

***Business Sutra: A Very Indian approach to Management* by Devdutt Pattanaik, Aleph Book Company, New Delhi, 2013, 437 pages, ₹ 695.00, ISBN 978-81-923280-7-2.**

Patrick Johnson is a Lecturer in the Department of Business Administration and the Campus Coordinator for the morning session, in Salesian College, Siliguri Campus. He has done his BBM (Marketing) from Christ College, Bangalore University and Masters of Marketing Management from Pondicherry University. His area of interests include advertising, developing corporate identity and photography.

Devdutt Pattanaik, has over twenty five books and four hundred articles on Indian mythology. Trained to be a doctor, after spending fifteen years in the healthcare industry, he found his calling as the Chief Belief Officer in Future Group. Apart from lecturing in Indian universities and management institutes, he also has column in the Economic Times where he explains the relationship between mythology and management.

In his book *Business Sutra*, he develops the idea of approaching management in an Indian way. His approach is based on culture and ancient mythology, to be precise stories, symbols and rituals drawn from Hindu, Jain and Buddhist mythology. He clearly states from the very beginning that there is a need for an Indian approach in the Indian management scenario because the western management concepts were developed by western thinkers, considering the western outlook towards life, values and ethics, the western business environment and the western culture. Such western philosophies are not apt for the Indian business environment. The core of the author's philosophy, his business sutra states: 'as is belief, so is behaviour, so is business, this is business sutra...' The key words are 'belief' and 'behaviour'. The author theorizes that a man's belief is shaped by his tradition and cultural background which is mainly derived from ancient mythology. This belief directs one's behaviour, and the behaviour decides the person's business activities or outcomes. This concept of belief is ignored by the western management thinkers.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part is the Introduction, where the author connects belief to business. He states his 3B framework, Belief, Behaviour & Business, which is the foundation of *Business Sutra*. He further clarifies that every belief is irrational hence a myth; many are convinced that their belief is the objective truth but belief is subjective; to have beliefs one must have imagination. From nature, one derives imagination, through imagination subjectivity, through subjective truth one arrives at beliefs, which further develops culture from where springs forth humanity... thus 'from belief sprouts every human enterprise'. Therefore according to Devdutt Pattanaik, mythology is as practical as management theories.

In the second part, the book mentions three types of beliefs - Indian, Western and Chinese. An attempt has been made to explain these philosophies. The book states that Western beliefs are derived from Greek and Biblical stories, where concepts of one God, one life, bowing to authority or defying them and achieving greatness to be recognised as the authority. Hence the need to set goals and to attain them are commonly seen in western management thought. The Chinese beliefs are more focused on being at harmony with all aspects of life. The author goes on to say the following philosophies namely Taoism and Confucianism and later Buddhism that shaped Chinese beliefs - harmony and maintenance of order. On the other hand Belief in rebirth is what defines the Indian way. Belief in multiple lives establishes a view that one need not have fixed goals, there is a certain uneasiness with rules and regulations and the rise of contextual improvisations - 'jugaad.'

The final part which is about seventy five percent of the book is named 'Business Sutra.' Here the author explains 'a very Indian approach to management' after preparing us with the initial two parts where he accentuates the need for an Indian approach because of the Indian beliefs. This part is further divided in to five sections, 'Kama's vision statement', 'Drishti, observing objective reality', 'Divya-drishti, observing subjective reality, 'Darshan, observing the subject' and 'Yama's balance sheet.'

The book has about 145 Sutras (sayings) - brief statements, spread in all its sections. These sutras are explained keeping the Hindu mythology as the background, which is further followed by contemporary, fictitious (as mentioned by the author) management cases in boxes which gives a clearer picture of what the author is trying to say. The book also has illustrations in almost every alternate page that reinforces the thought behind the sutras.

Even though the book is a good read it may be difficult at times to accept the author's points, especially for management thinkers and professionals trained in the western management thought. Also, India is vastly diverse in its culture and beliefs, the author summarises Indian beliefs from Hindu, Jain and Buddhist traditions but there is more to Indian people and their beliefs. Once again coming back to the core content of the book one gets a strong flavour of Indian mythology from the author's writings. It is interesting to see how the author has delved into Indian philosophy couched especially in the mythology mentioned in this book to conceptualise an Indian approach to management.

A must read not only for management gurus in Asia but also for all management aspirants worldwide especially when the presence of Indian workforce is leaving its mark globally.