



Indians at the workplace always leave me mesmerised by their capacity to deliver. The first surprise came when we introduced the computer/word processor in our office on an experimental basis about 3 decades ago. An assistant finished typing 25 pages in one day when assistants were typing up to five to six pages a day on the type writer. I thought it was perhaps an exception and an instance of individual excellence.

But when I increased the intake in the post graduate programme (PGP) in one Indian Institute of Management from 35 to 105, the non-teaching staff strength remained the same as before, while the workload in every department and section, from the duplicating room to student affairs office and the placement office, the PGP office, the library and even the accounts office increased three-fold. On the teaching side, the number of faculty members increased marginally from 22 to 24 (it had indeed come down from 22 to 20 in the first year).

As if that was not enough to convince one of the unfolding phenomenon, when I reached Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode, I found that there were 30 non-teaching staff when the PGP intake was 60 and it remained the same when the intake went up to 120, then to 180 and even to 260. Thus I found that the non-teaching staff strength of 30 could take care of an incremental increase of 60 to 120 to 180 to 260 in the PGP.

The same was the case in the matter of the faculty. The number of faculty members was 20 when we had an intake of 60. It increased to 24 when the intake was 120, remained the same when the intake went up to 180 (indeed it had come down to 17 in the first year) and was only 28 when the intake went up to 260.

This faculty strength also had taken the load of 240 participants of online programmes, close to 10 week-long faculty development programmes (making institute leaders in both), besides conducting the usual management development programmes (MDPs) and multiple conferences. At which stage they were fully utilized, I don't know.

But what I conclude from this is that Indians are great deliverers. We don't, at times, set adequate challenge benchmarks to meet.

Are they akin to the Hanuman, with his legendary capability to deliver results but carried a curse due to which he was unable to remember his own ability unless reminded by another

person? Can we ever utilise their potential fully? To me, it remains a leadership and human resource development puzzle and challenge