

Sarma, Parthjeet (2018). *The Radically Changing Nature of Work, Workers & Workplaces: Using Space as a Starting Point of Innovation. Mumbai: Become Shakespeare. Pages: XIX+ 88. ₹149. ISBN -9789387649972.*

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Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in the late 18th century in western Europe, the nature of industries has changed, and so are the workers and workplaces. During that period most of the works in industries were of physical in nature. Unlike then, the globalised economy at present emphasises upon mechanical, technical and mental work. The quality of the workplace has also changed. At present most of the big industries across the world have multicultural and multi-ethnic workers. Therefore, each one's interests have to be taken care off. Finally, in the age of globalisation, one is always at work and can be so from any corner of the world. This has been possible because of revolution in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT). This book by the author Mr Parthjeet Sarma delves into these mentioned issues.

As the nature of work has changed, changes in workplaces and work cultures have become necessary. The author talks about the need for playfulness incorporated into workplace designs (p 6). By 'Play' he does not mean an activity, but the 'play' which he uses is in the context of a mindset (p 7). In the 20th century, as computers and other machines have taken over or taking over many of the works done earlier by human beings; a fear has emerged that people will lose their jobs. These machines are useful in the countries where a large section of the population is ageing, but not in the countries with a large population. With the

emergence of devices, human workers, particularly white collared, are mainly focusing on works which are the right-brained, creative, and also requiring conceptual abilities (p 11).

Not only that there has been a change in the nature of work but also a change is in the concept of 'going to work' itself because the modern workplace is different from the conventional one. Industrial revolution introduced the assembly line which was all about productivity and efficiency. The author talks about the first stations, when he writes that "The first workplaces were designed with rows and rows of workstations, with a manager overlooking performance, almost mimicking the factory shop floor" (p 12). Later, to offer privacy, the cubicles were introduced (p 12-13).

In the age of globalisation, a paradigmatic shift has occurred with the revolution in the ICT . The smartphones, laptops, etc. have become essential work tools which are always there with the workers. He or she can perform work from any place in the world. In these times the challenge is to attract those who do not want to come to the office and like to work from any place they want. To attract such workers to the office, most of the companies have workstations that look like clubs; where workers can get a sauna, go for a jog, play a game of snooker, sleep and work from a café or from a bean bag (p 13).

At present, with more involvement of mind work, productivity is fuelled by creativity which leads to innovation. Both - creativity and innovation - need to co-exist for the success of any business (p 19). In the age of technology, one does not have to depend on the workstations where they have to go and do anything creative (p 25). This modern work and workstations also need a modern Human Resource policy to motivate the workers. The author writes that "[a] good twenty-first century approach to building productive workplaces requires a holistic HR approach;

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embracing an understanding of how the human psyche has evolved and the science around it" (p 29). The Human Resource department has to ensure that they get the right kind of work matching their talents. This has to be supported by the monetary and other benefits to the workers.

The author has enlisted some factors which directly or indirectly helps the workers to be productive. First, is a distraction. This can be positive also, because often creative thoughts may emerge from distraction. Second is playing games. This activity relates individuals with others and makes one to learn few things such as handle emotions, respond to challenges, and cope with stressful experiences (p 42). Third, is sleeping at work. Stress, diabetes, high blood pressure and other health complications pile up when one does not get adequate sleep. Organisations, till recently, have continued to ignore sleep wellness as a part, and have focused on diet, weight, exercise and smoke cessation. Progressive organisations are doing their bit to help workers overcome their stigma over sleeping at work, as they realise that sleeping at work, actually makes business sense (p 55). Fourth, is switching off. This helps the workers to switch off at times. About his own experiences, the author writes, "I have come across organisations that have tweaked their email servers to stop them from transmitting

emails after office hours and during hours" (p 55).

At the new workplace, both physical and the digital world have merged. With such convergence, an individual remains active on both personal and professional lives simultaneously (p 69). In contemporary times, both technology and social changes are influencing the people's lives, at large. The author calls them as technology influencers and social influencers (p 74). The working lab has to be developed in such a way that it provides a positive vibration and turn out to be a place where the quality of thinking matters, rather than proved to be a place where hundreds of ideas per minutes emerge (p 82). It has to be a place where there is knowledge rather than one finds it as three-step methodology that promises success (p 83). Because the influencers exert influence around the new meaning of work, workers and workplaces, they will individually begin to shape the sociocultural and technological scenario, creating an eco-system where the new meaning can flourish (p 87).

This book is an interesting study of work, workers and workstation in the modern times. This work is an essential need for the entrepreneurs. It will help them to understand the nature and demands of the contemporary workers and economy.