

Being Critical or Being Intuitive

Year 2019

The music of the wall clock woke me up. It was 4 in the morning and I was still in the office (slept on the chair). The month before was as dreadful as a demon. The state was devastated by the cyclone (the strongest cyclone to strike the state in the last 20 years). I am spending more than fifteen hours in the office to bring in normalcy. I am posted at Social Welfare Department in the State capital. Being the In-charge, I ensured of owing the responsibility for my leadership critical thinking, to implement the analyzed action and adapt to the approach of decision making for problem solving.¹

The state is in acute silent mode. The havoc wrecked by the cyclone scared everyone. The aftermath problems are more humongous. But the society at large has a unique technique of facing the natural disaster. We fear it initially, then face it but create our own need based necessity problems. Remembering my days studying Peters Drucker to be a better manager, it is important for me rationalize the reality of the situation and what decisions will satisfy these.²

The nature's unrest in the state has created both social and economic discontent. The department has quantified the loss but the real challenge underlies in critically implementing the strategies³. The blueprint of the draft mentioning the several economic boosters was prepared. However, I was pondering on something which happened 20 years ago.

I was in my teens when my state was severely hit by the cyclone. I vividly remember a dynamic young women officer was in-charge of our area. Later I became friends with her. She shared her education was till high school and joined the State Disaster Management department as an assistant. She had no lucrative business degrees but her managerial approach was decisive. She was given the research report to be implemented at the ground level. Her method of capacity handling at a time when the internet has not made world shrink, lied solely on intuition. She taught me that a persons' gut feeling should not be overlooked upon. Rather, it made me realize today that intuition enables a person to be critical thinker, a craft which every employer seeks from its managers but is lost in the process of quantitative analysis in organizations.⁴

I contemplated my actions for implementing the strategies rethinking the actions taken by the woman 20 years ago.

Year 1999

Oh! Mom, everything is ruined. Water is clogged up till heels of the shelf. I was panicked and cried for my life holding my mother. The city was badly affected by the cyclone. It was dark and scary. We were waiting for government help. In the middle of the night, official arrived. We were given food and medicines. Maybe after the food, I slept on my mother's lap.

The morning was tough. The city was completely devastated. The trees were uprooted. The houses were partly cracked. Life was not normal. Officials were helping their best to bring back the normalcy. The government has announced relief packages.

Months passed but nowhere life was normal. We were facing hard, both financially and socially. Among the many hardships, my family lost the livelihood. We are the fishing community and our sole bread earning mode was destroyed. The tools were kept at the embankment and everything was taken off by the storm.

The officials were implementing their relief packages but somehow it did not cater to creating new livelihood for the people. But one officer understood the issue. She got the intuition that people may break into unrest. She sat with the people, listening, and tried to understand the needs. Eventually she devised a model to restart our livelihood. We were given scrap materials to recreate our own new fishing tools. The embankment area was re-laid. May be we are re-establishing ourselves.

Thanks to the lady officer for re-instating hopes for survival. We were washed away but her intuition for a future unrest helped to re-stable the city. Her quick and ready insight of the problem was critical for the time⁵. She understood the crux of the problem and analyzed the depth of its vulnerability.

Few months later, when were coming in terms to lives, we did not imagine she will pay a visit to us. I listened her talking to the elders how she came up with the idea from the scratch. “Yes, totally agreeing creativity is not something people are born with but a big mystical factor to be cherished”.⁶

Since I was in my growing age, her determination to work for the people understanding their sentiments motivated me to be more accepting. I tried to identify myself with others and assessing their needs. I decided to be her.

Year 2019

I looked outside the window. Oh! That was 1999 and today 2019. 20 years later I could not be her but the cyclone was same. Yes I earned some fancy degrees to my name. I am working as senior official in the welfare department but I could not be her. She took the decision on her intuition but her approach was carefully and judiciously critical for any business desions.⁷

Though she was hold by the emotions of the people but it did not overshadow her thought process to be logically unreasonable. Her devised plan of livelihood model enabled us to maintain our self in the toughest of time.

Yes better decision and critical approach is the identity of a leader. A person, who realizes the potential of a situation, its vulnerability and how far it can penetrate, truly signifies a leader.

In today's tech era, instant information is on the table. But, wait! Do we even take few seconds to implement our cognitive actions? The lady officer's critical thinking skill implemented all as stated by educator **Edward Glaser**⁸. She had the ability to:

1. Recognize problems
2. Find workable means for meeting those problems.
3. Gather the required information
4. Recognize unstated assumptions and values
5. Concluded and generalized her assumptions.

I am definitely a manager, managing situation as expected from any government official, but I don't stand myself as a critical analyst. A critical analyst is someone who imbibes being both decisive and logical. Then, the person is a leader. And the lady officer was a leader. She was critical of our approach. She took a decision all by herself. She stood against the time and created her own **MAGIC** for the people.

A leader is not made but born. However, the skills of critical approach can be sharpened with practices. A multi facet socialized critical thinking skills are problem solving and solution creation approach. Truly, with her zeal, critical thinking acumen acts like a bridge connecting people and processes to profits⁹ (read stability).

The shattered hopes of the people all around motivated me to re-work on my skills of implementing decisions. The families who lost everything, children crying to understand what is going on, I need to stand for them.

The best I can give them is being critically emotional. The department I am in-charge of implements all social security government policies. But being in a coveted position I have the advantage of serving the society. Considering the society as a business unit, profitability as the betterment of the people, business models do apply to society as well.

I devised a model of manufacturing to service in the city. The small manufacturing hub for clothing was set up with the aid of co-operative bank. The city was not known for garment hub, but was known for a premier fashion technology institute. Channelizing the staff and students of the institute, the people were assigned the job of stitching and it was procured by the government. A call centre was also established with the help of the telecom department and assigned the outsourcing job of electricity department. All this was implemented with minimal infrastructure because the city was still recovering from the nature's devastation.

Truly, nature in its own color sometimes teaches us to re-think (critically) what we can achieve. There is no established research on critical thinking, leadership and leadership development; however, critical thinking definitely is an essential quality of an effective leader.¹⁰

The economy of society shifts with the developmental changes in the decades. The breed of employee also changes, knowledgeable workers are in the market but the jobs don't match the honed skills. This paradox gives the mass employee useless of their worth.¹¹

The last 20 years also witnessed silent revolution, emergence of analytics but somehow the critical quotient evaporated. The lady did not read Drucker's managerial texts but I have. The reasoning ability of managers builds the foundation of an organization. It's a promise to my consciousness that whatsoever the situation I land into, definitely I will not wobble at once. The Drucker's critical thinking and the lady's intuitions are both for the same thing – working for the organization or society. Society is a business model and organizations work for the society.

The world is facing a crisis of leaders. Believing the managers do not succumb to slackness and rise up to intuitively critical thinking; the Managers will be touted as World Class Leaders.

Readings:

1. www.iidmglobal.com>leadership>leadershipskill
2. The Effective Decision by Peter drucker
3. <https://hbr.org/2010/01/how-leaders-should-think-critical>
4. <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/337563>
5. <http://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/index-of-articles/making-critical-thinking-intuitive/600>
6. <http://jan-aulbach.de/articles/Honing-your-intuition-with-critical-thinking>
7. https://medium.com/@Robert_J_McHugh/how-leaders-can-develop-critical-thinking-402dbf0d1972
8. <https://www.raps.org/news-and-articles/news-articles/2019/8/critical-thinking-and-leadership-skills-for-regula>
9. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2018/05/31/sharpen-your-critical-thinking-skills-with-these-14-leadership-practices/#7ea89ed017ac>
10. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/107179199500200407>
11. <https://business-digest.eu/en/2017/02/14/organizational-stupidity-why-you-lose-your-critical-thinking-skills/>