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## Editorial

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**Biographical notes:** G.D. Sardana is a Professor of Operations Management and Chairman of the Center for Development of Management Cases at Birla Institute of Management Technology, Greater Noida, India. He also edits *South Asian Journal* for business and management cases, published and marketed by SAGE Publishing. He carries corporate experience of 40 years followed by ten years in teaching and research. He is a Mechanical Engineer and has received his PhD degree from IIT Delhi in Productivity Management. He has to his credit close to 100 papers and three books: *Productivity Management* (Narosa, 1998) *Productivity Measurement for Business Excellence* (Narosa, 2009) and *Managing World Class Operations* (Bloomsbury, 2014).

Tojo Thatchenkery is a Professor and Director of the Organisation Development and Knowledge Management programme at the School of Policy, Government, and International Affairs, George Mason University, Arlington, Virginia, USA. He is the author of several books and articles on organisational change and social constructionist thinking (<http://www.appreciativeintelligence.com>). He has consulted with many international organisations, including Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, American Red Cross, IBM, Alcatel-Lucent, General Mills, 3M, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and Tata Consulting Services (India). He is a member of the *NTL Institute of Applied Behavior Science* and the *Taos Institute*.

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When it comes to organisational change and transformation, researchers and practitioners have a choice of adopting a highly critical approach in the hope that the showing of the deficits and drawbacks will lead to continuous improvement. Or, they can adopt an alternative perspective of curiosity and wonderment where the focus will be on sorting out what works in the system as opposed to what is broken. The latter approach is based on Appreciative Intelligence® and is an instance of strength-based approaches to organisational change. The positive approaches for organisational transformation shows up in many ways such as organisational redesign, corporate social responsibility, and

socio technical systems interventions. In this special issue, we provide a collage of such approaches.

The first article in the issue is about a generative capacity called Appreciative Intelligence<sup>®</sup> which is the ability to reframe a given situation to recognise the positive possibilities embedded in the situation but not recognisable initially. In 'Appreciative Intelligence<sup>®</sup> in leadership culture transformation: a case study', authors Hanna Lehtimäki, Johanna Kujala, and Tojo Thatchenkery studied an international tyre manufacturer who was facing a highly negative market environment and potential for significant layoffs. The Human Resources and Development Department called in a local university research team, and an organisation development (OD) intervention based on Appreciative Intelligence<sup>®</sup> and appreciative inquiry was setup to foster leadership culture that would support the international growth of the company. In the process, middle management was interviewed and top management discussed the current and future leadership culture. Middle management defined core values upon which various steps were to be taken to put the goals of future leadership culture in practice. The study showed how a difficult situation can be reframed into a positive, future oriented action.

Ilkka Asikainen, Tero Montonen and Hanna Rissanen in the second paper 'Taking the perspective of customers: theory, exercises, experiences and practical recommendations' deliver what is self-evident in the title. They demonstrate the importance of building on customer input for creating products and services. According to them, simple empathy exercises may help companies discover true customer desires. They discuss five empathy exercises and the theoretical foundations behind them. Their empirical analysis showed how the process of empathising or taking the perspective of the customer persona was depicted by the business developers who participated in the exercises. The promise of empathy in innovation is thus immense.

The third paper in this issue uses the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) Analysis for empowerment in South Africa. In 'Using force field analysis to help a South African entrepreneur empower employees' Debora Elam and Kristine Brands explore the power of Appreciative Intelligence<sup>®</sup>-based force field analysis. They point out that corruption and corporate fraud is high in South Africa and requires significant changes to corporate culture to build ethical organisations that focus on employee integrity. In that context, they wanted to work with an entrepreneur in South Africa in order to launch a training program he developed to help address the root cause of South Africa's high employee theft issue. In the seven years since its inception, he has been unsuccessful at selling the completed product and has not generated income. Using unstructured interviews, a company SWOT analysis, and a force field analysis, the researchers collaborated with the entrepreneur to develop an action plan that would help the business owner tackle the fraud and create modest profitability.

Esa Hiltunen in 'Unlocking the potential of retail department managers: dilemma of exploitation and exploration' explores the dilemma between exploitation and exploration in the work of retail department managers in a Finnish grocery retail unit. According to the author, in previous studies, the exploration dimension has been poorly understood in low status service sector work. This paper shows that in highly efficient retail trade, the focus is on the leveraging of managers' cultural and social capital over the short-run. Long-run work involvement generates 'the sense of work' for balancing dilemmas between exploitation and exploration, but it also prevents the potentials for change and development. Hiltunen points out that retail department manager have autonomy and

freedom in crafting their jobs, but their capabilities to explore and innovate are not fully recognised. Suggestions to remedy the situation are provided.

‘An exploration of objective meaning in transformational synchronicities’ by Cynthia Cavalli brings in a refreshing Jungian psychoanalytic perspective to positive approaches and human potential movement in OD. The concept of synchronicity, Carl Jung’s theory of meaningful coincidence, proposes that meaning exists as an objective phenomenon, in addition to the human activity of making or deriving meaning from life experiences. Cavalli points out that this idea is gaining support from a growing number of scientists who believe that it may reveal how the inner world of subjective experience connects with the outer world of objective observation. Building on research conducted using phenomenological methods to explore meaning as an emergent and complex phenomenon, Cavalli examines the personal stories of synchronicity for nine participants to characterise their experiences in terms of meaning as an objective phenomenon.

The last paper of this special issue is about one of the most socially responsive issues in corporate governance: corporate social responsibility or CSR. In ‘Convergence of corporate governance and corporate social responsibility’ Karen A. Smith Bogart point out that there is growing convergence of corporate governance and corporate social responsibility due to increasing business performance pressures and escalating stakeholder expectations of the firm and board of directors. Her paper explores the experience of seven US public company boards to determine factors that may advance board involvement and impact in corporate social responsibility.

Overall, the papers in this special issue underscore the importance of positive approaches in tackling what is normally thought to be negative issues and themes. By building on what is present as opposed to what is absent, stakeholders can engage with one another in a more generative manner than destructive. The case studies and papers featured here provide ample evidence in that direction. We thank Editor-in-Chief Dr. M.A. Dorgham for giving us this opportunity to guest edit the special issue.