; (d) For the public sector, people's evaluation of social relations is linked with the beliefs regarding performance efficiency. This chapter goes on further to report the significant attributes contributing to favourable and unfavourable attitudes towards private and public sector separately. The structure in attitude system shows that parliamentarians, farmers, and journalists show the largest inter co-relations in the responses. On the other hand entrepreneurs, government officials, and unionists show relatively greater differentiation in their beliefs vis-a-vis the various attributes. New parliamentarians and unionists generally hold unfavourable beliefs about private sector. These are some of the more interesting findings which emerge from the analysis of data.

The fourth chapter of this book is devoted to discussing the important findings of the study. The discussion includes data from both the questionnaire and the unstructured interviews. However, the discussion about organizational attributes of private and public sectors, determinants of attitude and government and public sector tends to be repetitive in many places. Repetitions may have crept in due to the author's concern for discussing the subject in detail. At the same time, there are some very interesting observations about trade unions, business associations and managerial class in industry. Trade union behaviour is believed to be largely conditioned by management attitudes and behaviour and simultaneously by intra and inter-union power politics. The business associations are believed to have only peripheral influence on the member industries. The respondents also believe that professionalization of business associations will lead to their assuming more effective leadership of industry. A comment at this point is called for. The author could have delved into the growing number of management associations in the country. These associations have a much more professional character than the business associations which have existed till date. The managerial class is somehow divided into two subclasses viz., the professional managers of the past two decades, and the new managers with professional education and training. The lack of innovativeness amongst the former is admitted. However, the definition of innovativeness is not very clear. If it includes the effort for application of new management techniques as well, then perhaps the older breed of professional managers need to carry out some self-examination. The managerial class as a whole needs to pay attention to their image as a privileged class, socially removed from their non-managerial co-workers. Managers in public sector are believed to exhibit bureaucratic behaviour patterns.

The last chapter of the book summarises and concludes the study. It contains a section on business schools which have not been discussed in the previous chapters. A number of questions can be raised on the basis of this study. Some of these questions may be answered by the managers and management scholars.

- 1) Can the private / public sector as a whole conduct an image building exercise, and if so, who should initiate such an exercise ?
- 2) If the present image is not generalizable, as suggested by the study, what will be the effect of image building exercises carried out by individual organizations on the basis of their own strengths ?

- 3) What is the role of the fast developing professional management associations in the context of corporate image in India today ?
- 4) In what ways can there be an effective transfer of management technology to the corporate sector as a whole ?

This book may offer some guidelines in the search for answers to these questions.

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Management Planning and Information System. by S. K. Bhattacharyya. New Delhi, Learning Systems, 1976. Rs. 40/-

In style and content Prof. Bhattacharyya's book is perhaps the first of its kind in India. Part I has eleven sections in a total of twentythree pages. These pages cover the conceptual and schematic aspects of a planning and information system (for the author information and control system are synonymous — p.1). Part II has six sections covering twelve pages. The step-by-step process of creating and launching an MPIS is described in this portion of the book. There are a few supplements in the end which show information formats for engineering projects, textile and foundry business.

The book has no pretensions to be considered as a scholarly work. It is one of an 'executive self-development' series. That explains most of the features associated with the book (e.g. quality paper and print, affluent use of paper, pages for notes being graph paper, etc.). The imprint of the author's varied experience of industry — mainly as a consultant — is obvious.

Let us take a somewhat closer look at some of the finer points.

- 1) As mentioned, above, the author has considered information and control systems as identical. Indian managers (or for that matter managers elsewhere) perhaps need to grasp that information is only a means towards control. Control is a process, whereas information is the throughput in that process. The control process has wider and deeper managerial — especially qualitative — implications than implied by information alone. Control should ideally concern itself with the art of handling information. Of course, information generation is a pre-requisite.
- 2) When the author suggests that three distinct levels of management (corporate, executive, and operating - p.9.) are found in an organisation, he seems to have in mind the typical large firm in the private and public sectors. True, the need for organised MPIS is positively correlated to the firm size. Yet, there is a vast