
Editorial

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Biographical notes: G.D. Sardana is a Mechanical Engineer and has done his PhD from IIT-Delhi in Productivity and Performance. Presently, he is a Professor in Operations Management, and Chairman, Bimtech Center for Management Case Development, at Birla Institute of Management Technology. He has industry experience of 42 years chiefly at BHEL, ABB, and Singer. He is in academic for the last nine years. He has published over 90 papers: three papers have won best paper awards from the Indian Institution of Industrial Engineering. His books include: *Productivity Management* (Narosa, 1998) and *Measurement for Business Excellence* (Narosa, 2009). He has edited 11 books on business cases.

Tojo Thatchenkery is Professor and Director of the Organisation Development and Knowledge Management Programme at the School of Public Policy, George Mason University, Arlington, Virginia. His recent books include *Making the Invisible Visible: Understanding the Leadership Contributions of Asian Minorities in the Workplace* (2011), *Positive Design and Appreciative Construction: From Sustainable Development to Sustainable Value* (2010), *Appreciative Inquiry and Knowledge Management* (2007), and *Appreciative Intelligence: Seeing the Mighty Oak in the Acorn* (Harvard Business Review 2006 Reading List).

In the final diagnosis, it is the human resource which has to deliver the results be it a profit-oriented business organisation or a non-profit, social welfare focused non-government organisation. It much depends on leadership which provides a strategic route, is able to engage the employees, and establishes a positive communication that sets the path to growth and business excellence. It is a motivated, empowered and satisfied workforce that creates competitive advantage. The competencies that an organisation enjoys have roots in capabilities in the group dynamics and skills of individuals. On the other hand, there are visible instances where organisations with advantages of high end technology, state-of-art plant and machinery, scale of production and geographical reach

could not become 'excellent,' achieve growth, and create sustainability because of its failure to create a desirable level of employee-management relations.

HRD management is multi-dimensional and multi-faceted. It is present in all traditional functional areas of management controls. Recruitment, training, placement of right employee at right place, appraisal system, rewards and punishment have been a part of the organisation – management concepts since ages. Incentives as instrument to boost production or sales have been tried out right from the early days of industrial revolution. Later developments in HRD management ushered in concepts of understanding worker rights, humanisation of work place practices, gender issues, strategic planning of human resources, multi-skills, impact of technology, job rotation, transferability of skills and employee satisfaction in matching skills with proper jobs. HRD management in recent times has added new dimensions. Balance score card stressed performance management and creation of alignment of human skills with the strategic objectives. Innovation, creativity, and new product development have come to be associated more closely with human attributes. Globalisation has created a demand to understand the impact of cultural and cross cultural issues on the workforce. The fast vanishing line separating the back-office and the front office has created a demand of new breed of employees who are efficient both in the soft skills as well as the hard skills. We talk of human resources in terms of human capital.

This issue has papers dedicated to examine such new dimensions and new issues facing the human resource with a basic objective of enhancing the capability and performance of human capability. Appreciative Intelligence® (AI) is one such new instrument increasingly being made use of in various applications. The majority of the papers refer to the application of AI or its derivatives and hence it is appropriate to term the theme of this issue as 'Challenging Our Mental Models for Organisational Excellence'.

This issue carries seven updated and revised papers selected for the journal from 69 papers that were presented at *International Conference on Management Cases 2012*, jointly organised by Birla Institute of Management Technology, Greater Noida, India and School of Public Policy, George Mason University, Arlington, Virginia, USA and held on November 29–30, 2012, at BIMTECH Campus.

Beverly Powell and Tojo Thatchenkery in the first paper of this issue present a case study concerning a geographically detached division of a government funded finance company. The primary organisation processes millions of pay transactions annually. The detached division as a facility is divided into several sections and processes specific payee inquiries. The director had concerns that there was a degradation of employee motivation combined with a decaying level of communication within and between different departments. He believed that this was stemming from a perceived loss of employee trust in the leadership. The director was interested in regaining the trust of his employees. He was interested in exploring how an appreciative sharing of knowledge (ASK) intervention would help uncover trust building factors.

Tero Montonen and Päivi Eriksson point out that not many higher education institutions pay due attention, or succeed in performing their societal duties, including their roles in industrial, regional and national innovation systems. The authors present a case study to show how a practice-oriented model for learning 'innovation practice' was developed and implemented at the business school of the University of Eastern Finland. The article details how university-level business degree teaching can be attuned to learning innovation through experiential learning and real-life projects with companies

and other organisations. The authors point out that the results are encouraging. The understanding of innovation has accelerated when measured by course feedback. The interest of the business students in entrepreneurial action has accelerated within and outside coursework.

Beata Glinka and Tojo Thatchenkery refer that cultural context influences every stage of entrepreneurial process such as the decision to start a new venture, identification of an opportunity, choosing a type of business, and ways of managing it. The study explores how the constructs of cultures might impact attitudes towards entrepreneurship and wealth creation in three very different countries – India, Poland, and the USA. The study assesses the perceptions of MBA and MS students towards entrepreneurship. The authors use qualitative methods of data collection and thematic analysis to bring out underlying and deep rooted assumptions towards business, leadership, and wealth creation. The study concludes that core cultural values impact significantly students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship and business creation.

The retail industry of India accounts for 14% to 15% of the country's GDP with several international key players such as Walmart and IKEA vying to enter the Indian market. Organised retail forms four percent of the retail industry and growing at a pace of 45% to 50% per annum. This industry employs 25 million people and is the second largest employment generator in India after agriculture. Pooja Misra et al. present an exploratory research with objectives to understand and analyse if compensation in terms of financial and non-financial rewards and organisational justice has an impact on turnover intentions and the role of motivation and job satisfaction levels. The study covers retail store operations in the National Capital Region (NCR) of India.

Karla Peters-Van Havel in next paper points out that several geographically dispersed organisations have an opportunity to offer the psychological sense of community as a source of motivation, offering a sense of belonging, trust, mutual influence, connection, and in return receiving an internalised commitment. Her case study of Black Rock City examines the psychological sense of community, identifies communal aspects, and embarks upon an understanding of the intentional and fortuitous aspects of managing and developing a systemic community without physical boundaries. It is a qualitative case study based on in-depth exploratory interviews of self-defined Burners, history, direct observations, an ethnographic study, and primary research. Findings of this study convey 'shared emotional connection' as the most important factor.

Eiman Ibrahim et al. next discuss the community engagement practices of JOC Petroleum, a petroleum company operating in Sudan since 2001. It is a (50:50) joint operating company between Sudapet, a national governmental petroleum company and Petrosedan, an Asian multinational oil company. What makes JOC different from other oil companies in Sudan is that the company operates the blocks on behalf of different partners or shareholders. In 2011, the newly formed Republic of South Sudan declared 'Development and Equitable Sharing of Wealth Guiding Principles' for all its oil and gas investors, through which community development projects are now considered as a legal requirement. Such development has prompted JOC to review its community engagement practices, particularly in terms of its compliance with the present regulatory and societal expectations.

Manosi Chaudhuri and Sakshi Puri in the last paper of this issue present an exploratory study on competency assessment of the retail staff and preparing to launch retail HR processes in top stores of Adidas India. Adidas has high brand name in all

sectors of sports around the globe. Adidas long felt a need to bring about a change in the way they operated through a franchise model in India. Its presence is noted in about more than 250 cities in India. Adidas India has been able to structure and align its products and premises through various processes. One of the most important resources is people, where there is still scope of development. Manosi Chaudhuri and Sakshi Puri use the techniques of in-depth interviewing and observation.

We hope the papers included in the issue have provided new insights as to how human resources can be integrated in the organisation (or society at large) to be creative, innovative and generator of wealth aimed at the growth and the transformation of the organisation. We trust that the case studies will encourage the academics, practitioners and the students of management studies alike to appreciate the concepts and approaches to seek transformation in their organisations.

As editors of a special issue of this volume, we express our sincere thanks to the publishers, Inderscience Enterprises Ltd. and specifically *IJHRDM* Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Mohammed A. Dorgham for providing us the opportunity to edit this issue.