

## Editorial

### Contextual Management: Indigenous Theories and Practices

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One of the areas of growing and intensified awareness in higher education has been regarding the need for greater and better investment into research. This immediately puts an additional pressure on the teaching faculty as besides the normal duties, one has to exert and set aside extra time and energy to do research. The promotion of research as an independent activity is also being encouraged or happening through the JRF scholarships and the growing number of research institutes. The very first proposal for an applied research oriented university in India was put forward by Jamshetji Tata to Lord Curzon in the last quarter of 19th century. It was actually something envisioned purely for research and is today the TIFR and TISS with their wings spread across the country.

The contemporary stress on research is related to a shift in the perception of knowledge generation and dissemination itself. The traditional or prevailing thinking was that knowledge was generated in a privileged setting by specialized institutions and by experts. Therefore, and with, the western origin of contemporary education system prevailing in India, this perception got re-inscribed. In contrast, the presently increasing realization that any location, any people, any agency is in a privileged position to generate knowledge is what gives added force to research activities.

This shift is resultant from a questioning of not only the mode by which knowledge was being generated, not only because of the persons and their locations, but also because of the shifting understanding on what 'knowledge' itself is meant to be. To study or to know about what it means to have knowledge, calls in itself for, knowledge about knowledge as a prerequisite. In other words, why do we need the knowledge we are aspiring for, or, desiring to accrue for ourselves? In our present case we are posing the question as Indians, located in different parts of this country with the varied qualifications and 'privilege' we have as to why do we want to study about management? If our endeavour is directed towards better management of our communities, our tradition, our way of life then we need to study these and take a lesson or two from there. Now how come we have reached a point of having come to accept implicitly and explicitly that there is little 'good' to be learned from this context? Consequently, is there not a felt need to import theories and practices so as to apply them to our context in order to make it better?

On the other hand, is it because we have subscribed to a system of education and with it a mode of doing science that is western in source and still holding its sway? Is it because we have not dared changing the language of our communication and the systemic processes of education bequeathed to us to look critically and creatively at our context? This creative and critical look into our context can be done in three ways: first, by using the derived notions of management being applied to our context; second, by discovering and strengthening the prevailing indigenous practices that have a future if supported and cared for; and third, by attempting an integrated approach of bringing together the traditional and the modern management strategies. The application parameters and thinking process behind the papers being presented in this volume revolve around these three frames of reference. The ability to trust and regain the old, the daring to critique and contest the new will probably show us the way.

It is to be noted that we do not use the word indigenous in its limited usage. In the limited frame it would refer to management practices and theories traceable from among the indigenous communities of India or anywhere in the world, as they are so designated for reasons of affinity to the land they inhabit. In a broader understanding of the word we refer to any local, contextual, non hegemonic process by which the hegemonic practices are localized or indigenized.<sup>1</sup>

A proliferation of attempts is on to delve into Indian cultural history and value system to delineate principles that can motivate and streamline managerial projects. In this exercise two things happen simultaneously. A look at the continuity from the ancient to the medieval and contemporary within Indian value system on the one hand, and, the critique one brings to this very continuity as a debilitating factor that prevents true and genuine values of modernity from percolating into Indian society at large, on the other. It could be that certain ingrained negative values of tradition needs to be challenged and remodified or done away with and on the other certain imported ideas may be in need of modification or just not workable in Indian context. Two recent texts

1 "Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them. They form at present nondominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system." ... "On an individual basis, an indigenous person is one who belongs to these indigenous populations through self-identification as indigenous (group consciousness) and is recognized and accepted by these populations as one of its members (acceptance by the group). Cfr United Nations 2004, quoted in Carolyn Stephens, "Nutrition, biodiversity and traditional knowledge" in Seminar 661, The Malnourished Tribal, September 2014, p.25. The term 'indigenous' is not officially recognized in India since that would mean that a majority of Indians are non-indigenous, nonoriginal inhabitants of the Indian Territory. The indigeneity question could be argued both ways. In as much as on an international fora, the Indian question of all Indians being Indians irrespective of the genetic migratory stories of ancestors, it does not, thereby deny the fact that within Indian indigeneity there is a segregation of the tribal and the dalit because they are more indigenous in the sense of being *adivasi*, *vanvasi*, *vanyajati*, *janjati* (folk), *adimjati* (primitive) *girijan* (hilldweller) etc.

that caught my attention along these lines of cross-cultural adaptation of managerial principles are: one, *Jugaad* by Navi Radjou, Jaideep Prabhu and Simone Ahuja and the other, *Business Sutra* by Devdutt Pattanaik, both being also featured as reviews in this volume.

*Jugaad*, is the colloquial Hindi word for 'an innovative fix'; an improvised solution born from ingenuity and cleverness'. It means facing challenges in a unique way. It refers to any use of ingenuity to 'game the system'. In other words, the seminar itself was to search how we can convert Management into a hot selling homemade product having seen through and drawn from the so called 'high flown' theories coming from elsewhere. *Jugaad* refers to something that happens organically an 'emergent' phenomenon or not a planned activity and yet it meets the requirements of having had to plan in depth once engineered, introduced, implemented. In the words of Woodrow Wilson, it is 'the highest and best form of efficiency (as it) is the spontaneous cooperation of free people. Not that this type of innovation or inventiveness is unique to Indian business, or that we should make much of the source, or location, of a good idea provided it works. Yet there could be uniqueness in the way Indian context exemplifies it. This also draws attention to the fact that where affairs are messy and not yet fully ordered there is greater opportunity for management and it could be done either by imitating processes elsewhere or ingeniously creating a solution from within the context. It is recognition of the fact that 'innovation is by its very nature a disorderly process' (p.13).

*Jugaad* Innovation is built around six core principles: seek opportunity in diversity, do more with less; think and act flexibly, keep it simple, include the margin, follow your heart. Global competitiveness and local need - both needs to be met along with sustainability, durability and quality in the way we innovate whether in health, education, agriculture, energy or skills.

As for the second book on Management that impressed me recently, *Business Sutra* by Devdutt Pattanaik, a trained Doctor, who turned ad agent and business advisor out of his interest in Indian mythology brings together his analytic acumen with his passion for generating leadership notions from within the Indian (indigenous) traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism. I simply quote from the blurb:

*Business Sutra* uses stories, symbols and rituals drawn from Hindu, Jain and Buddhist mythology to understand a wide variety of business situations that range from running a successful tea stall to nurturing talent in a large multinational corporation. At the heart of the book is a compelling premise: if we believe that wealth needs to be chased the workplace becomes a *ranabhoomi* - a battleground of investors, regulators, employers, employees, vendors,

competitors and customers; if we believe that wealth needs to be attracted, the workplace becomes a *ranga-bhoomi* - a playground where everyone is happy.

Therefore, the philosophical underpinning of this UGC sponsored Management Seminar papers on "Contextual Management: Indigenous Theories and Practices" is a belief in the fact that 'knowledge always requires knowledge of knowledge: the ongoing investigation and integration of how we construct/create knowledge. The process whereby our lived experience in differing contexts give rise to 'knowledge' of people, places, times, and season, relationships, codes and customs, often goes unobserved and critically unexamined. We are participants as agents and as consumers in the production of the knowledge available around us. How do we come to live the way we do? Why do we challenge ourselves to change? How do we achieve better quality and wellbeing in the mode of our living? What extent does responsibility weigh on promoters and disseminators of knowledge - as educators, educationists, and management gurus, and aspiring gurus or disciples - to question our received notions, and be discerning enough to nurture and promote the local along with the best from the global? Concerted efforts in this direction can in turn, make the local and the indigenous equally global in value appreciation and opening up opportunities. The papers selected for the first of the twin-volumes on the topic, do convey the sense of responsibility from the part of the authors to do justice to the endeavour.

The very first article on 'Expatriates and the Impact of Cross-Culture Training' by S. Brinda and Vincent Arokia Das analyzes the impact of cross-cultural training on the expatriates. Their study, based in Hyderabad, shows that a global manager today, needs to be well acclimatized with the changing and invasive cultures in order to work at a global level. The literature reviewed and the primary research conducted on its basis reinforces the positive effects of such training. The second article by Aparajita Roy and Moumita Saha explores 'the Concept of Motivation' using 'Vroom's Expectancy Theory' on 'Marwari and Marathi Business Communities.' India being one of the happening places for global investors there is an improved customer satisfaction and retention. Indian business scenario, nevertheless, is dominated by traditional business communities. The authors bring to focus two such communities - the Marwari and the Dabbawalas. These two business communities though having different business models, are yet shown to be similarly motivated by applying Victor Vroom's Expectancy model.

The third article, 'Margin to Metropolis' is a study on the 'Lepchas of India and Igbos of Nigeria' by Amitabha and Shreya Bhattacharya contrasting the writing of histories of these marginal tribes. These narratives unveil a prevailing presumption of a master gaze - intrusive yet uncomprehending with the right to interpret any and every 'primeval' culture. They show how as a consequence the positive elements of

such cultures are often overlooked, suppressed or even erased. The authors question, in the context of the modern nation state, as to who decides what should occupy centre-stage and why? They assert that the time has come for contemporary nation states to realize, that only through the unearthing and re-establishment of certain fast-vanishing indigenous traditions could one create a more equitable, more just world order. Therefore, the time has come to centre-stage the periphery; a sort of de-centring the centre, and for the metropolis to learn from the margin. Vinay Limbu and Indu Chettri, in the next article, explore 'Village Tourism in Darjeeling Himalaya' and argue that it can be a means for 'ensuring Sustainable Development and Rural Livelihood'. The authors attempt to highlight how the charm of Himalayas attracts thousands of travellers from faraway places. They also point out how tourist's orientation is shifting to village tourism due to the natural, primordial and virginal ambient of the places. The area of study chosen to prove their case was Takdah-Teesta, which according to them is an unexplored tourism destination having rich sustainable tourism prospects.

'The *'Haat'* of Rural Economy' by Shomik Saha, which comes next, takes on the 'rural India's Traditional Supermarkets' by highlighting the role *Haats* have played in Indian hinterlands from time immemorial, a role especially of being a facilitator for socio-economic interactions. He argues that rural *Haats* are the nerve centre of the rural marketing in India as it is a readymade distribution system which caters to the need of the rural population of India. These *Haats* are generally organized on weekly basis and play an important role in the economy of India. The author hints at the challenges and the possibilities for the *haats*, in this era of retail boom. Rashik Chettri, in his article which follows, gives a management perspective to what is a very traditional wisdom of proverbs *Ukhaan* among all peoples, but in his case, the Nepali speaking Gorkha community spread within and outside India. The author attempts to re-emphasize how folklore proverbs, '*Ukhaan*' still heavily influence the day-to-day lives of the Gorkhas/Nepalis. He feels that the society may be better managed if *Ukhaans* are applied in daily life. The paper discusses the origin and literal/metaphoric meanings of some of the *Ukhaans* and how an insightful study/reading of these in the modern sense and searching for the managerial contexts into which their application can be exported could enhance not only the management processes and systems but also their teaching.

'The relevance of Total Quality Management for Indian companies' by Surya Narayan Ray, the seventh article, summarizes an elaborate study undertaken by the author. In the post-liberalisation era, Indian companies have come of age, withstood the global competition, and are almost at par with the best in the world from a quality perspective. India has the largest number of companies, outside of Japan, that have been recognised for excellence. In the last decade, Indian manufacturing companies have imbibed world-class practices in management. Some findings from the original

research conducted by the author are shared within the perspective of TQM and its applicability for Contextual Management. The next article by Debayan Nandi looks at the options that 'e-Recruiting' provides as 'the Latest Gizmo of Employee Hiring' is becoming popular in India. The paper attempts to highlight how internet recruiting tools are definitely an advancement over the traditional recruiting tools. The pros and cons of e-recruitment practices have been discussed. Qualitative and quantitative research suggests e-recruitment processes can be improved to be cost efficient and be integrated to the strategic H.R. tools.

The paper on Cyber security Management by Dhirodatta Subba focuses on the need to protect the information system of a nation. Due to the complex nature of cyber space, he argues that it requires a multi-faceted approach involving a close partnership between the Government, Industry and Academia, for ensuring the security of information systems and assets of the country. The 'Challenges of Family Businesses in India' by Sandeep Singh, coming next, focuses on the challenges faced by the family-owned business houses in India in their day to day business operations. Further, he suggests how these problems can, and should be addressed, as their contribution to Indian economy is significant. These businesses play an important role in improving the living standards of the people of India. However, the opening up of Indian economy has seriously jolted the status of these businesses and is in some cases, almost threatening their very existence.

The second last article entitled 'Influence of Western Sports on Indigenous Games of India' by Laden Lepcha attempts to focus on the indigenous games that originated and are still popular in India. Sport is an important arena where national integration, pride, cultural homogeneity as well as supremacy are often visibly displayed, and India is no different. The author attempts to compare the games of the international arena with that of India. It is due to the negligence of the Government that the indigenous games of India are not gaining the importance and popularity it deserves is a case the author attempts to make besides suggesting that the prestige and popularity can be revived if only the games can be understood and promoted properly beginning with schools and colleges.

The last article of the volume entitled 'Indigenous Farming: Sustainable Ecosystem in Darjeeling' by Simrit Kaur is an outline for a proposed study on the indigenous approaches to farming towards sustainability. It is an investigation about the indigenous agricultural practices, their values, beliefs, strengths, and limitations. Further, she makes the case for strengthening the traditional farming practices that can lead to sustainable development and livelihood security in the Darjeeling region.

The twelve selected articles, mostly from among the papers presented at the UGC sponsored national seminar, address in one way or the other two primary concerns that triggered the reflection in the first place: firstly, the need to improvise, innovate, adapt and adopt management styles that are unique, efficient, viable and innovative. Secondly, they presuppose and propose an indigeneity dimension to the project of managing affairs, a concern to be context-sensitive and context specific. While some argue for the indigenous hidden and yet to be highlighted aspects of local traditions for its potential to engage business practices and rewrite theories, others engage in an alternative activity of indigenizing the global, universal or primarily Euro-American based managerial practices and theories. Despite the possibility of contextualizing the universally acclaimed managerial roles, systems and processes, every context in itself calls for discovering its own inherent management potential by the practitioners and participants. The *Salesian Journal* in its fifth year, and as the College brings down the curtains on its Platinum Jubilee celebrations, is itself one such humble attempt.