

Editorial

G.D. Sardana*

Birla Institute of Management Technology,
Plot No. 5, Knowledge Park-II,
Greater Noida-201306 (Uttar Pradesh), India
Email: gdsardana@gmail.com
*Corresponding author

Tojo Thatchenkery

School of Policy, Government, and International Affairs,
George Mason University,
Founders Hall 608, 3351 Fairfax Drive, MS 3B1,
Arlington, VA 22201, USA
Email: thatchen@gmu.edu

Biographical notes: G.D. Sardana is currently a Professor of Operations Management at BIMTECH and edits *South Asian Journal for Business and Management Cases* (SAGE Publishers). He has a rich corporate experience of over 40 years having worked in organisations of repute such as BHEL, ABB and Singer at senior positions. He has authored around 100 papers, published in national/international journals. Three of his papers have won best paper awards from Indian Institution of Industrial Engineering. He has published three books: *Productivity Management* (Narosa, 1998), *Productivity Measurement for Business Excellence* (Narosa, 2009) and *Managing World Class Operations* (Bloomsbury, 2014).

Tojo Thatchenkery received his PhD from the Weatherhead School of Management, Case Western Reserve University. He is Professor and Director of the Organisation Development and Knowledge Management program 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).

The third millennium has brought the management of organisations to a complexity never seen before. The world economy is in a state of flux. The technological revolution has picked up unprecedented pace bringing about major changes in product development and process innovation. Whether it is assembly line or big data analytics, competitive advantage hinges on the capabilities of organisations to do what they do more efficiently and effectively than in the past. They have to be in a stage of continuous improvement, introduce innovations, be creative, launch new products, exploit new opportunities, and meet the threats of ever increasing competition. This calls for organisations to be agile,

incorporate flexibility, cut down its product development time, and go all out to win new customers by creating convincing value propositions. The markets of the developed economies have reached near saturation because of zero growth in population. Thanks to the fast changing aspirations of the customers who are globally distributed, consumer demand has shifted to the developing world, necessitating a realignment among global economic powers. Blue chip multinational firms are reengineering and reorganising to focus on products and services that are suited to the new customers aligned with local cultures. Fast food giant McDonalds had for long banned beef and pork in its burgers in India. Over 50% of the pizzas toppings offered by global chains Pizza Hut and Dominos in India are vegetarian variety. Organisational change has never been easy. It asks for human resource to fit in a new role, and reconceptualise human talent management. Work life balance has suddenly become important. Money is not the only motivator anymore. The human talent mix has become truly global. In this ever changing new environment, change is the only constant. Understandably, leveraging human capital has become the key aspect for bringing about organisational change and transformation. This volume provides a sampler of the latest approaches for managing human capital and facilitating organisational change several of the papers explore the application of Appreciative Intelligence® in organisation development and change management.

Ten papers included in this special issue are drawn from papers presented at the *International Conference on Management Cases, 2014* (ICMC 2014), held on December 4–5, 2014 at Birla Institute of Management Technology, Greater Noida, India. ICMC, jointly organised by BIMTECH and School of Policy, Government, and International Affairs, George Mason University. This is a well-known annual conference that attracts academicians, practitioners and researchers from all continents. The papers in this volume are the updated and revised versions incorporating various suggestions that resulted from constructive criticism from the experts while making presentation at the conference.

Ida Parkkinen, Hanna Lehtimäki and Tojo Thatchenkery in the first paper of this volume illustrate how members of an organisation used Appreciative Intelligence® for shaping change in organisations. The organisation faced a need to make changes in the organising and management practices to maintain cost efficiency and to improve leadership culture. The case study shows how appreciative inquiry (AI) and Appreciative Intelligence® approaches support treating organisational change as a process of organisational becoming. The authors discuss the process of change in the context of a Finnish Orthodox Church. The particular strength of this approach is that it pays attention to the involvement of organisational members in the change process and allows for analysing change at all levels of the organisation.

The second paper from Petra Parkkali, Hanna Lehtimäki and Tojo Thatchenkery shows how an Appreciative Intelligence® and AI approaches were applied by the authors in a public sector organisation which had undergone an integration process. The case study depicts a post-merger situation in a public organisation after three governmental units integrated in 2010. First, an AI intervention was conducted to support post-merger management by focusing on the positive potential of the newly formed organisation. Managers and leaders from all three parts of the organisation were invited to meetings to share their own experiences. Follow-up interviews were conducted to collect data that showed how the results of the intervention had been utilised in the organisation.

Kristine Brands and Debora Elam present next another intervention of AI in the context of identifying quality enablers for an online graduate accounting program's

course in a private university. The case study uses a customised AI organisational model to identify and leverage quality enablers. This process consulting-based organisational analysis model examines the organisation's strengths with the objective of building on those strengths. A two-person research team facilitated the study with full-time and affiliate faculty members of the university to identify quality enablers for the graduate online accounting program. The goal was to increase the enrolment in the online graduate accounting programs by improving the programs' quality and to apply this knowledge to other programs in the university.

Sangeeta Shukla and Nimisha Singh next discuss how the global business landscape makes communicating with diverse cultures a necessity. Groups with culturally different customs, traditions and beliefs face difficulties in communicating across national boundaries. The challenge for managers across the world is to make their teams communicate in the same cultural language. This case study presents the communication challenges faced by Mamsys, an IT company based in India, as it does business with clients from different parts of the world. The case also suggests strategies for communicating effectively while respecting cultural differences. The case study highlights that as Mamsys expands its recruiting to other countries and as different cultures mix, cultural intelligence has to be inbuilt in their processes.

In the paper that follows, Outi-Maaria Palo-oja and Marke Kivijärvi address the question through an intensive case study of a two-year commercialisation project in which a university, a few companies, and intermediary organisations worked together to identify business opportunities for academic life science knowledge. The objective of the study is to illustrate the commercialisation process, and to use sense-making analysis to expose how the different parties come to understand commercialisation and their specific roles in the process. The focus of this study is on a two-year, government funded commercialisation project, named Knowledge to Products (KnoPro). The KnoPro project was established for the purposes of further advancing the commercial use of life science research as well as building up business skills within academia.

The next paper authored by Alisa M. Cortez and Owen Hanley Lynch examines the relationship between meaning in work and personal identity using data from 115 men and women between aged 20 to 74 and various educational levels across 20 professions. A mixed-method, dual-team qualitative analysis revealed five broad zones of engagement. These zones of engagement are both descriptive and prescriptive in nature as they capture a moment-in-time interaction between person and work experience and can be used in developmental intervention dialogue toward a different desired experience. The study reveals the dynamic relationship between meaning in work and personal identity, and contributes to scholarship and applied practice by identifying specific identity-work relationships which are open to change and development.

Monique W. Morris in her paper that follows highlights the importance of deep inquiry in the education of delinquent Black girls in the USA. Multiple intersecting factors contribute to the over-representation of Black girls among students who experience exclusionary discipline and other criminalising factors in school. Education is an important rehabilitative factor among girls in trouble with the law; however, there has been little investigation into the practices that interrupt school-to-confinement pathways for Black girls. This article discusses the application of reflexive theory and epistemological considerations that may provide a foundation for the implementation of a

liberative pedagogical model for educating girls who have a history of formal contact with the criminal legal system.

In the next paper, Geeta Rana and Alok Kumar Goel explore learning mechanisms in organisations. The case study describes how top management at Ethan Private Ltd., an Indian design, sales and manufacturing company, decided to adopt a new strategy through organisational learning mechanism to strengthen the vision, purpose, structure, practices and climate of the organisation. The authors point out that over time organisations that have built the learning capability through constant focus on various processes are dynamic in nature and draw on an array of professional skills and personal qualities. The case study provides valuable implications for the practitioners and researchers to better understand the internal stakeholders need and workplace expectations of employees.

Satya Mohan Mishra, H.M. Jha 'Bidyarthi', Mayur A. Dande and Pavan M. Kuchar next discuss Bandhan's headway in quest for financial inclusiveness of India's millions of women through micro-finance. The authors discuss how the founder of 'Bandhan – Togetherness', after experiencing the horrors of poverty, initiated his venture in 2001. With a start up capital of meager Rs. 200,000 raised through cooperation of relatives the aim of 'Bandhan' was to provide loan to the borrowers belonging to the bottom-of-pyramid. The attempt bloomed with passage of time and gained trust. Today, the organisation has 2,016 branches and has lent Rs. 299 billion to 5.5 million customers so far. Bandhan has helped women change their lives by offering small loans. The founder concentrates on woman as he feels that they spend more wisely than men.

The last paper in this volume is from Kaarlo Paloniemi and Ville-Veikko Piispanen who debate how entrepreneurs utilise strategic entrepreneurship in business development. The case study focuses on entrepreneurship and the constructs of opportunity that drive opportunity-seeking actions in strategic entrepreneurship. The authors present their own experiences of a longitudinal multiple-case study of the growth-oriented business development process of two Finnish ICT entrepreneurs in the SME sector. The findings of the case study indicate that if an opportunity is looked at through alternative theoretical perspectives rather than utilising opportunity based on the dominant entrepreneurship literature definition, it can open new avenues for opportunity's role in growth-oriented business development. Thus, the business is affected the way entrepreneurs utilise opportunity-seeking actions.

The ten papers describe the Appreciative Intelligence[®]-based approaches that were effectively utilised for organisational transformation. The change agents in all these instances thought outside the box and acted entrepreneurially to achieve success. The case studies show the power of language in creating and reframing realities. They show with good conviction that stakeholders have the choice to engage in a deficit conversation or generative conversation. The default is the former. The papers show how the latter can happen with good mindfulness and intentionality. The result is the emergence of organisations where participants can experience meaningful work life balance and purpose in work. We hope that the readers would find that the ideas and approaches presented here are applicable to their work, professional, and personal environments. We thank Editor-in Chief, Dr. Mohammed A. Dorgham for giving us the opportunity to guest edit this special issue.