

TALK BY MRS. DEEPIKAA JINDAL  
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Mr. Mark Hodge, Director Global Business Initiative on Human Rights, Mr. Salil Tripathi, Director Policy, Institute of Human Rights and Business, London and Advisor Global Business Initiative, and friends.

It gives me immense pleasure and satisfaction to engage in this partnership aimed at strengthening the symbiotic relationship between 'Business and Human Rights'. I have always believed that core of all business are the people who run that business and hence it is a moral obligation on the part of business houses to engage with people on the three principles of human rights i.e. 'Protect, Respect and Remedy.

It was a year ago when a dialogue was established between Global Business Initiative on Human Rights and JSL Foundation, that I realized the enormity of such engagement and I was convinced that the best practices of business and human rights have to be further strengthened through a process of learning and sharing. Today the industry has a number of challenges and problems with regard to the demographic element and there is an urgent need to address various issues aligned to the aspirations of the people, which are very dynamic and constantly change with development. Despite the fact that change is necessary and cannot be wished away, good human relations will remain key areas of concern, which are responsible to enhance the motivation level of people and strengthen bonds of people and business. The other areas of interest revolve around various practices linked with risk management, reputation management, stakeholder relationships, access to finance, access to contracts, access to markets and so on.

In deciding how best to pursue this task, I would like to quote from the words of Nobel laureate Amartya Sen who writes "What moves us, is not the realization that the world falls short of being completely just - but that there are clearly remediable injustices around us which we want to eliminate". This perspective, which resonates well with the concept of "principled pragmatism", leads one to inquire how to improve actual lives, rather than to theoretical characterizations of "perfectly just societies or institutions", which in any case remain illusory.

In conclusion, I would like to only reiterate that there is a definite need to create greater awareness on the precept - that it is citizenship which binds the slender thread between State, Social Capital and Trust - where-in trust remains the currency of social capital. Our effort should remain at building this bond between the two through a process of adopting best practices of various business houses across the world. It is through such engagement that we can protect and respect human rights and find remedies to strained relations and in so doing improve the business climate and the business environment.

Thank you