

By Kumar Priyaranjan

# Creating Future Skills: Through SMT

Challenges for growth in the next decade are going to be the availability of right skills at the grass roots, in addition to inadequate infrastructure, large fiscal deficits, incomplete economic reforms etc. According to Planning Commission, India has to almost double its ports, roads, power, airports and telecom in the next five years to sustain growth. Number of universities should go up from 350 today to 1,500 by 2016. Intake into universities must rise from 7 to 15 percent and differentiated talent development should be the focus.

India's high population density, extreme climate and economic dependence on its natural resource base make environmental sustainability critical

in maintaining its development path. According to Prof. C.K. Prahlad's projection, India will need to skill 500 million candidates by 2022 and produce 200 million graduates.

The largest working-age (19-58 years) population in next twenty years, which the country will have, needs to be skilled in job-oriented vocational areas & should be given the right education. Else instead of being useful for India in sustaining its economic growth, they may turn into a liability.

In view of the above scenario the need of the hour is:

- Integration of Skill development and Formal education system
- Development of specific & differentiated talent

And, the solution to address these needs might lie in a model referred to as SMT. Self Managed Team (SMT) is a team of interdependent members having shared authority and responsibility to plan, implement, execute and review the work or objectives set. They bring dynamism, high energy and self-motivation to the work place. The inherent zeal to do something in life makes them go extra mile to create high impact on business. As they get groomed in problem solving & decision making also, they need less or no supervision, which makes the organization devoid of supervision, making it flatter and more efficient. Self-Governance, Community Living, Learn-Teach-Learn, Skill Based Progression System are key features of the concept.

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## The Collective Responsibility for Future India

It's collective responsibility of academic institutions and industry leaders to have holistic approach to creating future skills for strengthening the grass-root and build career plans for them in line with economic growth. Substantial work in this direction can be done through Self Managed Team (SMT) Systems, Learn and Earn Scheme, Industry Specific Vocational programs.

Self Managed Team system is a systematic way to engage needy youths in gainful employment and brighter career prospects. Some organizations like Dr. Reddy's, Pepsi, TVS Sundaram, and Raychem RPG, have adopted the unique concept and have gained significantly in people productivity & quality of products. It has become a business model.

These youngsters co-create a positive learning environment. They are high energy, dynamic, flexible members who take complete ownership of the work assignments. This led to higher productivity, fewer quality complaints and substantial process improvements. Organization structure became leaner as the supervision layer is redundant. And this also led to lower cost of employment. High learning ability has led the team to reach or go beyond industry benchmarks faster.

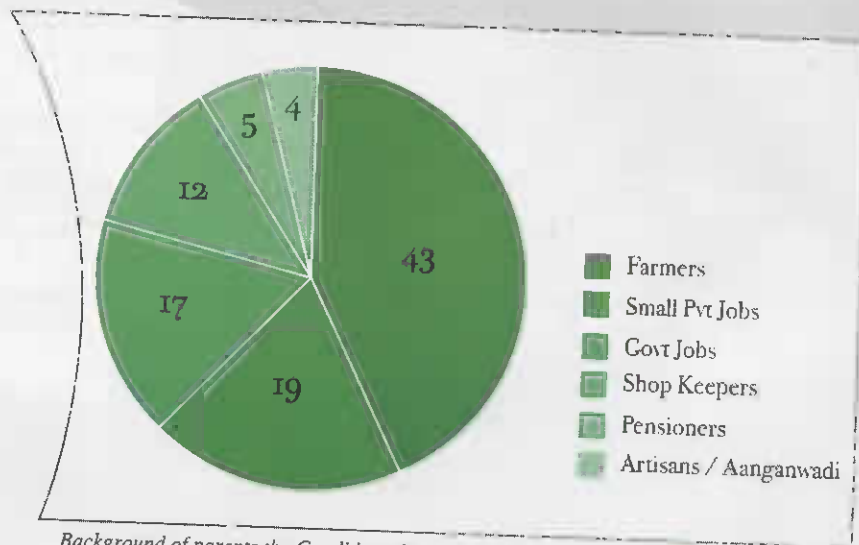
Distinct features like self-governance system, learning from one-another, optimizing time of team members, getting into root cause analysis for every problem in the team, skill based progression, and excellence scorecard are the pillars on which this system is based on, and it brings distinct values to the organization. These members take complete ownership of the work and move around wherever needed, which is really unique.

## SMT- Rendering Durable Efficiencies

Self managed teams bring cost efficiencies and longevity as people don't normally leave due to community connect and other strong connects amongst people and with the organization. It's quite evident from the RPG case elaborated below that it brings high productivity, makes organization efficient and creates employment opportunities for the needy people in the society. It has been

differentiated skills rather than going to the skill starved job market; thereby, it also contributes to building future skill requirements of the nation. They decided to embark on the journey of Self Managed Team (SMT) concept of manning for the new manufacturing units.

This was first initiated in Raychem RPG's unit in Nalagarh, Himachal Pradesh for Transformer & Energy



Background of parents the Candidates hired by Raychem RPG in Himachal Pradesh

successful in RPG Group companies and other companies mentioned above. It's a very useful system to achieve extra ordinary results through ordinary people.

## Self Managed Team at RPG

RPG gave a very serious thought on charting out new paths to create

Meter manufacturing. Ten+two pass out young boys and girls in the age group of 18-21 were hired from municipal schools in rural areas of Himachal Pradesh and from needy families. Otherwise these families would not have been in a position to send their wards for any further higher education and they would have been engaged in small petty jobs or would have got into daily wages work.

In the first phase consisted of 200 boys and girls from needy families from rural areas from all over the state of Himachal Pradesh. Ten districts of Himachal Pradesh out of 12 districts in the state are represented in Raychem RPG, Nalagarh, HP. Thirty-two (32) percent are female and 68 percent are male. Ninety-three (93) percent of them studied in Govt/ Municipal Schools.

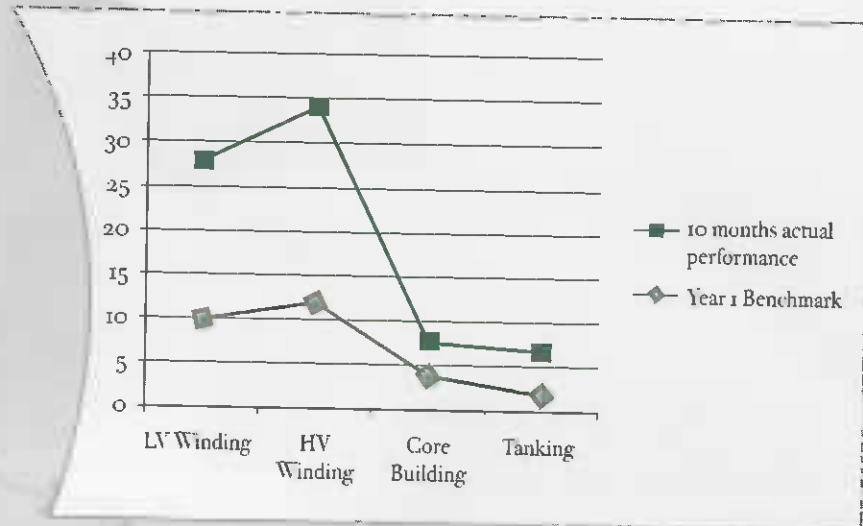
The practice continues in Raychem RPG in Halol, Gujarat after Himachal Pradesh. Other RPG Group companies also embraced the concept i.e. car radial plant of Ceat and Cable manufacturing unit of KEC all located in Gujarat. Large number of candidates are currently engaged through this system in RPG group companies.

All self managed team members were put through structured programs in technical areas like Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Drawings coupled with behavioural programs, spiritual orientation towards life, yoga & meditation, spoken & written English, computer literacy, and corporate etiquettes in collaboration with Engineering colleges & universities like Institute of Engineering and Technology, Baddi; Nirma University, Ahmedabad; Xavier's Institute of Technical Education, Baroda, The Art of Living Foundation and **Centre for Excellence in Organization (CEO)**.

They have also been given thorough training on problem solving tools like Pareto analysis; fish bone analysis, 7QC tools, why-why analysis; work planning, operational execution and decision-making, which prepare them, work with less or no supervision.

Through this structured approach the team members are empowered to take decisions within the defined boundary and under the mentorship of seniors. Skill based progression, Learn-Teach-Learn, Human Values Action system, Open Communication Continuum, are some of the great features implemented.

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in mapping role & responsibility to chart out the right framework of delegation. This led to creating higher engagement level of seniors more meaningfully as the self-managed team members take up more of the operational activities. The empowerment roadmap defined in line with the business expectations facilitates these people to get groomed for higher responsibilities in the future.

Senior's role changes from traditional control orientation to mentoring, coaching and have share accountability with the team members. Leaders play the role of:

- Coach, mentor and guide;
- Problems solver as and when required;
- Facilitator to create strong bonding among team members.

This has given a group of young, energetic, highly charged set of people on the shop floor who take complete responsibility of manufacturing processes. They work very closely with suppliers, vendors and even go to vendor's place for qualification of products and facilities. These youngsters facilitate customer visits and they only handle all technical queries raised.

In terms of productivity over seventy five percent of the group has surpassed industry benchmarks created by so called experienced seniors. Twenty five percent people were at benchmark level and the remaining five to ten percent were also fast catching up. The productivity benchmarks were set for year 1, 2 and 3 respectively by business heads. But in ten months time these youngsters crossed the mark and showing the consistent performance.

RPG Group has the strong belief that such practices are symbiotic in nature as it can help alleviate problem of unemployment; and it would help increase productivity; building career of needy youths, reduce unnecessary rush in colleges for such education which would not help them build their career.

Plans were drawn in the beginning to work on their higher future employability. Emphasis has been on continuing education wherein these people from remote villages will become Engineers in next few years as the members from Nalagarh unit are enrolled in B.Tech program with Chitkara University, Himachal Pradesh. Syllabus was co-created by internal technical experts and university professors keeping in mind the overall industry.

It's also a process of creating pride in the society and families where these candidates belong. Hence, at the time

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of on-boarding all parents or guardians were invited to give them complete information of the industry segment, company, people, policies, role of their wards in the company, their career progression so that when the parents or guardians go back to society, they carry the right information and they are fully aware of the company affairs. This completes the feedback loop and develops engagement with society at deeper level.

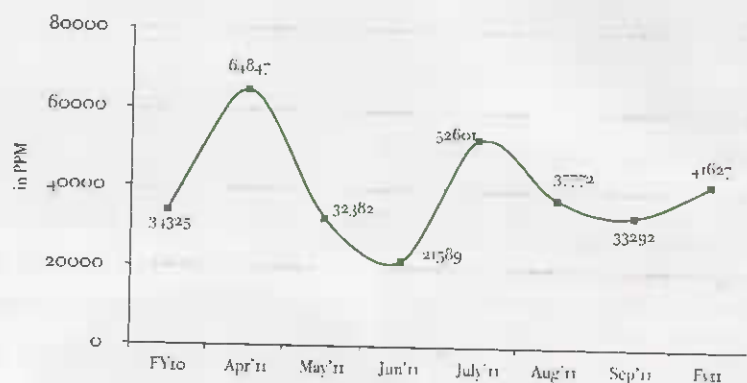
In Chakan, Maharashtra unit Learn & Earn system has been implemented wherein people from rural areas have been hired and enrolled into Diploma of Engineering programs with Technical institute and as part of the course

curriculum they get engaged at work. There are number of such opportunities to establish partnerships with society, educational institutions and even the government to create career oriented skill development and growth plan which would help build future needs of trained pool of talent to sustain growth.

This is how grooming youngsters from rural background can create the fortune at bottom of the pyramid in real sense for future of the nation. ■

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## SA and Insulators Overall performance



*In Process Quality Performance (Benchmark set 23000 PPM)*