
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Shilpa Surana Jain is presently working as an Adjunct Lecturer at the Murdoch University Dubai. Prior to joining Murdoch, she was working as an Assistant Professor at the TERI University, New Delhi, India. She was awarded her PhD in Business Management (Organisational Behaviour) from the Institute of Management, Nirma University, Ahmedabad, India. Prior to that, she pursued her Masters in Management Studies with specialisation in HR and Bachelor in Psychology, both from the Mumbai University, India. She had a short stint as a Lecturer at the Birla Institute of Management Technology, Greater Noida, India. Her research interests are job burnout, workplace spirituality and leadership. She has a number of publications to her credit in international and national journals and conferences. She has also obtained 'Diplome Initial De Langue Française' from the French Ministry of National Education in 2008.

Anup K. Singh is an eminent academician and thought leader. He is currently the 'Director General' (Vice Chancellor) at the Nirma University. He received his PhD from the University of Allahabad and Post-Doctoral Fellowship from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He was a Visiting Scholar at the J.L. Kellogg Graduate School of Business Administration, North-western University, Evanston. He has held various top management/administrative positions in organisations of repute. He has many publications to his credit comprising books, research papers in international and national journals, case studies, book chapters in addition to paper presentations at international level. He is a recipient of various awards for his teaching and learning excellence.

Sustainability has been a subject of thought, debate, reflection, and research for a long time now. Managing the triple bottom line, i.e., profits, people and planet has become paramount in the wake of depleting resources and environmental concerns all over the world. While concern has been expressed towards the sustainability of scarce natural and environmental resources, there has been very little attempt to explore the social aspect of

sustainability of critical human resources. Firstly, this refers to the problem of scarcity of duly qualified and motivated human resources to meet the future demand for these resources. Secondly, it refers to unintended outcomes of business practices for human resources, human resource management and the society at large. For example, critical human resources are being consumed and exploited, as reflected by increased work-related stress, blurring of work-family life, health problems, burnout or lack of employability.

This is a far cry from the rhetoric of *human resource development*. It also assumes added significance given the well-established view that human resources are the most important source of competitive advantage for organisations. The failure to ensure sustainability of critical human resources would lead to loss of strategic ability, differentiation and innovation. Thereby, it is of paramount importance that we explore the issue of sustainability of human resources so as to be better prepared to deal with the challenges of tomorrow. This special issue of *The International Journal of Intelligent Enterprises* is a compilation of interesting and thought provoking research papers that contribute in developing an exciting new research agenda geared towards the understanding and analysis of the sustainability issue from the perspective of critical human resources in organisations. This volume consists of seven papers. Brief description of each paper is as follows.

The first paper 'Locating sustainable leadership within a typology of leadership in business' by E. Brandt explores a crucial element that drives sustainability which is the leadership of an organisation. The initiative for sustainability often comes from the top of an organisation with business leaders committing their organisations to corporate sustainability with a view to preserving social, environmental and economic capital. However, advancing sustainability is easier said than done. Advancing the sustainability agenda requires leaders to engage in transformational change, challenge organisational paradigms, and introduce sustainable values into their organisations. Thus, leadership is a critical driver of sustainability. Despite a considerable body of research on leadership in business, there is limited work to date on understanding the relationship between leadership and corporate sustainability. This conceptual paper begins to address this gap by exploring the concept of sustainable leadership. It proposes four types of leaders and the business context in which those leaders may be appropriate. This paper aims to locate sustainable leadership within a leadership typology which compares leadership approach with environmental beliefs. This creates a conceptual framework which may be used to better understand how leadership influences corporate sustainability within organisations.

The second paper 'Linking CSR and sustainability with organisational culture, values and business ethics – a qualitative analysis of Indian IT companies' by S. Pandey and P. Rishi proposes the idea that corporate social responsibility (CSR) is the need of the hour given the ethical responsibility of organisations. However, CSR does not work in isolation; there are many associated variables that influence CSR and sustainability like culture, values and business ethics. The paper discusses the same in the context of IT sector in India which has been a champion in heralding activities directed towards a social cause. Top ten IT companies of India engaged in some or the other CSR activities were selected for a qualitative study that analysed sustainability reports, annual reports, ethical code of conduct, CSR policy and other information as per web sites. A differential range of CSR initiatives in quantity as well as quality was found with a strong positive linkage between associated variables like culture, values and ethics. Companies differed in their orientation and involvement towards CSR in line with different sets of values and

culture. Findings indicated a need for more concentrated efforts on the part of IT companies to fulfil the requirements of recent CSR clause of companies act in India on one hand and to be visible on global CSR map on the other. In all, the paper pointed to the important role of culture, values and business ethics as influencing CSR and sustainability.

A question that often arises is how sustainability can be embedded within an organisation. The third paper in this issue 'Revolutionary learning – appreciative inquiry in action' by R. Nandi aptly responds to this need by presenting the application of appreciative inquiry as an approach to organisational change and sustainability of institutional goals. A case-based approach is used demonstrating the use of the 4D cycle in appreciative inquiry to weave in sustainability within an institution. The idea is to think appreciatively to facilitate development and manage change. Using a generative approach, the educational institute is able to create an organisational design that intends to meet the goals of the institution.

All talk of sustainability would be redundant if organisations are unable to communicate the sustainability agenda to stakeholders. The fourth paper 'An assessment of non-verbal communication skills of business school campus recruits in India: Implications for stakeholder communication' by D. Verma and N. Pande discusses how communication plays a strategic role in the advancement of the sustainability agenda. In the present corporate world where there is an escalated focus on sustainability programs and the emergent responsibility of organisations to fulfil triple bottom line, effective communication has come to play an even more significant role. During various communication exercises, both internal and external, with a variety of stakeholders, executives have to be skilled enough to persuasively communicate the sustainability initiatives of organisation for not only building trust and gaining acceptance but also for enhancing the credibility and image of the organisation. Research has established that non-verbal communication is as significant as verbal communication in any change initiative. Further, it has also been seen that in a situation of sensitive conflict resolution, the significance of non-verbal communication increases as the persuader has to continuously track and decipher the body clues, cues and gestures and accordingly keep refining the message. As the appropriate usage and understanding of non-verbal communication is realised by all, business schools today have the added responsibility of developing skilled management graduates ready to shoulder the responsibility of strategic communicators of change. This paper aims to assess the non-verbal communication skills of business school graduates in India according to the expectations of the corporates. Study was conducted and interpretations were made through both quantitative and qualitative analysis to identify if there is any gap in the corporate expectations and non-verbal communications skills of management graduates recruited through campus selection.

Whilst economic and environmental aspects of sustainability have been much focused on, the social aspects of sustainability relating to the critical human resources have been sidelined. The fifth paper in this issue 'Rethinking human resource: making of parental policy in India' by A. Singh and T. Shukla rightly addresses this gap in our thinking by exploring how the sustainability of human resources is linked with several social issues. To maintain and sustain a motivated workforce, one of the major issues which need to be explored is work-family life and the policies thereof, one such being parental policy in organisations. In emerging economy like India, it is important to implement an

organisation support mechanism pertaining to parental policy issues. A preliminary investigation has been undertaken to identify the main factors that impact parental policy and its ramifications among white collar employees across corporates in India. The study is exploratory and analytical; it seeks to measure what employees working in the corporate, public and private sector think and desire. The paper attempts to identify the factors that can provide direction for rethinking HR in the context of parental policy issues.

The sixth paper in this issue titled 'Managing the IT millennials – HR imperatives and interventions' by H. Shah and A.K. Singh focuses on another social issue relating to the significant human resources that of managing 'the millennials', i.e., (Generation Y or Gen Y) in India. The millennials is a distinct and unique working group being highly ambitious, optimistic and having extremely clear sense of where they are headed. In India, for next 30 years, Gen Y will be the largest percentage of employed workforce as approx. half of Indian population is below the age of 25. The skills and competencies of Gen Y are crucial if Indian economy needs to move up the value chain. Millennials bring newer perspectives and challenges at the workplace with their new ways of contemplating work which are significantly different as their career aspirations, values, and motivators are quite different as compared to other generations at workplace. Companies must decide newer and effective ways to manage millennials to actively engage them. This paper analyses the career aspirations and motivational factors for millennials who have been employed in IT sector in India. The primary data have been collected from Gen Y IT employees using questionnaire survey. Also, four rounds of focused group discussions (FGDs) were conducted, generating further insights into their aspirations, motivators and engagement drivers. Based on the analysis, different HR interventions have been proposed to attract, motivate and engage millennials continuously.

The last paper in this special issue provides a roadmap for the future with the call to develop a holistic perspective of sustainability by linking it with spirituality. This paper 'Sustainability from the lenses of spirituality: a new perspective' by K. Gupta, R. Agrawal and V. Sharma presents a new way of looking at sustainability by proposing spirituality as a concept that can be implemented in sustainable development. Academicians and researchers are largely investigating different dimensions and factors associated with sustainable development to understand the concept better, which may aid in striking a path towards a better, clean, healthy and sustainable future for the present as well as the coming generations. The efforts to categorise sustainability into the quadrants of economy, environment and society have brought about a great concern and response in the masses leading to green manufacturing processes, green products and marketing, ecological concern, social sustainability, etc. According to the authors, the holistic approach to sustainability is still missing where the concern is limited to individual choices and decisions to adopt the sustainability notion creating a huge gap in the movement leading to ineffectiveness of the whole drive. An awakened consciousness leading to spirituality can play a magnificently important role in creating the sensitivity and self-responsibility in augmenting, aiding and enhancing the sustainability movement holistically. Qualitative research methodology has been adopted to study the role of spirituality in the present mode of development. In-depth interviews of various senior academicians from premier institutes in India were conducted to explore the issue of how spirituality as a concept can be implemented in sustainable development. The findings suggest that present development is lopsided in the absence of the concept of spirituality

giving rise to various problems and crisis questioning sustainability. Spirituality should be developed in individuals through role models, education and society to create a more awakened and responsible society.

We are thankful to the participating authors and their submitted papers; we believe that this special issue in the field of *sustainability and human resources* provides the community of academic researchers and practitioners a detailed perspective relating to drivers of sustainability such as leadership and culture, values and business ethics; certain approaches to embed sustainability within an organisation such as appreciative inquiry and how communication plays a strategic role in sustainability; the social aspects of sustainability relating to the critical human resources like parental policy and managing millennials and lastly a roadmap for the future that looks at sustainability from the lenses of spirituality and thus provides a holistic approach to sustainability.

We are thankful to the reviewers for their valuable and timely feedback which improved the quality of this special issue immensely. Lastly, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Editor-in-Chief of *The International Journal of Intelligent Enterprises*, Dr. Vipul Jain for providing us an opportunity to offer a special issue in his journal. Without his continuous support and cooperation the successful completion of this special issue would not have been possible.