

B-SCHOOL CORNER

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Responsible leadership and sustainable goals



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Ari Lindeman from Finland University delivers seminar at IMI Kolkata

Responsible leadership has emerged as an intense topic of discourse in recent times in the context of the VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous) world, said Ari Lindeman, Professor and Head of the Degree Programme, Entrepreneurship Ambassador and Project Manager of Business

Academy at South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences. He was speaking at a seminar on *Responsible Leadership* at the IMI Kolkata campus on March 29.

Lindeman highlighted the importance of responsible leadership in the contemporary world and the characteristics of such leadership at the micro, meso and macro levels, while addressing the challenges of such leadership in India, Finland and other countries.

Several challenges

Leadership has to address the concerns of sustainable development, keeping in view the pressing challenges of technological advancement, globalisation, ever-changing workforce demographics, limited resources and environmental crises, he said. Leaders need to be responsible enough to ensure that organisations are able to respond appropriately to opportunities and challenges in the VUCA environment. Responsible leaders deal with societal concerns based on their ethical judgment, which ensures the long-term sustainability of organisations in such an environment.

The literature on leadership showcases various kinds of leadership — transactional, transformational, charismatic, servant-style, authentic, autocratic, participative, and the like. Each style has its own dimensions, merits and demerits, and the selection of a particular style may be contextual. Quite recently, responsible leadership has been added as a new genre.

Ari Lindeman discussed the various dimensions of responsible leadership, such as awareness of oneself and society at large, being good and doing good and the legal, moral and collective responsibility towards one and all. He described the business culture and leadership styles in Finland as distinct from those in India.

Sustainable development

The business practices and managerial orientation in Finland powerfully aimed at achieving energy-efficiency through development of renewable sources and innovating environment-friendly products in order to move towards a greener society. Though India has been trying for a shift towards responsible consumption and activities through its Corporate Social Responsibility provisions put forth in the Companies Act 2013, a major transformation in business outlook and leadership orientation is yet to happen, he said.

The seminar was organised at the IMI Kolkata campus for faculty members, research officers and research associates. Faculty members had the opportunity to engage in serious discourse on the topic, which is often discussed in global forums these days.