CHAPTER 9

SUGGESTIONS AND SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In this chapter, suggestions are made and directed to facilitate the companies to move in the direction of becoming a learning organization. No company can be a perfect learning organization. It is however an ideal towards which companies can move. The following suggestions are not directed to any specific company under study but are applicable to all of them. As we know a learning organization is defined as an organization where people continually expand their capacity to create the results that they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective action is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together. Keeping this in view, the following suggestions may be helpful to the companies under study and the companies in general. This is followed by Part II in which suggestions are made for each company to make at a learning organization.

PART-I : SUGGESTIONS FOR ALL COMPANIES

1) First of all, each company must, with the help of its employees, formulate clear vision and mission statements and should spread them throughout the company.

2) Each company should be imparted a comprehensive training at all levels as to how a learning organization functions. This training should be imparted to all the departments of the company so that there are no inconsistencies or gaps in understanding in the company. The training programme should emphasize that a learning organization has minimum three characteristics: a) It creates supportive learning environment, b) It follows learning policies and practices, and c) It has leadership that reinforces learning. Supportive learning environment implies that all barriers to knowledge sharing created by mistrust or fear must be removed.
3) Learning organization works on providing psychological safety to its employees. So no threats of punishment or firing from the job should be given to its employees. There should be no fear among employees that they will lose their job for expressing their opinions.

4) Different employees have different perspectives or frames of reference. The management must learn to appreciate difference in viewpoint of employees. The management should also be open to new ideas from employees or even from outside sources.

5) The company must allow employees to experiment with new ways of working and also allow them to experiment with new products or services.

6) The company must encourage debates and discussion among employees and attempt to positively seek out the different viewpoints of employees.

7) The company must have a committee or committees responsible for gathering information from customers, suppliers, competitors, best-in-class Company and from external environment to identify political, economic and technological trends.

8) Newly hired employees from companies must receive systematic training in the important aspects of learning organization. The top management must value training as most essential for employee development. Every employee must receive periodic training. There must be special training given to potentially creative people in the area of innovations and creativity.

9) There must be easy transfer of implicit and explicit knowledge from one part of the company to its other parts. There must be no information boundaries between the departments. Also, employees must have an opportunity to learn from outside experts. This could be done in two ways: 1) Invite outside experts to give seminars or lectures within the company, or 2) Send relevant employees to attend outside workshops, lectures or seminars and get feedback reports from them.

10) The Company managers and supervisors should be so trained that they speedily and accurately communicate new knowledge to the decision makers in the company.
11) The company should regularly share information with network of experts within the company.

12) Managers in each department should encourage multiple points of view. They should provide time and resources to their employees for identifying problems and challenges before the company.

13) Each manager in the learning company should provide resources in terms of time and money for reflection and improvement of performance.

14) The company should suitably reward the employee for his outstanding performances. Also there must be substantial individual and team reward for innovative behaviour. There should be committee for identifying such individuals and teams objectively and rewards may be given to innovative persons or teams periodically.

15) All supervisors and managers should be given an intensive training in team building and after this intensive training they should be evaluated on their team building skills. The company should also introduce the concept of mentoring or coaching as a learning and teaching technique.

16) There should be a plan for cross-cultural team building efforts in case of a company which has entered into a joint venture agreement or which as acquired a foreign company or which has collaborated with a foreign company with superior technology. In all such cases the company should assess its own absorptive capacity and should accordingly create several joint teams to acquire new knowledge and technology.

The creating of cross cultural teams to acquire mutual knowledge and technology is crucial to the successful functioning of a joint venture. The cross cultural teams will not work if there are organizational constraints on mutual information sharing.
PART-II : COMPANY-WISE SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions are made for each company to move in the direction of a learning company

Table 32
Suggestions for moving towards learning organization

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1)</td>
<td>Zydus Cadila</td>
<td>Leadership that reinforces learning needs improvement</td>
<td>More psychological security, more appreciation of differences</td>
<td>More information transfer, more debates and discussions</td>
<td>Leadership that reinforces learning needs improvement</td>
<td>Better leadership that reinforces learning, more psychological safety</td>
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<td>2)</td>
<td>Torrent Pharmaceuticals Ltd.</td>
<td>More experimentation, Better information collection</td>
<td>More appreciation of differences</td>
<td>More appreciation of differences, better leadership</td>
<td>Appreciation of differences, better leadership that reinforces learning</td>
<td>Better leadership that reinforces learning</td>
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<td>3)</td>
<td>Arvind Mills</td>
<td>To encourage debates &amp; discussions, better information transfer</td>
<td>More debates and discussions among employees, More education and training</td>
<td>More debates and discussions among employees</td>
<td>More debates and discussions</td>
<td>Better information collection and information transfer</td>
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<td>4)</td>
<td>Welspun Gujarat</td>
<td>More psychological safety for employees</td>
<td>More debates and discussions, Better information collection</td>
<td>More appreciation of differences, better information collection</td>
<td>More openness to new ideas, more experimentation</td>
<td>More psychological security, Better leadership that reinforces learning</td>
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<td>5)</td>
<td>Reliance Textiles Ltd.</td>
<td>More psychological safety, more debates and discussions</td>
<td>More appreciation of differences, more information transfer</td>
<td>More openness to new ideas, better leadership</td>
<td>More psychological security, more appreciation of differences</td>
<td>Better psychological security, more appreciation of differences</td>
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<td>6)</td>
<td>IPCL</td>
<td>More psychological safety, better leadership for learning</td>
<td>More appreciation of differences</td>
<td>More psychological safety for employees, more experimentation</td>
<td>Better leadership that reinforces learning, more appreciation of differences</td>
<td>Better psychological security, more appreciation of differences</td>
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<td>7)</td>
<td>GHCL</td>
<td>More psychological safety, better leadership for learning</td>
<td>More debates and discussions</td>
<td>More appreciation of differences</td>
<td>More openness to new ideas, better leadership</td>
<td>Better information transfer, better leadership</td>
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<td>8)</td>
<td>GACL</td>
<td>More psychological safety, more debates and discussions</td>
<td>More appreciation of differences</td>
<td>More psychological safety for employees, more debates and discussions</td>
<td>More appreciation of differences, better leadership</td>
<td>More openness to new ideas, more details as discussions</td>
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<td>9)</td>
<td>Essar Gujarat</td>
<td>More openness to new ideas</td>
<td>Better information transfer</td>
<td>More debates and discussions, more training</td>
<td>More appreciation of differences, better leadership</td>
<td>More experimentation, better leadership that reinforces learning</td>
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OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY FULFILLED

The study has fulfilled all its four objectives mentioned in Chapter 5. It has identified companies and their departments in terms of their learning ability and ranked them according to percentages scored. Secondly, it has identified learning policies and practices followed by the companies and their departments through several tables and their interpretation. Thirdly, it has identified gaps in policies and practices of the learning organization and fourthly, it has made some concrete suggestions and recommendations for each company to make it a learning organization.

LEARNING ORGANIZATION: THE SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The researches on learning organizations in India have just begun because the concept itself is new. Therefore the scope for further research in this area is very wide. Some indicators of the same are given below:

1) A comparative study of more companies as learning organizations in the same industry or in different industries.
2) A comparative study of companies as learning organization in the same service sector or across the service sectors.
3) Learning organization in social service sector or voluntary organizations.
4) A comparative study of learning organization in public sector versus private sector companies.
5) Universities and their departments as learning organizations.
6) The cross-country study of companies as learning organizations.

It is hoped that in future some scholars will work on the above topics and will come out with valuable findings and conclusions.
CONCLUSIONS

It may be concluded from the above study that there cannot be perfect learning companies in India or elsewhere. In fact, there is no one opinion on any organization which could be termed as an ideal learning organization. Different companies have different variables relevant to their learning capacity. However, team work, experimentation with new ways of working, openness to new ideas, spreading knowledge within organizations, psychological safety given to employees, rewarding outstanding employees, employee training, information collection and information transfer from top to bottom and leadership that reinforces learning seem to be essential ingredients for learning organizations. It seems that in the coming few years, more and more companies will adopt a learning organization model to be competitive and innovative.

A learning organization cannot be created without a learning culture. This includes team learning also. Modern organizations cannot learn if team members do not come together and learn. For this, a learning organization has to create a communication system to facilitate the exchange of information and its spread at the bottom on the basis of which any learning organization is built. No learning organization can be built without a vision which is not widely shared by its employees. Also no learning organization can be built without leadership at all levels which does not reinforce learning. External environment also has to be monitored and innovations and outstanding performances have to be rewarded. This requires autonomy for employees and an active adoption of the learning policies and practices by the company with a focus on research and development.