

did to help bring freedom to his land. He loved his country and had its highest interest at heart—he was a real president. Under his able leadership, the great land took important steps as a new nation. In the same manner, Lincoln too was an exceptional leader.

These days we in Nepal are facing a leadership problem. No leader of ours has proved to be a real leader. Even though the system of voting is a developed one, we vote without knowing the candidates. We, actually, do not and are not making personal judgment of character. We only know about the candidate from what we have heard and read. We have no sound judgment about the candidate. Thus we go with propaganda and sentiment, without knowing what is actually going on. The system of voting has been spoilt in many places by the lure of money, rather than merit.

Let's develop ourselves and use our heads to choose leaders who can lead us, and we must stop blaming our leaders because we are the ones who elected them in the first place.

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CSR can bring in profits too

This is to comment on Rakesh Wadhwa's article on Corporate Social Responsibility. I do agree with the opinion of Wadhwa that companies benefit societies most when concentrating on delivering demanded services and products as long as they do it within existing legal frameworks and/or—in the absence of that—in a considered, responsible

way avoiding negative external effects on either environment or society. I do also agree with the opinion that companies should not be (made) responsible to take over charitable activities that might absorb vital resources needed to ensure the sustainability of operations. But we should be clear about the difference between charity (how to spend money) and CSR (how to earn money).

CSR means to conduct business in a way that ensures economic, social and environmental sustainability of a company. CSR also means to be responsive to the needs of stakeholders (which includes but is not limited to shareholders) in order to maintain good relations which improve the chances of sustainable business success. If, for example, a company focuses on short-term profit only in order to address the shareholders' immediate demands for high revenues, it might actually put its long-term existence in peril. Investment in research, development, product safety, labour relations, training, management systems, community relations, business relations and trust, etc might be neglected and lead to a lack of competitiveness, labour unrest, community resistance, opposition from consumer groups, pressure from public authorities, decreasing brand loyalty, reputation and sales.

I do not want to go into the details of the damage that scandals involving lack of responsible business practices have caused to many big companies. Instead, I would like to draw your attention to the state of the

private sector in Nepal. As we all know, the private sector in general does not have a good reputation here and many people are unaware of its role in development and welfare creation. It is still perceived as exploitative and exclusive. What does that have to do with CSR? The link between unsatisfied stakeholders and the lack of support many business leaders complain about are not difficult to make. If you are serious about profit, you have to be equally serious about the ability to produce and sell, and what better way is there in Nepal than to build alliances with the stakeholders who are closest to your company? I admit that building good relationships with workers and communities as well as public authorities might require some investment (time-wise, brain-wise and even financially) and it might not pay off immediately in every case. But there are enough examples where workers and communities have made a huge effort to support or protect 'their' companies. This kind of 'we are in the same boat mentality' is part of the support the Nepalese private sector needs so dearly. If you are still convinced that CSR and caring about stakeholders has nothing to do with profit, core business and successful entrepreneurship, I would happily enter into further discussions.

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