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Glimpses of Indian Heritage and Culture

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1. The Uniqueness of India

Indian Heritage (IH) is what we, of the present generation, have inherited from our past - ancient thought and wisdom, philosophy and religions, customs and traditions, culture and values, etc. IH is unique in various ways, a broad understanding of which will be relevant and useful in our daily life of transactions and relationships.

India is one of the 49 civilizations, which existed prior to the Christian Era, perhaps the oldest, with an unbroken continuity of 5000 years. Kaliyuga is believed to have begun in 3102 BC, the day Sri Krishna left his mortal body. The seers at that time had given an indication of the shape of things to come, some of which have been proved right. We see around us so much of crime and violence, corruption and conflicts, cruelty and insensitiveness, selfishness and exploitation, inequality and injustice, and a hundred other ills afflicting the modern society. How to wade through these samsaras, with a reasonable amount of happiness, is a complex problem confronting all of us. An appreciation of IH may help.

The other 48 civilizations in Greece, Rome, Egypt etc. are dead and gone, leaving behind only ruins of archeological curiosity and tourist interest. Rome has only the Collesium; Greece the Acropolis and Parthenon and Egypt the Pyramids. But in India, what was in vogue 4000 years ago still prevails in religiosity, festivals, music, dance, respect for elders, sanctity of marriage, rituals, vegetarianism, etc. Therefore, there is something unique about India, which made it possible for her to withstand 69 invasions, 1000 years of foreign rule and onslaught of crude culture.

The need for a glimpse of IH has arisen because Indians are losing their moorings due to the ill-effects of modernization and industrialization, wrong interpretation of secularism, crime and violence in the celluloid and electronic media corrupting the mind in the name of entertainment, rising consumerism and conflicts, and so on. We cannot individually do anything to change the present trends in the environment. But we should insulate ourselves from negative forces and strengthen ourselves with good thoughts. The universal prayers in India are:

- "Let noble thoughts come from every side,
  Lead me from
- Ignorance to enlightenment
- Darkness to light
- Death to immortality"

The potential nature of mankind is divine. We should try to experience it in this life. The article may help in this spiritual and cultural journey.

2. The Secular and the Sacred

We have just entered the new millennium. The last century was momentous in the history of mankind. Industrialization made rapid strides. Spectacular developments in Science and Technology, hitherto unimagined by man, showed their tremendous power,

and may change the course of life on the planet. Albert Einstein showed the energy in the atoms, which lead to the development of the atom bomb, which was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The five major Powers have stockpiled thousands of atom and hydrogen bombs, which can kill the world population of man and animal many times over. Man has gone to the moon and is now exploring the other planets in the universe, using satellites. Computers and Information Technology have revolutionized global communication. The agriculture age prevailed for thousands of years, the industrial age for two centuries and the new era, termed as the information age, has begun.

In spite of rapid developments in technology, there is apprehension regarding the future of mankind. Social scientists have not still found solution to the major ills affecting mankind. One billion people, mostly in the industrialised advanced countries, are enjoying abundant wealth and luxury, while one billion people in poor countries are living in poverty and privation. Inequalities and injustice, crime and violence, deceit and corruption, exploitation of women and children, depletion of forests and bio-diversity, pollution of environment, cruelty to animal species, communal and racial conflicts, etc. are increasing every where. There is no sign of abatement, though conventional measures have been launched by national governments and the UN system.

Our ancient sages had foreseen such trends in degeneration of public life and decay in morals. They have suggested many ways by which man can find solace even in this environment.

IH is an integration of the thought and wisdom, theories and postulations, beliefs and faith, philosophy and spirituality, culture and values, principles and practices, customs and traditions of the four major religions, born in India, Hinduism from (3000 BC), Buddhism and Jainism (from 500 BC) and Sikhism (from 1500 AD). IH has also been influenced by Christianity, which came to India in 50 AD before it went to Europe, with its ideals of love, service and sacrifice. Islam came with conquerors, who ruled India for 800 years. Sufism, which is the mystical side of Islam, has found acceptance amongst liberated scholars Jews and Parsis, driven out of their land home, were given refuge in India. Thus eight out of 12 world religions are coexisting, forming India's plural culture. The British rule for 200 years opened the doors to the western world, which enabled mutual understanding of the philosophy of the East and West, and ushered in the concept of secularism in Government, education and business.

Every country has a unique genius, and India's is religiosity and spirituality, where the secular and sacred are integrated in the personal lives of individuals. India has adopted secularism, where the State does not make any discrimination among religions. But IH believes that India's spiritual concepts, if integrated into personal and professional lives, would bring happiness to individuals and peace in society. However, only such of those ideas and ideals, which are relevant to modern life and which do not create conflicts, would be proposed for adoption whereby even inter - religious harmony can be fostered.

3. A Way of Life

One unique feature of Indian Heritage is its diversity. India's present population of one billion people is composed of 820 million Hindus, 126 m Muslims, 23 m Christians, 20 m Sikhs, 8 m Buddhists, 4 m Jains and 1 m others. One major difference is that Hinduism is not based on a single prophet or book. But it is the revelations of hundreds of Sages, Seers, Saints and evolved souls, who took birth in every century from 3000 BC till now. Other religions are based on Prophets and their teachings, such as Moses, Buddha, Mahavira, Zarathustra, Jesus, Mohammed and Guru Nanak. In fact, Hinduism is not strictly a religion, but a view and a way of life. The word Hindu itself was given by Persians, who used to call the people on the eastern side of the Sindhu (Indus) River as Sindhus, which got changed to Hindus. The real name is *Sanathana Dharma,* that is, Eternal Values Without condemning any sect. Hinduism assimilated prevailing concepts and cultures, becoming more a federation of philosophies, religions, customs, beliefs and practices. Thus one finds the most abstract and profound concepts of God and creation at one end, and primitive beliefs and obnoxious practices at the other.

Christianity has the largest following in the world with 2400 m spread over 100 countries, while Islam has 1200

m in 60, Buddhism 500 m in 10 countries. These religions through conversions have spread to many countries. But Hinduism, which does not convert, is prevalent mainly in India and the tiny kingdom Nepal of 10 m people. But Hindu culture has spread to Thailand, Indo-Chinese countries and Indonesia, a predominantly Muslim country, with a small Hindu population in the Bali Island. About 6 m Hindus have settled in various parts of the world Burma, Singapore, Srilanka and West Africa and the Caribbean islands.

An outstanding characteristic of IH is its openness, universality and all inclusiveness, Rig-Veda, the oldest scripture of IH, declared, "Let noble thoughts come from every side. For large hearted persons, the whole world is one family. God is one, though called by different names and sages and prophets. Like water from the sky falling on earth takes different routes through rivers and streams, they all ultimately reach and merge with the ocean, all prostrations to God, whatever be the name or form, reach the same God".

Another characteristic of IH is that the four religions born in India believe in reincarnation and transmigration of souls, which means that the soul is immortal with no birth or death and that it takes on new bodies when one body is dead. This soul is known by various names as jiva, atman, spirit, divinity etc. The Advaitha philosophy postulates that the individual soul (Atman) is identical with the universal cosmic soul (Paramatman), The Dualistic philosophy believes that the universal soul, or God, is different from individual souls, which is a feature common to the three Semitic religions. Buddha never postulated a God or soul, though Buddhists believe in reincarnation. Buddhism and Jainism are in a sense atheistic, though followers treat their founders as Gods. Hindus also accept Buddha and Mahaveera as part of their God system, as divine incarnations.

Hinduism states that man is potentially divine and that man can realize his divinity in this life itself, if he leads a spiritual life. For this, various paths are devotion, knowledge, yoga and meditation, or desireless action in the name of God, or a combination of these four paths.

4. The Four Yogas

An unique feature of the teachings of IH is that spirituality is integrated into the secular life of work, transactions and relationships. Every thought, word and deed are considered as a spiritual endeavour. In this concept, the ultimate aim of man is conceptualised as realising his basic nature as divinity. This pursuit of realising God in this life itself can be accomplished by following the prescribed four paths, namely, knowledge, yoga, devotion and work, or by adopting a combination of these paths in varying proportions. One cannot only progress in the spiritual journey, but also prosper in this materialistic world with happiness and peace.

The path of knowledge, that is *Jnana Yoga,* is the most difficult, rarely feasible even for one in a million. Since most mankind is involved in work for earning a livelihood, IH prescribes *Karma Yoga,* where one is to engage in work or profession or business, without being obsessed with the fruits of one's action, that is 'desire less action or *Nishkamakarma'.*

One can be highly committed and dedicated in performing action, but results may not be as per our expectations, that is, it could be positive or negative. Anxiety and tension about results may even affect the quality of our actions. Religious people can dedicate the work to God and act as instruments of God. Others can do work in the name, and as a Trustee, of the society. Acting with such an attitude, in a spirit of surrender to God and leaving the result to Him, enables one to be released from tension and bondage. Whatever be the result, favourable or unfavourable, can then be accepted as prasada, i.e. as God's grace nevertheless.

The fourth path is known as Rajayoga, which consists of Yoga practices and meditation. In order to adopt these three paths, it is highly useful to adopt the *Bhakthi Marga,* that is devotion to God. This path is the most popular and relatively easy. Man loves himself. If one can transform this love to God, he gets empowered and inspired by God-consciousness. This approach of love and surrender to God is also adopted in Christianity and Islam. In India, most people follow the *Bhakthi Marga,* which is evident in the Indian scene - hundreds of temples and pilgrim

centres as well as large number of religious festivals, which are celebrated with devotional fervour. Most classical music and dance evolve in devotional themes. Prayer takes innumerable forms as *Bhajan, Keerthan, Pooja, Abisheka, Padasevanam,* singing the glory of God, parades and processions, dance to propitiate deities, religious baths in holy rivers and lakes, rituals, fasting, silence, etc.

Principles of these four paths, with different emphasis depending on one's aptitude and inclination, are described beautifully in the Bhagavad Gita, which is the essence of Hindu scriptures.

5. Outer Cover, Inner Core

IH advocates a spiritual approach to life, work, transactions and relationships not only amongst fellowmen, but also in man's outlook towards animals and nature. The concept is that the secular and sacred, materialism and idealism, philosophy and spirituality, ethics and morals should be integrated, forming a rope of different strands.

Religion is the outer cover and spirituality is the inner core. Typically, religion is based on prophets, such as Jesus and Mohammed, and their teachings contained in holy books, such as the Bible and Koran. Religions have organisations, hierarchy, wealth, doctrines, and faith in the divinity of the founders, rules for admittance and ex-communication, claims of superiority over other religions, exclusiveness, etc.

All religions have a set of ethics and morals, rules of conduct, do's and don'ts, etc., such as Ten Commandments, Codes of Conduct of Buddha, Sermons of the Mount, etc. Generally, a great deal is common amongst religions, though emphasis may be different. Unlike all these religions, Hinduism is distinct and unique. It has no founder, organisation or a single book. Hinduism derives its authority from the four Vedas - Rig, Yajur, Sama and Adharva Vedas. Each Veda has four parts. The first three parts consist of hymns in praise of nature and gods and rituals. The last part is called the Vedanta, meaning knowledge, which consists of Upanishads. About 108 Upanishads are extant now, out of which 12 are popular, namely Aitareya, Brhadaranyaka, Chandogya, Isavasya, Kaivalya, Katha, Kena, Mandukya, Mundaka, Prasna, Svetasvatara and Taittiriya.

The gist of the Upanishads has been summarised in Brahmasutras, a set of aphorism, where profound thoughts are expressed in a few words. The quintessence of all the Vedas is in the Bhagavad Gita, which is the scripture of Hindus, comparable to the Bible of Christians and Koran of Muslims.

The gist of Upanishads and Brahmasutras are in Bhagavad Gita; the three together can be termed as Sanathana Dharma or Eternal values. Since these are abstract theories and postulations, beyond the comprehension of ordinary people, the principles contained in them are given in a story form in the two Itihasas - Ramayana and Mahabharata - as well as 18 Puranas, each containing 50,000 to 100,000 slokas.

In addition, Hindu scriptures include the Manusmrithi (Law of Manu), Kautilya Sastra (Law of State Craft), Natya Sastra (Dance), Gandharva Sastra (Music), Ayurveda (Health), Dhanur Sastra (Warfare), Jyothi Sastra (Astronomy and Astrology).

Thus IH contains one million slokas of profound wisdom of hundreds of saints and sages, dealing with all aspects of life.

6. Seeing and Experiencing

The four India born religions (IRs) are Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism, in which many aspects are common. The other two prominent religions of foreign origin are Christianity and Islam, which belong to the Semitic group (SRs), which includes Judaism as well. Followers of Zoroastrianism (Parsees) are largely in India, which has elements drawn from IR and SR. Islamic conquerors drove away Parsees from Persia (Iran), who took refuge in India, as Jews did earlier.

Though there is a great deal of similarity in ethics and morals in these eight religions, the IRs and SRs differ substantially in philosophy, relationship between Man and God and attitude towards animals and nature as well as concepts on creation, cosmology, good versus evil, goals of life, etc. SRs can be considered as exclusive, while Hinduism is inclusive, open to other thoughts and

accepts all religions as true, as different paths towards the same Godhood.

SRs have all along been in conflict with science, whose discoveries have shown that some of their concepts are factually wrong. Many Scientists were persecuted for their views and findings, which contradicted Biblical concepts. But Hinduism always welcomed science. With every scientific discovery, concepts given in Hindu scriptures are being proved right. Albert Einstein, the greatest scientist of the 20th century, has declared that religion without science is blind, and science without religion is lame. Hindu sages had speculated on the origin of the universe, concepts of relativity, age of the universe, speed of light, movement of planets, etc., - all of which are based on their intuition as they were made without the help of microscopes and telescopes.

Another point of difference is that SRs depend a great deal on the historicity and the divinity of their prophets. Hinduism does not depend on any prophet. Hundreds of sages and saints from prehistoric times till the present day have given their views based on their revelation. In every century, such evolved souls were born in all parts of India. Their theories, philosophical concepts, speculations and postulations have been verified by actual experience, and do not rely on mere faith or doctrine. In fact, Hindu philosophy is based on *Darshana* and *Anubhava,* seeing and experiencing. Sri Ramakrishna told Swami Vivekananda that he has seen God and that Vivekananda also could see Him, if he had adequate yearning.

In the case of SRs, if incidents in the life of their prophets are proved to be historically wrong, faith in their teachings will be shaken. However, in the case of Hinduism, even if it is proved that there was no Rama or Krishna, Vyasa or Valmiki, Vasishta or Viswamitra, and so on, their ideas contained in India's scriptures will stand valid, based on logic and reasoning as well as being and becoming. Hinduism boldly says that man's potential nature is divine, and that he can realise his divinity in this birth itself by leading a pure and noble life, following one or more of the four Yogas - *Karma, Jnana, Bhakthi* and *Raja.* Bhagavad Gita describes these four paths succinctly. Whatever be one's religion, whether belonging to SRs or the other religions in the IR group, reading Bhagavad Gita will be useful in the secular world of work and materialism as well as in the spiritual journey to realise one's divinity.

7. Many Forms of God

Ethics and morals are more or less the same in all the eight popular religions existing in India - three Semitic religions, namely Judaism, Christianity and Islam; Zoroastrianism; and four religions born in India, namely Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. Devotion or *Bhakthi* is the common feature of all the religions. There is no God other than their prophets in the case of Jainism (Mahavira) and Buddhism (Buddha). Followers of all religions seek God's help when they are in distress and plead for material wealth, blessings and various kinds of services. Hindus also approach God as *Jijnasu* - those who are inquisitive and eager to know about God, and *Jnani* - those who already know God's nature and adore Him.

Most religions consider God and man as separate, same as the *Dvaitha* concept of Madhwacharya. Hinduism postulates two other concepts of God, namely *Visishta-dvaita* of Ramanujacharya where man is part of God, as well as *Advaita* of Shankaracharya where man and God are the same. Though most Hindus accept Shankaracharya's concept in principle, in practice, they also consider God as separate and praise Him and seek favours. In a way, Advaita is implicit in Jesus's teachings also. "Kingdom of God is within you. God in heaven, you and me are the same".

Another unique Hindu concept is that God is *Nirguna,* that is, with no name, form or attribute. In another concept of *Saguna,* God is conceptualised in several manifested forms with names, forms and attributes. It is difficult for the large majority of people to visualise God as formless, and hence the rationale for a *Saguna* form which is easily comprehendable.

Further, Hinduism projects God in hundreds of forms, and gives freedom to devotees to approach Him in any form he likes as *Ishtadevata.* Thus we have Siva, Vishnu, Sakthi as well as Ganapathi, Subramanyan, Hanuman, Durga, Mahalakshmi, Saraswathi, Parvathi

and hundreds of deities with different names and forms, which may appear crude to non-Hindus. But Hindus sincerely approach their favourite Gods on whom they place their faith with heart and soul. They love God with different attitudes as - servant, student, friend and lover, depending on their temperament.

India has hundreds of temples for different presiding deities. Other deities are also given a place in the same temple. But generally, temples of Vaishnava cult have only *Vaishnavite* Gods and Goddesses. Further, some Gods are known by more than one thousand names.

Thus *Vishnu Sahasranama* and *Lalitha Sahasranama* contain one thousand names for Vishnu and Lalitha. Ardent devotees recite these names with great devotional fervour. The objective is to help devotees to imbibe attributes and values denoted by these names. All these concepts and practices are to help man to progress in the spiritual path.

Hindu temples, festivals, *Acharas* and *Samskara* provide great variety, colour and pageantry, which are attractive to enable devotees to approach God along lines they are inclined. Most devotees pray to all Gods and Goddesses without any discrimination. To rationalists, such approaches may look absurd. But devotees consider these as effective aids for increasing the intensity of devotion and dedication.

8. Spiritual Framework

Hinduism postulates that man is potentially divine, a revolutionary concept, which is not easily comprehendable. Hinduism further declares that the primary goal of a human birth is to realize this divinity in this life itself, and not in heaven or elsewhere after death.

In order to achieve this profound goal, perhaps after hundreds of birth cycles, Hinduism proposes that the approach to the secular world of work, entertainment, transactions and relationship ought to be spiritual and religious.

Hindu scriptures have structured all aspects of human activities in a spiritual framework, including birth and death, marriage and family life, bathing and eating, professional work and business, building a house or buying a vehicle, undertaking journeys or meeting persons, music and dance, art and literature, sculpture and architecture, and so on. In medieval Europe, Church and State fought for power and supremacy, which resulted in unimaginable tragedies and persecution. Therefore, the State was separated from the Church and became secular.

The secular approach was extended to human transactions, keeping religion as an affair between man and God. India has adopted this as State policy. Thus, a tradition of hundreds of years was given up.

But, in private life, some people still try to integrate secular work and spiritual effort. Even business is carried out in temple premises on the ground that business should be done in the name of God. The God of wealth is Mahalakshmi herself, who is worshipped at the beginning of the business year.

Education is dedicated to Goddess Saraswathi. Names of persons, companies and restaurants are drawn from Hindu mythology. Pictures of Gods and Goddesses can be seen all over Even machinery, vehicles and equipments are decorated and worshipped. Classical music and dance, art and literature, painting and sculpture all are on devotional themes. The idea is to remember God's names all the time.

Hindu saints and sages were not only philosophers but also poets too. They composed the two Itihasas and 18 Puranas in poetry form of one million stanzas.

9. Law and Karma

In the secular world of materialistic values, the twelve major religions of the world are trying to inculcate Ethics and Morals in transactions and relationships. Inspite of the tremendous potential to bring about peace and harmony, what we see around is rising inequality and inequity, partisanship and parochialism, injustice and exploitation, crime and violence, poverty and disease, brutalisation of nature and animals, greed and selfishness, physical and mental pain. Buddha declared 2500 years ago that life is full of suffering. The varied

prescriptions given by the major world religions have not been able to reduce suffering or make man more humane and noble.

Meanwhile, enigmas and mysteries puzzle even wise men. Why are one billion people allowed to indulge in conspicuous consumption and waste, when another billion are wallowing in poverty and privation?

Why do virtuous people suffer, while the wicked enjoy luxury and power? Why is the system so cruel and insensitive to just causes and good people? Money and mafia power dominate the society, misusing the freedom given by democracy and exploiting innocent and helpless masses (as in India). Why such contradictions?

Why thousands of children are born blind or paralysed? What have they done in this life to deserve such life long punishment? Why are a few thousands born wealthy, while many millions are born poor destined for life long suffering? Corrupt politicians and criminals get away with murder, while the meek and law abiding are harassed by the establishment. Who is responsible for such widespread injustice and suffering? All religions affirm with great confidence that God is all merciful, loving and just. Therefore, he cannot possibly be responsible for such contradictions. Religious people pray to God for curing disease and helping in distress. While a few hundreds feel that their call has been answered, a much larger number feel frustrated that God is not listening to their wails and woes.

The four religions born in India declare that God is not responsible for the misery of man and animal and that man himself is responsible for his successes and failures, joy and sorrow, etc. One of the cardinal tenets of Hinduism is the principle of cause and effect, meaning that the present is the effect of the past, and that the present will determine the future. The present is the result of earlier actions in this birth or in previous births. An adjunct to this principle is the concept of reincarnation, where the soul, deemed to be immortal, migrates from body to body in successive cycles of births and deaths, carrying with it past desires and actions, effects of which will be experienced in this and subsequent births. Thus, the Law of Karma provides the rationale behind disparities and discrepancies found in life. Also, it proposes that we should lead an ethical and moral life, observing Dharma and right values, so that we may enjoy a better future.

10. Order and Logic Rule the World

Man is only one among millions of living species. Therefore, to be born as a human being is a rare privilege. How did we become eligible for this unique opportunity? Was God favouring us? Surely, God would not be partisan, as he is considered just. Either he decided so based on our good deeds, which qualified us for this privilege, Or, there is a natural law, which determines automatically who should be born human and who as sub-human beings.

According to the Laws of Karma, Cause, Effect and Reincarnation, we are what we are because of our past acts in the previous birth or births, when we must have done enough virtuous or desirable deeds, qualifying for a human birth. With the same logic, we can presume that we would be born again as a human if we continue living noble virtuous lives - reasonable rationale for observing ethics and morals.

It is argued that such laws do not exist, and that there is no obvious and scientific proof for reincarnation. The scriptures of the religions born in India - Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism - believe in these laws. Many scholars in the West, starting with Plato, believed in reincarnation. Many people recalled their previous lives, which have been verified and documented. Buddha recalled all his previous births; so too Sathya Sai Baba, who has also predicted his next birth in Mandya as Prema Sai. All Hindu saints and sages and the scriptures have declared unequivocally that the soul or Jiva migrates, along with the subtle body, containing desires, tendencies and vasanas. Body only perishes at death, while the soul is immortal, which is neither born nor dies.

These laws explain the enigma of the diversity, inequity, inequality and injustice found in life. Some are born wealthy and healthy, while others are poor and sick from birth. A child is born blind or paralysed. He has done nothing to suffer such a punishment. Good people suffer, while known criminals enjoy life. Competent people fail,

while the stupid are successful. As God is a good person, he would not possibly be responsible for such obvious anomalies.

Some rationalists believe that everything happens by chance, at random, without any reason or cause. But everything in the world obeys a natural law or order. The atom at one end and the vast galaxies observe order in movements. Stars and planets travel as per precise routes and speeds. The earth goes round its own axis, goes around the sun and further travels in space along with the solar system, all at great speeds, without even a minor change in speed or direction.

Plant life observes order. Mango trees produce mangos; A set of pattern for all plants. A minute seed blossoms into giant tree. Minerals and plants life observe absolute order, scientifically predictable. Fire is always hot, while ice is cold. Their nature and behaviour are predictable, observing certain laws. Light, gravity and magnetism obey laws.

Similarly, the animal kingdom also observes order. Dog loves mankind, while scorpions bite. Certain animals start swimming from birth. Repetition in successive births makes such characteristics a habit, which ultimately becomes basic nature or swabhava. Animals act as per instinct, which is consistent.

This analysis shows that there is absolute order and logic in the world of events, movements, nature and behaviour. If that is so, what happens in the human world of events, acts, transactions, responses, relationships, results, outcomes, happenings, nature and behaviour? The only logical explanation is that it is the result of some causes, which took place in this birth or previous births. A part of the effects of all previous births is allotted to this birth, called Prarabdha, which has to be enjoyed and suffered in this birth. This effect is called by various names as fate, luck or ill luck, destiny, Karma, Vidhi, etc. Effect of what we do now will be in the future - in this or the next birth. The present and future can be modified by virtuous deeds and God's grace.

11. The Four Paths to Divinity

The path of Devotion is most popular in Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam, which together cover 4.5 billion out of 6 billion people in the world. Man generally prays to God for help while in distress and for material gains, which is a low form of worship. Pure and disinterested love is considered more proper and most acceptable to the Divine. In the dualist school of philosophy, followed by Christianity and Islam, Man and God are different. Hindus have two other concepts – one suggesting that Man is part of God (qualified non-dualism), and Man and God are the same for those who have attained Knowledge at the highest level, popularly known as *advaita* i.e. non-dualism.

In the Hindu concept, one can approach God with different attitudes or *Bhavanas.* One can look at God as a child, as Yasoda did Krishna; or as friend, as in the case of Arjuna and Krishna; or as a servant, as Hanuman and Rama; or as lover, as in the case of Radha and Meera to Krishna.

Devotion can be in various forms, such as *Sravanam, Keerthanam, Vishnusmaranam, Paadasevnam, Archanam, Aathmanivedanam, etc.* Temples, Churches and Mosques are meant for group worship. Here also there are differences among the three religions. Christians go to Church on Sundays and Muslims on Fridays. Hindus go on all days. Most Hindu temples are open from 4 a.m. upto 10 p.m., where devotees worship individually. In the case of the other two religions, group worship is the standard practice, which fosters organised effort and unity.

Hindus are highly individualistic, where each has different notions about God, method of worship, etc.

Another feature of Hinduism is the large number of festivals, such as *Ganesh Chaturthi, Krishnashtami, Ramanavami, Vijayadasami,* etc. Large number of pilgrim centres attract devotees from all over India, such as Sabarimala, Vaishnudevi, Tirupathi, Varanasi, Badrinath, Rishikesh and hundreds of others, which attract millions of pilgrims. Such pilgrim centres, scattered all over India, help national integration. Thus festivals and pilgrimages are special features of Hinduism, which strengthen religious fervour.

For example, Ganesh chaturthi is celebrated on a grand scale. Ganesha is the most popular deity in India.

Thousands of idols, some as big as 60 feet, are taken in procession and immersed in water bodies every year. Ganesha is a lovable God, who, in popular imagination, plays many roles. He is vigneshwara or remover of obstacles. He is most sought after before examinations. He was invoked to rescue the film star Rajkumar from the bandit, veerappan!

12. Homage to the Teacher

Teachers Day is observed on Sept 5th to coincide, with the birth anniversary of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, former President of India, who was a philosopher, teacher, statesman, scholar, orator and a true representative of India's glorious concept of philosopher teacher. Through his books, lectures and professorial assignments in prestigious Universities in UK, he made available India's profound wisdom in philosophy to the Western world. His book on "East and West" is a classic document, comparing Eastern and western philosophy. His stature was so high that he could converse freely with Stalin when he was Ambassador to the USSR.

One of the unique features of Indian philosophy and culture is the profound status, bordering on reverence, enjoyed by teachers in religious literature and philosophy, social standing and cultural values.

The ancient Gurukula system was based on the concept that teachers should not only impart knowledge but also character. Education is character building and man making, while training is concerned with imparting information and developing knowledge and skills for making citizens productive in society. But nations depend on the character and values of citizens, which are to be inculcated during the formative stages of studentship in the educational system. Though successive Educational Commissions have emphasised the importance of character building and value formation, India has not yet achieved even a semblance of this goal.

In mythology and religious literatures, we find that kings, and even Gods, abided by the wise counsel of their chosen Gurus. Vasishta, as Guru to Rama and his brothers, imparted wisdom in the classic philosophical literature, called Yogavasishta.

Ancient sages and saints, who functioned as teachers to society and to individuals, were held in the highest of esteem for their self-effaciveness and selflessness, service and sacrifice. They were so committed to the cause of human welfare, with least interest in name and fame, that they did not even put their names as authors of their sublime thought and wisdom contained the 108 Upanishads, Brahmasootras, Bhagavad Gita and Dharma and Neethi Sastras. In every field of human endeavour - medicine, health, architecture, dance, music, astronomy, warfare, administration and even sex - they gave profound wisdom, which, though written 4000 years old, are still relevant to the problems encountered by modern societies.

In the Indian concept, one cannot progress spiritually without the blessing and guidance of teachers. Teachers not only instructed, interpreted and developed knowledge, but also inspired students to blossom in wisdom, character and spirituality. Even great Shankaracharya had a Guru. Ramakrishna was Guru and mentor of Vivekananda.

In spite of this glorious tradition from prehistoric times, India has not taken advantage of the ancient values of teachers in character building and value formation in the educational institutions. A civilization will be judged not so much by material progress and high-tech, but by values, such as love and affection, compassion and kindness, service and sacrifice, truthfulness and uprightness, honesty and integrity, humility and austerity, etc.

Therefore, on Teachers Day, we honour teachers and remember Dr. Radhakrishnan and thousands of his predecessors from prehistoric to current times, who shaped the concept and content of our education.

13. A True Exemplar

On October 2nd, Gandhiji's birthday, the whole country pays tributes to him. His statue was unveiled in Washington DC, showing that even the US respects him. Gandhiji demonstrated how the cultural and spiritual heritage of India can be effectively used in all walks of

life, including politics. Gandhiji is a true representative of India's glorious heritage.

The basic principle of IH is that spirituality should be integrated with the secular world of work, transactions and relationships. Gandhiji considered himself as an instrument of God. He applied the principle of Non-violence in dealing with the British as well as in Hindu-Muslim conflicts. He did not harbour any ill-will against the British. By adopting the concept of peaceful non-cooperation, he converted handicaps of being weak and disorganised into powerful weapons to immobilize Britain's organised rule and arms.

Service and sacrifice have high value for leadership in IH, with which he inspired India's intelligentsia, businessmen, professionals and masses. Gandhiji led a simple life, identifying himself with the masses. Bhajagovindam says that man should lead a contented life, accepting what he is eligible for in this birth as effect of merits and demerits done in previous lives. Power came to him without his asking for it, while our leaders are pursuing power and patronage.

Gandhiji was perhaps one of the very few persons who practiced what Jesus Christ taught, namely 'love your enemy and forgive them'. Vivekananda said "Awake, arise and stop not till the goal is reached". Gandhiji woke us up from long years of servility.

He displayed tremendous courage in everything he did. He started his meetings with prayer, invoking the blessing of Gods of all religions. He observed fast and silence for gathering inner strength. He walked in Naokhali, pleading for communal harmony at a time when violent Hindu-Muslim riot was taking place.

He had the courage to sit at the Round Table Conference in London clad in simple clothes to meet the King. His witty remark to reporters who asked why he had practically not worn anything. "His majesty had enough clothes on for both of us". Our ancient Rishis, who advised mighty kings of India, led a simple life and wore the minimum of clothing. Gandhiji stayed in slums and travelled in third class.

Gandhiji openly declared that he looked up to Bhagavad Gita for guidance and solace when in distress. He sought God's blessings before undertaking any major programme. Our secularism makes us diffident to utter openly that we are servants of God. Gandhiji was more secular, in the true sense, than all the proclamations of secularism by our leaders and professionals.

It is a strange irony that those who are garlanding his statue in different parts of the country do not even feel a sense of shame or hypocrisy when they are conducting themselves without following any of Gandhiji's principles.

14. The Significance of Diwali

Indians celebrate Diwali with great fervour. Diwali has significance in many aspects of our life. It symbolises triumph of: light over darkness, virtue over vice, knowledge over ignorance, justice over injustice, compassion over cruelty, and such dualities in life. According to IH, one cannot exist without the other. For instance, we cannot have pleasure without pain, success without failure, attachment without aversion, love without hatred, and so on. Diwali is an occasion to celebrate the positive aspects and to endure the negative and unpleasant.

We are born with two kinds of assets and liabilities. Firstly, Prarabdha is inherited from the good and bad actions done in previous births, which is to be enjoyed and endured. Secondly, physical and mental characteristics are inherited from parents. A combination of these is called fate, destiny etc. During the first 20 years of life, we are influenced by religion, environment, education, ideology etc.

Only when we become adults, we are capable of knowing what is right and wrong, good and bad, etc. By observing ethical, moral and spiritual values, we can reduce the ill effects of destiny. Diwali is an occasion to remind ourselves to curb undesirable tendencies, such as, anger, violence, hatred, jealousy, envy, pride, cruelty, lust, passion, greed, avarice etc, all of which will result in further degradation in this birth and in the next birth. Diwali illumines the inner divinity in us and encourages us to follow ethical and virtuous values, such as, honesty, integrity, truthfulness, humility, courtesy, compassion, forgiveness, sympathy, fairness, helpfulness, selflessness, etc. In addition, we should

also observe spiritual values, such as yoga, meditation, fasting, silence, prayerfulness, desireless action, service acting as instrument of society and God, submission to God's will and accepting results with equanimity, balance, etc. Thus, Diwali exhorts us to observe Dharma and abjure evil thoughts, words and action, which will help us to achieve happiness as well as progress materially and spiritually.

In the societal plane, Diwali helps us to unify our nation, which is our duty. We have been a single cultural entity for millennia. But we are now a highly divided people with a pluralistic culture. No other nation in the world has so many divisive forces, based on religion, caste, language, ethnicity etc. The concept of a nation state is yet to take root. Therefore, cultural events like Diwali help to unite us. Many such celebrations and festivals, observed all over the country every month, unite our peoples as a nation.

Diwali is the time for merry making, eating sweets, exchanging gifts, bursting crackers, and so on. In the midst of such revelry, the real significance of Diwali should be kept in mind so that we respect our heritage.

15. Outstanding Example of Spiritual Leadership

An extraordinary feature of our civilisation is its spirituality, which has been kept alive for five millennia by thousands of saints and sages. Mankind is grateful to them. While industrialised countries progressed materially, India's contribution was in spiritual growth. Ramana Maharshi, Aurobindo, Bhagwan Ramakrishna, Saradadevi, Shirdi Baba, Vivekananda, Yogananda, Shivananda, Ramathirtha, Chinmayananda and hundreds of known and unknown spiritually evolved souls kept aloft India's glorious spiritual heritage. One amongst them is Sri Satya Sai Baba (Shirdi Baba in the previous birth) whom millions consider as an incarnation of God and is revered by people all over world.

About 20 million followers, in 100 countries, acknowledge his presence for being with them to guide and bless mankind. At Prasanthi Nilayam in Puttaparthy, the birthplace of Satya Sai Baba, two millions congregated on his birthday to sing his glory, and receive Baba's message.

No other human personality has united the hearts of peoples, belonging to all nationalities, religions, races and castes, as Baba has done. Baba is a universal person who discourages sectarianism. He has millions of devotees in the Christian world. To all his non-Hindu followers, his advice is to remain in their own religions, enriching the same with ethical and moral principles, which are common to all religions. Holy festivals of all religions are celebrated with equal fervour in Prsasanthi Nilayam. Thus Baba unites mankind spiritually, allowing each religion to retain its identity.

Hundreds of books have been written describing the miracles Baba has performed. Millions have been cured of their illness. His superhuman powers have been witnessed by scientists and scholars.

Baba preaches in simple words, the importance of love, truth, service and spirituality. Besides, he has transformed the poor, and Ananthapur District, making available water, greening the area, establishing schools, colleges and primary health centres, and so on. A super specialty hospital renders free medical service, including the most complicated heart and other operations. Another super specialty hospital is functioning in Whitefield. Doctors from all over the world fly in to the Puttaparthy airport and conduct operations free at the hospital. He has built houses for poor people and also gives gifts to those deserving. The Educational institutions, established and managed by the Sai Trust, give highest importance to values and attitude formation, which is a model for the rest of India. A School of Music was inaugurated on his birthday, as a part of Sai University.

India had many spiritual masters; but Baba stands above all of them, representing all that is sublime and spiritual. Baba is an outstanding example of spiritual leadership and management. Though one million congregated in Puttaparthy, there were no policemen. Everybody observed decorum and volunteered to work free. Those living now, particularly in India, should consider themselves fortunate that Baba is with them, walking about and acting like an ordinary human being.

16. Serve God by Serving Man

The essence of Bhagavatham, consisting of 96,000 Slokas, is "helping others is *Punya;* hurting is Papa".

Barthruhari, a great saint and scholar, has suggested that we should use every opportunity to "give more and take less". Religious teachings say "you will serve God by serving man". Service and sacrifice are cardinal principles in all the religions. Lao Tse has stated, "by giving, you become more". Charity and rendering help to the needy is the essence of humanism.

Having attained a human birth, and that too in India, which is a Karma Bhoomi, we should render social service. By so doing we keep our mind active. Our saints and sages have proved the benefits of rendering service and observing ethics and morals. Modern scientific research has established that social service activities give tangible benefits – mental peace and sound sleep, improved health, prolonged life span, etc.

The whole family can work together in such activities, which will help to foster understanding within the family. Children would develop good character by involving themselves in service activities. When such work is undertaken in groups in specific programmes, cooperation and team spirit can be fostered. When the mind is kept idle, or even engaged in worthless pastimes, the three trillion cells in our body will decay fast. At the other end, when serving noble causes, these cells will get revitalised, which will manifest as Tejas in the face. Experiments have also shown that the process of aging can be even reversed. Deepak Chopra's book on "Timeless Mind and Ageless Body" shows the very many advantages of pursuing noble goals without egoism and expecting no reward and recognition.

Indian heritage gives innumerable reasons for such service, one of which is returning to nature and society what these have provided for us. We should be thankful to the sun, earth, air, water and plant life as well as to saints and sages, scientists and scholars, who have given us this great civilization. Work done, as an instrument of the divine for serving God's creatures is the spiritual approach and basis of missionary work.

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Dynamics of Knowledge Development in a Competitive Economy – Exploring the Role of Ideas

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Abstract

In recent times, knowledge has become the major driving force for economic development through free trade and competition. In the process, the global economy got gradually transformed into a knowledge-based economic system. Since knowledge is considered as a critical strategic resource, its development and utilization has become a matter of major concern to all analysts. It is in this context, the present paper derives its relevance and utility. It is being increasingly realized that competition is not fought in the market places but in the R & D Labs, which are said to be the factories of ideas (or knowledge in general) while the markets are their testing grounds. Keeping this in mind, the paper attempts to analyze the nature and significance of the dynamics of knowledge development and also the role and significance of idea generation and its ideation modes, to gain competitive advantage.

Key words: *Knowledge, Knowledge-based economy, competitive advantage, idea generation, ideation processes.*

0. Introduction

The essence of recent changes in the global economy is competition and free trade. Both are considered to be the instruments of economic development. Their fundamentals are essentially ***"innovation & efficiency" - the basic tenets. That being the case, knowledge becomes obviously the defining feature of the competitive economy***. Knowledge-based economy thus evolved mainly in response to the intense competitive environment. Competition, innovation & efficiency grow invariably together in a reciprocal manner. One promotes and reinforces the other. They form the core of technology innovation and knowledge management, which together become an important source of added value for firms and hence their competitive strength. Competition thrives on knowledge and ideas.

In this new scheme of arrangement, ideas being what they are, occupy a central place in the knowledge-based competitive economy. ***Behind knowledge lies ideas, which propel the growth of knowledge of all types***. In fact, they shape knowledge society in general. Accordingly, an attempt is made in this paper to explore the various dimensions of ideas and their

relevance in building a sustainable knowledge-based competitive economy. It will be of some definite use in formulating the guidelines to carry out an empirical analysis and assessment of knowledge management practices in organizations for achieving the competence based competition. Our focus is not on epistemology but on the relevance and utility of knowledge development in the context of competitive environment.

The present paper is divided into *three sections.* Each one deals with a particular aspect of ideas. The first part deals with the nature and significance of ideas in the competitive environment and their broad interface with Knowledge-building. It also explains the dynamics of knowledge development with a special focus on the role of tacit knowledge in achieving competitive strength. The second part attempts to delineate the broad ideation processes. An exclusive emphasis is laid on this aspect since raw ideas do not have much value unless they are made saleable in the knowledge market. The last Section deals with the classification of ideas and its linkage with building sustainable competitive strength. For the sake of brevity and precision, a few schematic diagrams have been prepared. This paper is mainly conceptual in its nature and scope.

1. Nature and Significance of ideas in the competitive environment and their broad interface with knowledge-building

The significance of knowledge has been realized even in the distant past. For instance, Chanakya, a great Indian Statesman, who lived during 4th century B C says:

"Knowledge is like a holy Kamadhenu# cow. It bears fruit in all seasons. In foreign lands it protects and rewards. That is why it is considered in-built secret treasure"[2]

Importantly, Chanakya considers Knowledge as the 'in-built treasure'. Modern writers also treat Knowledge as *"parallel wealth"*[3]. These old and new viewpoints imply that Knowledge has been considered as the source of all development and hence competitive advantage. Knowledge also acts as a great leveler in a society.

The growth of knowledge is phenomenal in recent years mainly due to the revolutionary changes in IT and communication, unprecedented rise in corporatization and an ever-expanding R & D sector coupled with the competitive forces. The whole process of spiraling growth of knowledge, competition and globalization operates mostly through creating new wants/desires, inventing new uses/functions, new ways of doing things perhaps more efficiently as also economically and new ways of fulfilling the desires/wants. This implies that the creation of markets is different from the capture of markets. The former refers to the arena of knowledge and innovations while the latter to the general management.

1.1. Classification of Knowledge: Formal Vs. Tacit

The width and breadth of knowledge is so vast that its boundaries are beyond our comprehension and definition. In a sense, it is infinite with neither beginning nor end. Its distinctive feature is that it does not decrease either in quality or quantity when used. On the contrary, it grows. Knowledge in whatever forms it is made available affect the way we operate. We try to understand the world as it is and as it ought to be through the knowledge we have. If our knowledge changes, our understanding of the world also changes.

Several authors have defined the word Knowledge and organizational knowledge in many diverse ways[4]. Whatever the definition one accepts, Knowledge has the enabling property to perform the given tasks in a better and more efficient way than without it. In the present context, performance refers to both theory and practice. The core of knowledge in fact lies in improving the quality of decision-making at all levels and in all contexts. This is the reason why it assumes special significance in the competitive economy.

Knowledge has two broad dimensions viz., Stock and Flow. This being the case, practice or knowledge application adds to both in subtle ways. In this broad framework, the major sources of knowledge growth are found to be: observation, experimentation, validation through application and learning. Of course, reason underlies everything. All knowledge starts with

 # According to Indian Mythology, Kamadhenu is a mystical holy cow with spiritual powers to bestow all the boons asked of it.

observation and comes back to it for validation. The observation can be either in practice or otherwise, whose outcomes will normally be tacit. This tacit knowledge triggers several interrelated processes subsequently. Hence knowledge is generally built through the tacit route[5]. Assuming that there is always a given stock of knowledge at a given point in time, it is the application (or the practice) that adds new dimensions and several ramifications to knowledge through idea generation.

Formal knowledge is a codified, structured and systematized body of principles. This codified knowledge can be easily documented, transferred or shared. It is in public domain. Anyone can use it for any purpose. Its utility depends on the user's abilities. On the other hand, tacit knowledge presents an altogether different case. It is mainly individualistic. One learns it through experience or from actions and not from any documented sources or training. It is the product of self learning or learning by doing. It is stored only in the minds of the people[5][6].

Tacit knowledge refers to our inability to express what all we know during the process of knowledge acquisition either through observation or through experimentation. In other words, the inexpressible and inexplicable component of our knowing either through theory or practice is considered as tacit knowledge. This non-cognizability is its distinctive feature. Unlike codified knowledge, this is difficult to transfer to others though its role is great in several aspects.

The important differences between formal knowledge and tacit knowledge have been identified and presented in a tabulated form below. Implicitly this will also bring out their respective roles in building the organizational competitive strength. More importantly, the nature, the pattern and the rates of diffusion differ between the two. Higher diffusion rates are vital for building not only the organizational competitiveness but also of the nation. *In this way, it is not difficult to show that Knowledge can be considered both as an objective and as an instrument of competition.*

Formal knowledge	Tacit knowledge
1. Codified/documented	Not Codified/not documented
2. Stored in concrete forms	Stored in the minds of people
3. Retrievable easily	Not so easily retrievable
4. Consciously held	Subconsciously held
5. Easily transferable/sharable	Not easy to share/transfer
6. Acquired through secondary/ Codified sources	Acquired through direct experience / primary sources
7. Non-participatory	Participatory
8. Resides in the public domain	Resides in the individual self
9. Lie in "Why of an action"	Comes out of "How of an action"
10. Originates from training; trainable	Originates in doing and leads to skills, competences, abilities; non-trainable
11. Enables Efficiency	Enables Innovation
12. Structured/Focused/clear	Diffused/Unfocused/not clear
13. Easily harnessable	Not easily harnessable
14. For dissemination	For sharing

Table 1 Differences between Formal and Tacit Knowledge

Above all, the tacit knowledge seems to have an ingrained intuitive element. However, it may come to the fore in some form or the other during the process of doing and knowing. Nonaka[6] tried to rationalize as to how to capture and use the tacit knowledge for enhancing the organizational performance/skills.

1.2. Tacit Knowledge and Competitive Advantage

Efficiency and innovation are said to be or, rather claimed to be the only determinants of competitive strength of an organization or even the nation at the aggregate level. It may be noted that efficiency essentially refers to the levels of performance of a unit (doing things right) whereas innovation implies mainly "newness" (to be perceived by others) in various organizational fronts viz. processes, products or management (doing new things or doing things differently). By implication, efficiency thus refers to the art while innovation to science. *Newism* is the core of innovation whereas productivity (the amount of resources used per unit of output) is the core of efficiency. That being the case, both innovation and efficiency are said to be the vital factors in performance. Hence they are considered as the defining features of a firm's competitive advantage. In practice, both efficiency and innovation converge leading to higher levels of performance. The market forces are propelling the enterprises to build this convergence for their survival and growth. As a matter of fact, innovation if desired to be beneficial should result in increased levels of efficiency. Thus, both efficiency and innovation are related. In this sense, ***efficiency is nothing but an enacted innovation.***

In what follows is a brief analysis to bring out the role and significance of tacit knowledge in this regard and thereby, to show that it is the defining feature of competitiveness. It has a dual role to play in building and retaining the competitive advantage. First it enhances the quality of skills/competences to perform or the efficiency. Secondly, it facilitates and promotes the innovative capabilities by raising the absorptive levels[7]. In line with this, the analysts started treating both competence and knowledge as major strategic assets.

The competitive efficiency generally takes the following path:

Dexterity (minus monotony) ⇨ Skills ⇨ Competences ⇨ Efficiency

On the other hand, the innovative path takes a different path though concealed:

Learning ⇨ Absorption ⇨ Assimilation ⇨ Innovation

In both the cases, the underlying force is the accumulated tacit knowledge. Thus tacit knowledge, efficiency, innovation and competitive advantage are highly inter-connected. The cognizance of this relation will be of much use in R & D investments, harnessing tacit knowledge and formulating the HRM strategies in general[8]. In this context, the competitive efficiency refers mostly to assembly lines, shop floors, R & D labs and other field level operations; and partly to other functional areas of management.

A logical extension of this argument can be noticed in Lu, I-Y. et al. (2007)[1] who observe (P 13) that "Innovation provide the critical component of firm competitive strategy. Most knowledge-based technological innovation is difficult to codify, store and transfer, and technological innovation can be considered as tacit knowledge. Knowledge-based technological innovation can only be observed through application, acquired, practice and experience and consequently is difficult to transfer". This viewpoint is implicitly substantiated in our Diagram 2 in this paper.

Tacit knowledge is found to be the cause as well as the outcome of the application of formal (or explicit) knowledge to various situations and activities[@]. Its main distinctive feature is that it is not copyable or imitable. Hence it becomes a major source of competitive advantage. Further it encapacitates an individual to accomplish the given tasks in more efficient ways with lesser costs. The tacit knowledge gained mainly through practice assumes an ***apriori*** accumulated stock of knowledge, which will determine the extent of absorptive capacity to learn, assimilate and convert into practice the whole range of external factors (such as technology, market conditions, management practices etc.) for the purposes of commercialization. This absorptive capacity tends to become a major determinant of innovative capabilities[7]. That being the case, the organizations are struggling hard to capture, harness and codify the tacit knowledge at the right time for the right purposes to build their competitive strength.

[@]This statement may not hold good in the case of knowledge generation through serendipity or intuition.

1.3. The Dynamics of Knowledge Development: Knowledge-building process

In precise terms, ideas are the main instruments of thinking while thinking is an instrument of knowledge building. The feelings and observation is the material-base for the whole process. In between, experimentation and learning act as the facilitating factors. The sense organs, however defective they may be, are said to be the mechanical devices in the knowledge-building activities. Above all language has a very distinctive role and that too, a dual role to play. Language acts not only as a communication channel to transmit the contents of knowledge to the end users but also shapes at times the very thinking processes. The behavioral scientists have done substantial work on these aspects.

We cannot start with pure observations alone without anything in the nature of a theory. Observation is always selective. It needs a chosen object, a definite task, an interest, a point of view, a problem. Thus observation cannot be random or casual. It presupposes interests, points of view and problems. To the scientist, the point of view is provided by his theoretical interests, the special problem under investigation, his conjectures and anticipations and the theories, which he accepts as a kind of background: his frame of reference, his horizon of expectations [Popper, *op.cit,* P 47][9]. Observations get their meaning only through theories. It is through the known theories that we learn to observe as also to ask questions which lead to observation and to their interpretations. This is the way our observational knowledge grows. This general knowledge-building spiral is conceptualized in diagram No. 1. This is self explanatory.

This is how the knowledge spiral and practice/action takes place in a competitive economy. This spiral makes the growth processes continuous. More importantly, the above chart delineates the interconnection and interdependence between theory and practice/action. There is also reciprocity between the two. It also indicates, though implicitly, that the core of knowledge lies in its application. In a sense, the above chart provides a *unifying theme* to the analysis as contained in this paper. Further, it also suggests the ways in which the epistemic base is built at a point in time, which will subsequently be modified, improved and expanded by the succeeding analysts keeping in view the newly emerging socioeconomic environment.

In the context of knowledge building spiral processes, the underlying forces are found to be: (a) Feelings (b) Observation (c) Thinking/reason (d) Ideas (e) Experimentation/Validation (f) Learning (g) Sense organs. These key elements can be arranged in a diagram No.2. The philosophical base for this diagram can be observed in the seminal work (of Michael Polanyi, 1966[5]). They interact in very many complex ways without any traceable pattern and sequence.

The major problem is that there is no fixed, stable and consistent structure/pattern in the whole process. It is indeed whimsical and moves with the vagaries of the mind and the sense organs, which act in a highly erratic manner. It is mainly individualistic and contextual.

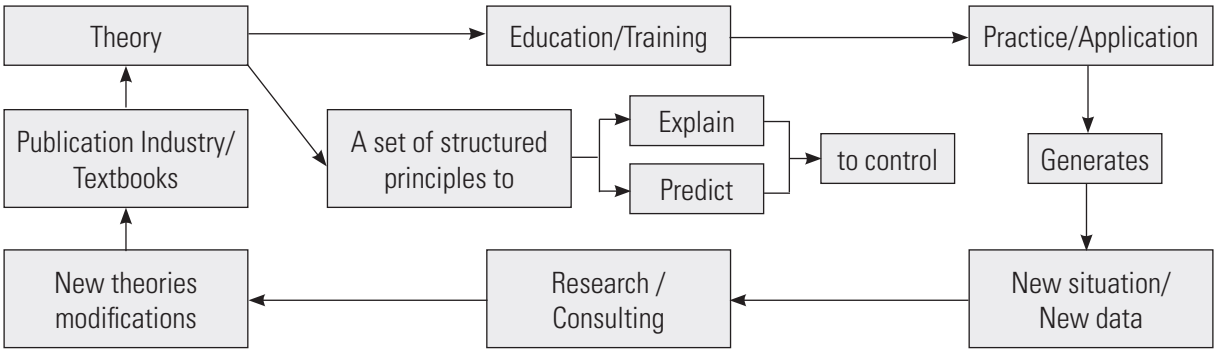


Diagram 1 Knowledge Building: An Endless Process

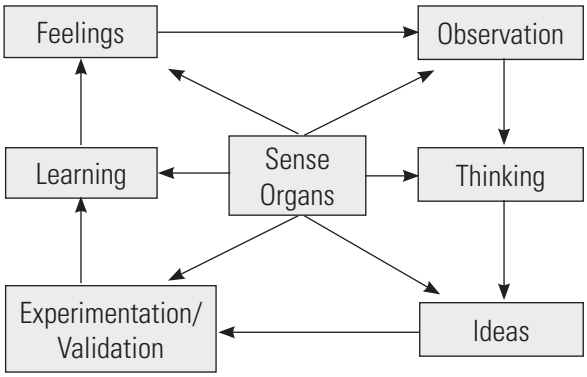


Diagram 2 Key constituents in Knowledge building process

Therefore it is not possible to make any generalization on the pattern of thinking and inference. We can only identify some of the key elements. To make the things more complicated, there is yet the school of Popperism of "trial and error"; and "conjectures and refutations"[9] [10]. All scientific knowledge grows, according to Karl Popper by putting forth the hunches or surmises (hypotheses) to arrive at the solutions of an encountered problem, either in theory or empiricism combined rightly with the "trial & error" method or the "conjectures & refutations". Therefore the safest generalization is that no uniform generalization is possible in the case of the patterns of thinking and inference.

Knowledge is the product of both learning and knowing in equal measure. Learning refers to the art while knowing to the science. In other words, both refer to applied and basic research respectively. This being what it is, knowledge has a dual role to play in the overall growth.

The classical approach[11] to the knowledge development in general is tabulated below:

A quick scanning of literature indicates that the classical approach as presented above could not find its due space either in knowledge development or knowledge management. Therefore, we plead for its due space in all matters relating to knowledge management. The above thinkers of the last century have made an inerasable mark on the processes of knowledge acquisition, systematization and even utilization. In the ultimate analysis and if one stretches the combined arguments of the above classical writers to their logical ends, they lead to an integrated development of a holistic epistemic base by which human lives can be made better off.

1.3.1. Knowledge Creation: Some Dimensions

In a competitive knowledge-based economy, the old, glorious concept of "knowledge is for knowledge sake" lost its significance giving way to the utilitarian approach to the knowledge generation and diffusion. Instead of satisfying only the curiosity instinct, knowledge needs to be useful in action. In isolation both become less effective. Both should be complementary to each other, which would promote competitive strength. Knowledge grows out of action and action grows out of knowledge.

Sl. No.	Authors	Premises Assumed	Outcomes	Resulting contributions Knowledge categories
1	John Dewey [11]	World replete with Troubles/problems	Problem-solution Approach	Managerial sciences/ Applied knowledge
2	Karl Popper[11]	Humans born fallible	Conjectures & Refutations/ Trial & error Method	Basic sciences/ Abstract knowledge
3	Karl Mannheim[11] [38]	Circularity in Knowledge Development/Biases	Unattached Intellectual/ Breakthroughs/ Objectivity	Social Sciences

Table 2 Process of Knowledge Development The Classical Approach

Thus there is a spiraling relationship between the two. The effectiveness of an action as measured by the inputs and the corresponding outcomes depends on the intelligent application of knowledge. Similarly knowledge generation/development depends on the observations and inferences made on the action.

In this context, action can be considered as the application of knowledge aiming to accomplish the identified and stated objectives and goals with a given set of inputs backed up by a decision in the best possible way within a given organizational framework. The outcomes of an action thus considered can be evaluated. That being the nature of action, both knowledge and action converge during the process of doing. Therefore, this process confirms the statement that ***"All doing is knowing and all knowing is doing".*** In this context, John Dewey, the great philosopher of last century, [Requoted from Milan Zeleny, 2005, P 25] observed that: "Action is internal and integral to knowledge. Action is not some tool for knowledge "acquisition" or belief "beholding": action is integral to whatever we claim to know. The process of knowing helps to constitute what is known: ***inquiry is action.*** Reciprocally, what is known by the knower is not stored as data or information, independently of the process of knowing: ***action is inquiry***"[12].

As a matter of fact, John Dewey's assertion is taken to its logical extremes by Karl Weick[13] who makes the case that environments are constituted by action and stored in the head as cause maps. He further says that ***enactment*** is a more influential engine in sensemaking as organizations make sense by bracketing ideas with actions of performance. In other words, Dewey's assertion is proved to be correct in Karl Weick's "enactment processes in organizations". Thus action (or enactment) generates knowledge/ sense in organizations or anywhere for that matter. Knowledge is generated when ideas are bracketed with action. In this context, it may be noted that the ideas can be independent of actions but the actions are essentially dependent on ideas. Implicit in this, is the popular dichotomy between abstract and applied knowledge.

In this context, a statement from the Chinese Philosopher (Confucius) would explain the case in point. It reads as: "To know what you know and know what you don't know, is the characteristic of one who knows'. This implies that the meaning of what one knows can be realized only by its application. In the process, one is also likely to realize what one does not know. This then initiates further efforts to know what is not known. Thus the process tends to become continuous. In a sense, the above statement implies both theory and practice of knowledge.

The prevailing paradigms (in Kuhn's sense) and their shifts will guide and direct the collective thinking processes in a particular socio-economic milieu[14]. Thus, the paradigms are the invisible forces underlying the general patterns of thinking in a society and subsequently knowledge development.

Breakthroughs enlarging the horizons of knowledge frontiers and opening up of new vistas, originate mainly from the paradigm shifts[14] while growth of knowledge takes place through modifications and refutations through falsifications and then subsequently through replacements by better (theories) knowledge[9][10]. Popper says that this growth path is the characteristic ability of science to advance. In between the two positions lies the tacit knowledge acquisition[5], which ENABLES the formal knowledge to grow. The tacit knowledge that way is an enabler of knowledge growth. It may be noted that knowledge is generally expressed or held either implicitly (tacit) or explicitly (codified) in the generalizations derived either from deduction (theory) or by induction (practice/doing). Generally all knowledge starts tacitly, which will be subsequently codified or formalized for wider diffusion. Theory/knowledge underlies action and decision. The interrelation between knowledge and action is indeed ingrained in the human systems of thought and action. In "doing", both theory and practice get converged and thereby generate tacit knowledge in the process. The whole phenomenon then enters into the knowledge spiral and thus generates the formalized knowledge.

A quick scanning of some seminal works reveals that knowledge, in general, has three broad interdependent

and reciprocally related components, viz.: a) tacit knowledge; b) applied knowledge; and c) scientific knowledge in that order, if we may be allowed to order so. They interact constantly in very many different ways, perhaps beyond our catch. From this, it follows logically that there is a dire necessity to integrate all the three in a wholesome framework. In this context, the seminal works, among others, of the great thinkers [John Dewey, 1910 & 1916, Kuhn, 1965, Popper, 1959 & 1963 and Polanyi, 1966] need to be integrated and cohesively structured to solve the complex problems faced by the modern complex knowledge-based society. This is the first step.

The next step will be the utilization of knowledge or the intellectual assets thus created to gain competitive advantage at the organizational levels, which has been clearly articulated by Nonaka 1991, 1995; Gilbert Probst et al., 2000; Andrew M Pettigrew et al, 2000 and others [6] [15]. The knowledge environment necessitates innovative forms of organizations to develop more creative, responsive and learning-oriented organizations, which can cope with the tougher competitive conditions[15].

Knowledge development and its application will be impossible without faith in ideas, which are of a purely speculative kind and sometimes may even be vague and obscure. In fact, world is a totality of ideas, not of things; and hence, markets also. Ideas can originate either from Popper's route of "trial & error" or through Kuhn's mode of paradigm shifts; or it may at times be even both.

One can observe that there is a continuous, gradual progression (of contents) from action; tacit knowledge; codified knowledge and then to wisdom in a circular and sequential manner. Wisdom is a thing that is aspired/ desired for due to the declining ethical practices. There is a circular/cyclical flow in the above progression starting with action and all new developments in knowledge coming back to the action. Then the cycle gets repeated to make it an endless process. The search for competitive advantage at all levels lie mainly in the above flows. Tapping can take place at any stage.

There is a general perception that knowledge; thinking and wisdom cannot grow limitlessly/indefinitely. In the ultimate analysis, both "Retention" and "Recall" of knowledge impose severe constraints on the spiraling growth of knowledge. In this regard:

"The ultimate ***"limits to growth"*** of knowledge and wisdom are ***time*** (available to human minds for reflecting, analyzing, and integrating the information that will be "brought to life" by being used) and ***capacity*** of people æ individually and in groups æ to analyze and think integratively. There are obvious limits to the time each of us can devote to the production and refinement of knowledge and wisdom".

Growth of knowledge in recent times is leading to the compartmentalized developments resulting in separate specializations/disciplines without much communication between them. Thus an expert in one becomes a layman in another. In the process, wholesomeness or the holistic thought is lost due to knowledge segmentation although knowledge growth may seem to be limitless. Whether or not, this is a healthy trend is difficult to answer.

1.4. Role and significance of Ideas

Ideas are ***the driving force*** in a knowledge based competitive economy. In one sense, knowledge based economy means the idea-based one. Ideas are the product of knowledge. In other words, ideas are the ***practicing face of knowledge.*** Thus, the applied use of knowledge is achieved through the application of ideas. We do not apply knowledge per se. We apply only the ideas or the outcomes of knowledge in the various fields of human activities. The same is true in the case of skills/competences, which is the reflection of idea-application[17]. Indeed, it is ideas that develop skills/competences. Thus ideas are central to competitive strength, skills/competences, innovation and efficiency and the knowledge society in general. They are the backbone or the basic foundations upon which the whole market systems together with the socio-economic systems are built.

Consequent upon the realization of the dire necessity of ideas in a competitive world, some new concepts like knowledge managers, idea manager, thinking

managers, ideators etc have emerged in recent years. Ideas are unique and are found to be relative to culture, geographical conditions, values, educational systems, needs, tastes and preferences etc. Ideas can originate from many different ways. The origin and the relativity of ideas will influence their quality and utility. In fact, there is a reciprocal relationship between ideas and socio-economic conditions.

Ideas are nothing but the structured expressions of the outcomes of the thinking processes, which could have been triggered either by tacit observation or a documented form of knowledge. They have a higher degree of relevance and significance, particularly with reference to the tacit knowledge. The tacit knowledge, being what it is, uses ideas as its only instrument in its application and usage. Since, it is considered as a major defining feature of competitive advantage, ideas also assume the same role. Like tacit knowledge, ideas are also not storable and recallable in their original form. Hence, they need to be documented in some form or the other. Further, ideas lie at the root of all skills, efficiency and competencies. It is ideas that mould and shape them and hence the competitive strength.

Ideas are both the inputs and the products of knowledge, which in turn is the recorded experience and a product of history. Action, passion, reasoning and belief are its essential constituents. The analysis on different aspects of ideas as carried out in this paper, throws open several choices before the individual and the policy makers. It has significant policy implications.

1.5. Nature of ideas

Everyone gets ideas almost daily and even routinely. Some reach the cognitive levels with differing intensities; some do not; some come and go. In this way, one can see several patterns and behaviors of ideas coming to mind and going out. Some document them while others ignore them. *More importantly, it is the values that filter them and do the rest.* Ideas may be same across the individuals but their acceptance or otherwise depends on the ideation modes adopted. This makes all the difference. *Ideation is nothing but a form of validation,* which can be carried out in different ways such as experimentation, reasoning, observation and so on. [See 2.Ideation Process of this paper. Also see Graham and Bachman, 2004[18]]

It is true that everyone gets ideas; but what makes a difference among people is the level of perseverance in ideating the idea. Some get ideas but do not start pursuing them. They just leave them at the start itself, some do pursue but leave them in the middle before reaching the logical end. The creative minds get ideas like any others but pursue them till their logical end to validate them conclusively. So to say, they have tenacity while others lack. This makes the difference. Accordingly on the basis of tenacity and perseverance, people can be classified in the context of idea generation into:

a) Non-starters
b) Starters but leave in the middle and
c) Starters and goal reachers.

They are the players in the competitive markets though they play different roles. Their interaction is of significance. However, the last category of people contribute to competitive advantage.

In fact, *competition is fought in and on the basis of validated ideas.* It is the ideas that compete in the market place through their applied usage in products. Since each product embodies ideas, the markets are made up of mainly ideas, not products. The products are only indicants of ideas or rather symbolize ideas. Accordingly, there is a clearly distinguishable trade in ideas and also there is a competitive market for ideas e.g. consulting services, talent searching, head hunting etc. With the ever-increasing globalization processes and free trade, the demand for ideas is increasing at much faster rates than ever before. This aside, commercialization of ideas is yet another factor that gave a big push to idea markets. This gives rise to two issues viz., the generation and commercialization of ideas. Both are necessary in a knowledge-based economy. It is the competition that facilitates and promotes both the processes.

It is the process of ideation that transforms the raw ideas into meaningful, usable and saleable ideas. It is nothing but validation. Therefore one has to ideate the raw ideas

to make them more acceptable competitively. It gives value and marketability. Thus, *ideation is considered as a process by which the ideas get legitimacy, credibility and credence as also muster wider acceptance in their favour.* They get duly varnished and become ready for implementation (or usability). Hence, *ideation is a critical step in building the knowledge-based societies/organizations.*

Since each product/service embodies ideas, the competition is fought with and among a cluster of ideas. In this sense, it is these embodied ideas that are sold in the markets and not the products per se. This can be extended logically in the context of the current global scenario as facts show that competition is not fought in the market places but in the *R&D labs,* which are nothing but a factory of ideas. The corporates all over the world invest huge sums on R&D because it is the R&D that generates as also assigns commercial value to ideas by applying them to fulfill the "needs and wants" of people in the best possible manner[19]. R&D is a double-edged weapon. On the one hand, it erects strong barriers to entry due to its capital intensities and on the other, it improves efficiency and innovation and the organizational strength. In effect, R&D gives monopoly power. Since ideas are the products of R&D, they give power. In other words, it confirms the fact that knowledge is power. It gives economic power.

This leads yet to another inference that the economy can build and retain its competitive strength through building of ideas by ideating them relevantly and to convert them into effective tools.

1.6. Ideas and Action : An interface

Ideas underlie the action, which is the mainspring of growth and prosperity[12]. Action is growth and growth is Action. Action signifies the whole gamut of all human endeavors across all the sectors - be it economic, R&D, political, religious etc. It has both consequences and a set of affected groups, both positive and negative. These outcomes of an action call for an evaluation of the impacts of action both intended and unintended. This feedback will introduce modifications in theory and practice, which trigger new thinking processes, whose outcomes in turn result in new idea creation and thereafter to more efficient actions. Thus, ideas are said to be the backbone of action or implementation[20]. In the whole process, the competitive strength of the organizations gets enhanced due to the improved quality of decision-making because of the in-built feedback system. Thus it is an endless process leading to continuous improvements and growth. In realities of the practicing world, there is indeed the precedence of thinking before action. However, when action is initiated, then both action and thinking get converged to go concurrently. In this process, tacit knowledge will be generated.

The interface between ideas and action is diagrammed in Diagram 3. From the above diagram, it follows that ideas have *a dual role* to play, viz.:

a) In making rational decisions (the conventional role) and
b) In shaping and building the competitive strength (the contemporary or the newly assumed/assigned role).

Ideas in their newly assumed role determine the pattern, structure and rate of economic development. In fact both the roles co-exist in their own respective ways without any confrontations in a Knowledge-based competitive economy. They trigger innovation and efficiency, which are said to be the basic tenets of competitiveness. *Ideas breed ideas*[21]. That is their distinguishing quality. That quality is the major contributory factor for "limitless/unbounded growth". If ideas stop, growth also stops.

They cannot be made out directly. *They are the derivatives from or the outcomes of knowledge and various thinking processes.* They also originate from experience and practice/doing. They have varying degrees of utility, applicability and usage depending upon their origin and the ideation processes they undergo. Ideas in their raw form are not sufficient either in theory or in practice. Hence, the ways in which they are derived will determine their value both in theory & practice. *Accordingly, it is the "ideation" that is more important than the ideas.*

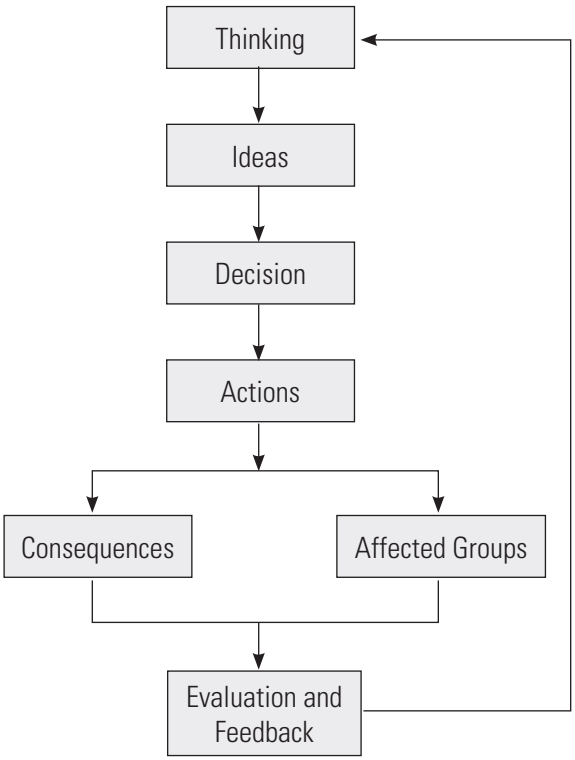


Diagram 3 Ideas and Action: An interface

1.7. Ideas, Knowledge and its application:

How do we apply knowledge to particular situations? To address this question, we need to know the broad meaning of knowledge and how it is built. In simple terms, it can be considered as a systematized and structured body of different clusters of ideas in a particular branch of study, e.g. economics, sociology etc. In that sense, ideas are the lowest units or building blocks in knowledge or theory construction. Thus ideas are like bricks and we ***construct the knowledge edifice brick by brick.*** Knowledge generation either in physical or social sciences starts with ideas, which are mainly tacit in nature (Level 1). In the second level, there will be abstraction and conceptualization process. These concepts are generally interrelated but unstitched or unstructured. In the third level, the systematization or theory building takes place. In the final level, the outcomes of theory building become Knowledge, which can be either tacit or formal. The whole process can be mental also leading mainly to tacit knowledge. To reiterate, the ultimate outcome of this whole construction process (i.e. Knowledge generation) can be either formal or tacit.

That being the case, for application purposes, we normally decompose the knowledge into various segments till the lowest unit is reached and then choose the last lowest unit, which is the idea, for application. All knowledge is logically reducible to elementary (or atomic) statements/propositions, which are nothing but ideas that constructed knowledge in the first place. It is this idea, not the knowledge in its entirety that is generally applied to particular situations. In other words, we normally ***reverse the process of construction in the sense that we apply the bottom most unit (i.e. idea).*** This process of going up and down in knowledge building implies a double movement of generation and application of knowledge in a continuing process. In the practicing world, we apply selectively relevant ideas after due filtration to the situation on hand. In this context, the situation may refer to an intellectual question or a practical problem or even a specific skill.

This process of construction and its reversal in a knowledge based approach to their various applications can be presented in a pyramid form as below:

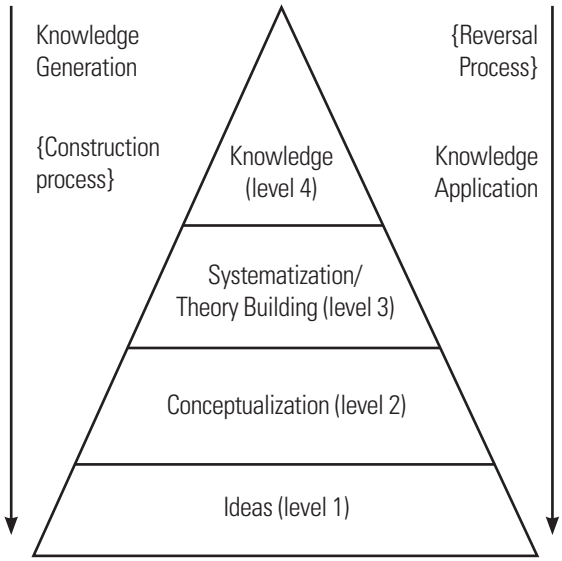


Diagram 4 Knowledge Pyramid & Its Application

The above pyramid explains the ways in which the composition and decomposition of knowledge recur concurrently in a spiraling fashion to generate and apply knowledge through ideas to tackle the problems in theory and practice. Ideas are the inseparable components of both the tangible and intangible assets, which range from patents and brands to reputation and know-how. They underlie all organizational elements. They are gained through experience, experimentation and history. They need to be identified, captured, filtered and evaluated to improve the organizational competitive strength. Ideas are central to knowledge management. Knowledge is nothing but an aggregation of ideas in a systematized manner. Ideas are the raw material for knowledge construction. Thus, knowledge is the systematized body of ideas. Knowledge building starts with ideas and comes back to ideas for its dissemination and utilization. The understanding of this recurring phenomenon would help the knowledge generation, dissemination and utilization to enhance the quality of R & D efforts and to maximize its benefits. The application of knowledge management approaches at the organizational levels[22] can make use of all the scattered, tacit and unrecorded ideas to enhance the organizational effectiveness.

The significance of Knowledge lies in its application

In a competitive knowledge-based economy, applied knowledge is more important than the basic theoretical knowledge. The utility of knowledge resides in its applied usage. As some author rightly observes: "There is no way of demonstrating knowledge of baking bread other than by baking it".

There is yet one more aspect to knowledge growth. Knowledge grows by sharing and dissemination like the water in the well. For instance, the more water we draw from the well, the purer water springs up in the well. Otherwise, water gets polluted and useless. In other words, its application is not subject to the law of diminishing returns. In effect, the "sharing and dissemination" of knowledge become one of the major determinants of the extent of applied usage of knowledge. But the person possessing the knowledge should not have any inhibitions to share. Therefore, in the ultimate analysis, it all depends on the mutual trust and expectations, which presume a mature society.

The ultimate effect of all knowledge is to organize things or people in ways that are different from the ways they were before. More importantly, there is no such thing as 'useless knowledge or useless idea'. The fact is that we have not yet learned how to use either all ideas or knowledge although they maybe at times contradictory or divergent. Only we are not capable of using them at the right time and for the right purposes. Some may have immediate use, while some deferred use. That is all.

2. Ideation Processes

2.1. Ideation Processes

Ideas are stealable but not the ideation process, which is concealed and known to the originator only. Ideas do not come just like that. Observation and learning lie behind the ideas. An equally important element is experimentation, which is nothing but the trial and error method[9]. Thus the three (viz. observation, learning and experimentation) together constitute the basis for knowledge. All the three constituents of knowledge can take place either simultaneously or with lags depending on the nature of subject matter. In this context, an important point to be noted is that the demand for ideas is undergoing both qualitative and quantitative changes due to the global economic reforms, which has changed the very landscape of decision making processes at all levels. The numbers of variables to be considered now are many more than ever before in the past. Consequently, the nature and complexities of ideation processes have become very complex.

As explained earlier, ideation is more important than ideas. The ideation process takes place through several modes such as:

- The scientific thinking process
- Imagination/intuition
- Chance/serendipity
- Experience/interactions or
- Practice/doing

There seems to be a possible confusion between the sources of ideas and the sources of ideation processes. In some cases, they merge. Therefore, it requires a bit of explanation. The former refers either to the theoretical concerns or the practical concerns or even both, which generally emanate from the prevailing socio-economic milieu including the environment. To put it in simple terms, the sources of ideas lie mainly in the socio-economic milieu, which is the fountainhead of all problems - theoretical and practical. On the other hand, the sources of ideation processes refer to the various validation modes to elicit wider acceptance both from the academic community and public at large.

In the case of ***scientific thinking,*** both the origin of ideas and their modes of ideation converge and merge. They are in fact in-built together because validation is generally an integral part of scientific thinking.

In the case of ***experience,*** ideation takes place through periodical observations in an ex-post facto manner. Observation can be on one's own experience, or on others' experiences, with little or no controls on the on-goings.

The mode of *practice/doing* presents a slightly different picture. This refers mainly to the applied-usage of knowledge; may be in the workshops/shop floors/assembly lines or in the R&D labs. Its focus is mostly on the skills/competences - the core of competitive strength. In this case, the doer gets ideas while doing - may be in doing differently or more efficiently. These kinds of ideas get ideated/validated through repeated doings and thereafter, it forms a part of skills/competences. This is how the very application of knowledge generates more knowledge. In this way the tacit knowledge is acquired, formed and stored in the minds of doers. In fact this forms the core of competitive strength. In a competitive market economy, we for one to believe that the knowledge, in general, acquired through and validated from "practice/doing" mode will have higher propensity to improve competitive advantage. It will have higher practical value than the rest.

Intuition and serendipity are at times considered one and the same, though there could be subtle differences. The problem is that, unlike other modes they are highly abstract and intangible. They have even religious connotations because some thinkers only get them while majority don't. Whatever their philosophical moorings, they are mainly related to the fundamental ideas resulting in the expansions of the frontiers of basic/theoretical knowledge [23]. In intuition and serendipity, the ideation/validation is in-built because when thinkers are deeply involved and are in agony over an issue, serendipity/intuition comes suddenly to their rescue by triggering an idea (or the solution) whose ideation is already in-grained in their deep involvement and intense agony. In this special case, both idea and ideation thus takes place simultaneously. It may be true that both are beyond our explanation. However, we can only say that ideation is already grained in the deep thinking process.

On the whole, it can be surmised that the ***ideation processes define the quality, effectiveness and utility of ideas.*** In other words, ideation defines the saleability of ideas as also the nature and type of ideas. It may be noted that the above modes of ideation are not mutually exclusive but mutually reinforcing and reassuring.

To make the ideas more effective and more useful in a competitive world, there needs to be among other things, two important factors, viz: (a) ***timeliness;*** and (b) ***faster rates of diffusion.*** Needless to say, both of them need strong scaffolding of various institutional and infrastructural facilities. Then their capacity to propel growth and development through innovation and efficiency will be much more than otherwise. The extent of diffusion of knowledge and innovation including the sharing of both tacit and formal knowledge depends on the motivational levels and the incentive systems including recognition that prevail in a society. Further it also assumes free mobility of individuals between occupations and across geographical regions with no social rigidities to impede such free movements.

Ideas in their raw form will not sell well in the market place. Experience shows that there are two factors that enhance and promote saleability and marketability of ideas in competitive idea markets. They are:

a. Wrapping/packaging and
b. Presentation.

Wrapping/packaging of ideas can take place through three different modes:

1. Mathematical style
2. Modeling/systemic and
3. Literary style.

Their choice depends mainly on three factors:

1. The requirements of end users
2. The complexity of the idea/problem and its impacts and
3. The skills, tastes and competences of the ideator.

The second parameter viz presentation can be exhibited in two different ways. They are (a) Oral and (b) written communication. Normally both are used to reach the target audience. In practice, one can observe: *"how one says is more important than what one says".* This is more often than not true in real life situations. Both wrapping and presentation together will influence the extent of saleability of ideas. Therefore, selling the ideas is as important as getting the ideas. Both require different types of skills. The cognizance of this aspect will be of much use in R&D.

An analogy would explain the case in point. According to the tradition in Hindu Temples, the natural water becomes holy water by pouring it in a *"Sankha"* (a big-sized sea shell called "counch") for distributing it to the devotees. In the same way, the raw ideas become saleable and hence usable if they are wrapped up in some chosen, elegant style such as Mathematical or modeling/systemic presentation. All these factors are presented systematically in the following diagram 5.

2.2. The Concept of Saleability/Marketability of Ideas

Since the concept of saleability/marketability is raised in the flow chart, it may be noted that all the shortcomings of marketing techniques/strategies will also equally apply in the case of idea marketing. Such techniques have a high degree of propensity

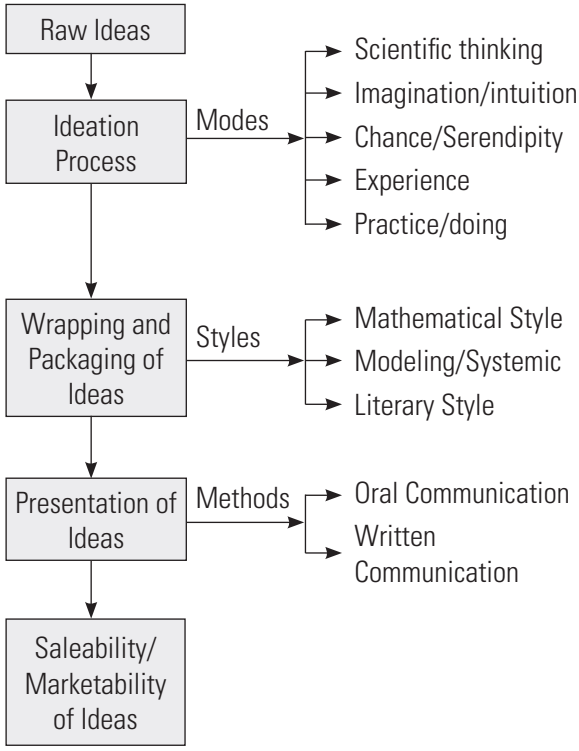


Diagram 5 Ideas & Ideation: A Thinking Process Model (with its components)

to distort the intrinsic merit of ideas/products. This needs to be kept in mind while evaluating the ideas for their quality, relevance and usefulness. At times, in marketing strategies some products of lesser quality are marketed through aggressive advertising techniques and other promotional campaigns. It is also true for ideas. For instance, the brand equity and the promoted brand image may distort quality levels and their perceptions significantly. So to say, we cannot conclusively say that the unbranded products are of lesser quality proportionally than the branded ones. It is also true in the case of idea marketing. (Example: consulting services). In this context, a distinction may substantiate the case in point. It is:

a) Real ideas with intrinsic worth and innovative value (Class I) and

b) Projected/ over-marketed ideas, which are normally projected more than their intrinsic worth/merit (Class II).

That being their difference, there is generally a danger in the competitive markets that the class II ideas may create distortions in the idea markets. Due to many and varied kinds of distortions and market imperfections, some ideas are prone to get overvalued/overrated as also better appreciated while others get under rated/undermined or even may go unnoticed. This is to say, markets do not reflect fairly clearly the true intrinsic worth/merit of ideas. For instance, some good ideas are subdued at times by the overselling of lesser ones. However, if ideas are documented in some form, they can't be destroyed. Good ideas will never die. In this context, an analogy is worth noting. Like the fake, duplicate, imitated and smuggled products in the bazaars, more or less the same attributes can be observed in the case of ideas also. The irony is that both have their own respective markets existing simultaneously as also thriving well. This is not difficult to establish in the present day realities of the world.

The saleability of ideas and the efficacy of idea marketing in general are guided by as also influenced by such factors as: the age and reputation of the ideator, his networking skills and his connections with the implementing agencies, the nature of ideation processes employed and so on. The users/buyers/ implementing agencies look for some important attributes in the ideas before they accept them such as: innovativeness, technological implications, product durability, compatibility, imitability, ease in implementation, cost implications and so on. Briefly, this gives the mechanics and the dynamics of the idea marketing.

The above distinction of ideas between the "Real ones" and the "Projected ones" has a very significant implication in building a country's competitive strength. By their very nature and by implication, the real ideas can build and retain a sustainable competitive strength. On the other hand, the other class of ideas may enhance a short term and unsustainable competitive strength. They may give some short-term benefits, which are not durable. The net effect of market distortions and imperfections in the idea market may create several distortions and deviations in the growth path of an economy and consequently, in the sustainability of competitiveness in the long run. In place of a holistic perspective, the undue importance placed now on the IT, FDI and service sectors, for instance in the Indian economy, would substantiate the case in point.

3. Classification of Ideas and ilts Linkage with Building Sustainable Competitive Strength

There are in fact an infinitely large number of ideas springing up and operating simultaneously in the economy while at the same time contributing in varying degrees to competitiveness at different levels. Therefore an attempt is made to classify them into a few divisions without pretending to make an exhaustive classificatory system.

3.1. Ideas and Risk Levels in Practice: (A division of Ideas into Original and Replicatory)

In practice, ideas bring about *change, which is essentially risky* as it refers to the unknown future. In this context, ideas can also be categorized under two broad types. Some are *original* belonging to the basic research. Some are *replicatory or confirmatory,* mostly belonging to applied research. The latter ones confirm, through replication, the former ones. In the process, the confidence levels of the users go up enormously. Both are important though the former ones may be more important but more risky. Because, the original ideas normally refer to the future, which is inherently uncertain and risky. Hence, risk is always associated with the original ideas. That element of risk can be reduced by the confirmatory ideas. In that sense, both are complementary to each other. This division assumes a special significance in the context of ever increasing competitive conditions.

This division of ideas into original and replicatory finds its relevance mostly in social and managerial sciences. Besides raising the confidence levels of the usage, the very replication at times adds to the knowledge generated by the original ideas as it is carried out in a totally different setting. Therefore, they need not be undermined in knowledge building.

3.2. Fundamental and Instrumental ideas:

In the same vein, one more distinction can be made between ideas. They can be categorized on the basis of their *orientation and concern* as goal oriented and means oriented. It is:

a) Fundamental ideas (Goal Oriented) and
b) Instrumental ideas (Means Oriented)

It is to be noted that their meanings and scope overlap and shades off into one another making the distinction very subtle and thin.

The former type of ideas are concerned with and directed towards bringing *structural changes* in all the systems such as: Markets, S&T, Socio-economic etc. *They are mostly related to inventions; and in a sense, they are concerned with the ends in which there will not be divergences/differences but convergences.* This is their characteristic feature. In fact, they attract the convergence of all, which is their characteristic ability. This is perhaps due to their lesser numbers than the means, and thus generally restricting their width of choice. All agree on ends/ goals but diversity exists in means to be adopted. In this context, the invention can be considered as the creation of new or hitherto unknown products, services, science & technology, production techniques and the supportive institutional mechanisms. The fundamental ideas are normally generated through basic/theoretical research. This is the reason why it is rightly called the fundamental research generating the fundamental ideas for bringing several structural changes.

On the other hand, the instrumental ideas transform or convert the fundamental ideas into their *"applied usage"* to improve efficiency, minimize costs, enhancing organizational effectiveness and of sort. In other words, they assign utility or the applied usage to the ideas generated by inventions. *The instrumental ideas are mostly related to innovations and in a sense they are concerned with the "means" in which there can be divergences and differences in perspectives.* In this context, innovation can be considered as the *practical refinement and transformation* of an original invention into a usable technique or new design/modification of the existing ones; or new processes and practices to apply creativity in every aspect of the organization's value-chain, which in effect, lead to the development of new and better ways of creating more value with the same inputs[24]. Comparatively, the instrumental ideas can be larger than the other one, which may give rise to divergences in opinion and thus giving the scope for wider choice.

3.2.1. Diversity and Creativity:

It may specially be noted that diversity and differences exist and persist with regard to the creation of divergent instrumental ideas but not so much in the case of 'fundamental ideas'. In this case, convergence takes place while diversity persists in the other. In other words, there is normally consensus and agreement on "ends/goals" but diversity and difference are often seen in the "means" to achieve goals. For example, one can see consensus on social and organizational ends/goals such as: removal of poverty, employment generation etc and raising productivity, profitability etc respectively; while diversity exists in the means to achieve those goals.

However, there is a merit in diversity and differences. There exist diverse perspectives, diverse interpretations and inferences, diverse solutions to problem and so on mainly due to *diverse value-frames* and conflicting interests. The merit in diversity is this. The variability or the variation is another name for diversity and difference. The variation or variability is the basic foundation for any kind of research inquiry or investigation for any purpose including policy making. If there is no variation in the phenomena and if there is perfect homogeneity or equality, there arises no research activity of whatsoever kind. No effort is possible to see the patterns, structures, correlations, order, sequences, uniformities or regularities, forecasting/prediction etc. Therefore, diversity and not homogeneity, is the basic source of all knowledge growth as also gives a reason to understand the world. Thus variation/diversity is the precondition for all efforts in research, policy-making and decision-making. In other words, *Variation/ diversity triggers both innovation and invention.*

Therefore, the organizations whatever they are need to encourage diversity/difference among their employees to enhance their potential for creativity, invention and innovation[25].

Diversity should not be curbed because it is the fountainhead of all creativity. Accordingly, a country can build its sustainable competitive strength through identifying, assessing and harnessing its diversity/ differences in ways that encourage and buttress creativity in all spheres of human activity. The constant interaction between the fundamental ideas (or the ends-related ones) and the instrumental ideas (or the means-related ones) will lead to the overall growth. If ethical dimensions are added to these interactions, one can expect the ***ethical growth*** in place of the unscrupulous growth. Given the present state of affairs globally, there seems to be no other credible alternative to ethical growth[26].

Ideas can be both constructive and destructive in nature. Since ideas can be either way, they need to be controlled and directed towards the ethical path. How of it, can become contentious because it encroaches upon the freedom of thought. The only solution seems to be self-restraint and self-regulation. Whether or not it will work is an open-ended question.

It is the ideas, whatever the form they assume, that take the overall growth to the next level. To be more specific, *the fundamental ideas take the growth to higher levels through inventions while it is the instrumental ideas that take the competition to the next level through innovation and efficiency.*

Thus, both invention and innovation are complementary to each other. They are reciprocally supportive to each other. One triggers and promotes the other. Building and retaining competitive advantage needs both in right proportions.

The above distinction of ideas also gives rise to a ***similar distinction in knowledge.*** From that point of view, knowledge can be considered as having two broad components. This distinction may be of some use in knowledge management approaches. Knowledge can be broadly decomposed into two components, viz:

a) That part of knowledge which is related to the ends or goals, resulting mostly from the fundamental ideas (or the fundamental knowledge) and

b) That part which is concerned with the means or the instruments to achieve the agreed upon goals, resulting mainly from the instrumental ideas (or the applied knowledge).

The essence of this distinction will hold good at the micro, macro or even at the societal levels. Though this distinction is more perceptual than otherwise, it is based on the impressions gathered after making a cursory scanning mentally across various disciplines within the constraints of our limited exposure. However, it appears to stand to logic and reasoning.

On general grounds, one can see that it is not difficult to work out consensus and convergences on part (a) of knowledge, while conflicts and disputes can persist in part (b). In view of this, it can be said that the knowledge management in part (b) need to be considered in a *paradigm of conflict rather than of rational choices.*

The fundamental ideas generally expand the frontiers of knowledge whereas the instrumental ideas assign and promote the applied usage of knowledge. In a competitive economy, both are equally important but the latter assumes more importance and significance. In this context, a suggestion can be tendered to maximize the benefits of R&D efforts and a better utilization of human intellectual capital at the global level in a formalized and structured manner. The creation and diffusion of the *fundamental ideas* through R&D can be undertaken on ***co-operative lines*** either globally or nationally instead of on purely competitive basis, as is seen now. On the other hand, the generation of ***instrumental ideas,*** which are mostly country-specific, can be left to the ***individual countries.*** Without going into its wider and deeper implications and meanings, this appears to be more optimal than the existing arrangement. When once this is accepted in principle, its modalities of sharing of costs, benefits etc can be worked out on mutually agreeable lines by the participating countries.

This implies that the existing system of undue and uneven concentration of R&D in a few countries seems to promote inequalities as also make some countries to depend heavily on others[19]. This is in fact an exclusivist approach, which may be counter productive in the long run. Besides, it constricts the freedom of choice among the nation states over their respective destinies with respect to the goals/ends and means and thus, giving rise to the anti-globalization sentiments. Instead, the suggested inclusivist approach may be more beneficial to the global economy. Because, each country has its own intellectual endowments, which need to be harnessed fully.

The above discussions have been diagrammed briefly in *Diagram No.6.* In reality, a number of multilateral interactions take place constantly among the components in the above diagram. The net effect of all these interactions will be on the rates of growth, managerial and organizational practices, science & technology and so on. There could be lags of different durations in the resultant outcomes. It is, therefore, difficult to capture all the intricate on-goings in the socio-economic systems. The stories of development of the developed countries will explain them in an ex-post facto framework. To put it in simple straightforward terms, it is the ideas that drive development along with concurrent social and organizational changes.

In a sense, all this implies the ethical considerations also. Because, ethics is all about action – it's motive, purpose and its consequences along with the affected groups, both animate and inanimate[$]. Further, its defining feature of maximum good to maximum numbers as also not making anyone worse off than before the action is also implied in this context. Above all action is growth and vice versa*. Therefore, the diagram in that sense implies an ethical growth path if the ramifications of an action are considered in their totality. (Also see the earlier subsection on Ideas and Action: An interface).

In the present context of ever-increasing competitive conditions, it appears that most of the ideas are mainly the products of the forces of profit motive, corporate growth and expansion. In the larger interests, this needs to be tilted in favour of the forces of environment, sustainability and social interests.

By implication, the above analysis of ideas and their ideating processes as well, has a high degree of relevance and utility in knowledge management in a competitive environment[28]. Because, knowledge can be viewed as a systematized body/structure of ideas, which is generally expressed in the form of statements. Further, ideas underlie the concepts and the conceptualization process. E.g. demand function, production function, elasticity, market segmentation and the list goes on and on. In view of this and from the essence of the analysis as presented in this subsection, it can be hypothesized that "ideating the ideas" is the first and the foremost important step in knowledge-building or a knowledge based economy. In this regard, a few case studies in some representative situations of knowledge management are given in Murray E Jennex, 2005[29].

3.3. A Digression on Ethical Considerations

To promote peace, prosperity and order in society, growth alone is not sufficient, but it may be a necessary condition. The sufficient condition being, the inclusion of ethics in all matters relating to the growth-oriented decision-making. As of now, law is the only instrument though surely deficient, to implement ethics. Since the corporates are said to the engines of growth, they need to incorporate ethics explicitly in all their decision-making. The ethical dilemma is always between self-interest (growth) and integrity (ethics).

The society can achieve the ethical growth mainly through: 1) economics (growth) and 2) ethics (decision-making). A judicious combination of these two parts will result in "wise development"[26]. This can be achieved only through the creation, diffusion and utilization of appropriate knowledge in which ethics will have to be given its due space.

Conservation, Preservation, Use and Consumption are the basic elements in the growth-ethics framework. For

$ In a sense, ethics is nothing but "good and bad" made difficult. But beauty lies in resolving these complexities in the larger interests of society as against the partisan interests.

** Action is used in its broadest sense encompassing all the human endeavors including projects, activities and many more.*

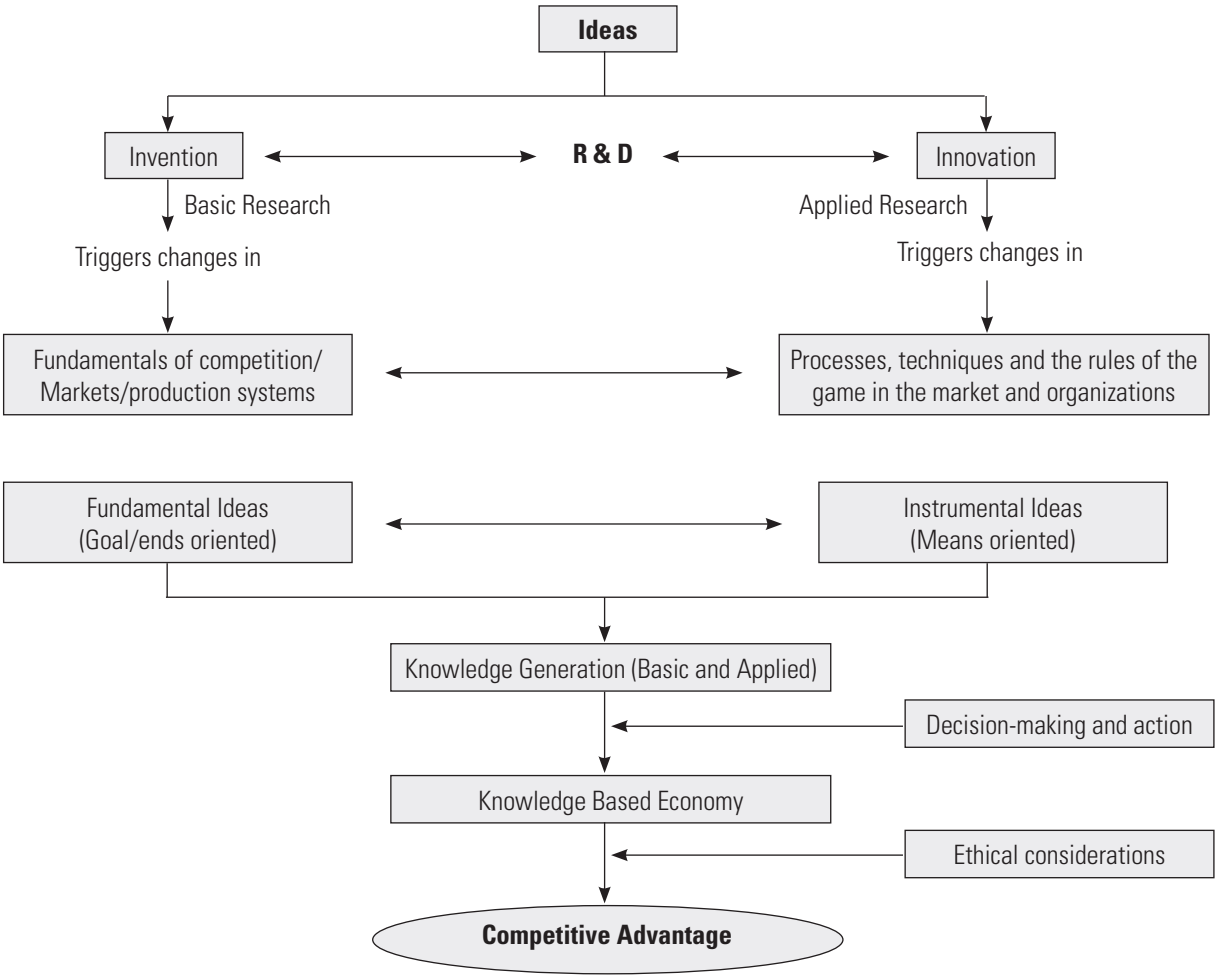


Diagram 6 Showing the Relation between Ideas and Competitive Advantage

the sake of brevity and understanding these four key concepts can be classified under two broad categories viz. (a) 'Conservation and preservation' aiming to achieve and promote sustainability in growth and its sources; and (b) 'use and consumption' can be considered as the cause and consequence of growth. In that sense, they need to be considered as the basic tenets of growth. Conservation does not advocate abstinence but parsimonious or the wise use of scarce, precious and non-renewable resources. Preservation refers mainly to the maintenance and safeguarding the ecological and environmental balance to maintain nature's cycles including the bio-chemical cycles, food chains etc. All these things can be put under the broad rubric namely the nature's balance. The term "use" in this context refers to the exploitation and utilization of natural resources (both renewable, and non-renewable) for satisfying the human needs. If overuse or over exploitation is resorted to due to the substitution of human wants/desires to human needs, then the question of ethics comes to the fore. Want/desire-induced consumption and not on the need–based one implies greed as against need. Hence growth entails ethical choices. Consumption has two dimensions viz. (a) Production and depletion and (b) Waste generation. The first one is related to 'conservation and preservation', while the second one to the capacity and sustainability of environment to receive, absorb and assimilate the wastes ranging

from kitchen residues to nuclear residues. Hence the consumption (the very objective of growth) implies in the ultimate analysis, the ethical issues.

If the four concepts were combined in right ways, they would certainly ensure sustainability. Any deviation from the 'right mix' will jeopardize sustainability. They are indispensable in the growth processes. Sustainability demands their practice across all the sectors both in letter and spirit. Besides, they can also be considered as some of the major determinants of 'good life', which is defined by ethics. Thus they have the in-built ethical dimensions in them.

To make globalization strong and stable, a different long run strategic framework is required in which the environment and the societal sustainability find their due space in managerial decisions. As a matter of fact, the ethical decision-making is not anti-development or anti-corporatization nor is it anti-profit. It is not an exclusivist concept but an all-inclusive one. Therefore the *"Profit-Market-Customer"* centric decision-making of the modern corporate/organizations can be replaced by substituting the ethical decision-making, which is considered to be *"Environment-Sustain ability-Society"* centric. In one word, it merely substitutes society to markets without sacrificing growth. Thus the primacy of society over markets is its ethos. This makes all the difference.

Society needs growth. It is an indispensable process in a dynamic society. No one can question this. However, the "Environment-Sustain ability-Society" centric approach pleads though implicitly, for the quality of growth and not growth as such[30]. As said earlier, action is growth and vice versa. Decision-making underlies all actions leading to growth. This needs to be guided by and adhered to the ethical norms, which will result in the aspired and desired growth (or the ethical growth). *This would ensure a wholesome approach to growth and its major causal factor i.e. knowledge.*

The concept of wise development thus implies the one that is conservation–oriented and environmental friendly with a larger focus on human needs than desires. In other words, when ethics is applied to the developmental process, it tends to become a wise developmental mode. Thus, a judicious balance between ethical considerations and growth is imperative. The ethical debate can be concluded as: ***Ethics without growth is deprivation. And, growth without ethics is disastrous.*** Both together would ensure a society worth living in. This is Wise Development. Needless to say that this can be achieved through reorienting and refocusing the knowledge generation towards ethical dimensions in growth processes.

Conclusions

Since competition is not fought in the market places but in the R&D labs, and since ideas are the formalized expressions of R&D efforts and knowledge in general, ideas assume greater role and significance in a knowledge-based competitive economy. Idea generation alone is just not enough to achieve growth through competition and free trade. It needs to be diffused through proper communication channels to all the segments involved i.e. uses and users as well. In that sense, practical questions take precedence over the intellectual questions (for R&D) in a competitive economy. *The generation and diffusion of ideas after ideating them in an ethical framework need to be geared towards achieving sustainable competitive advantage. This the knowledge has to achieve.*

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Current Trends in Language Usage in International Business in India – A Conceptual Study Based on Selected Multinational Corporations in Bangalore

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Abstract

Language is an important part of people's daily lives and plays a great role in their way of thinking. It determines their attitudes towards products and their decision towards purchasing products. Language is an important component of culture and has some qualities that the other components of culture cannot provide. A proper understanding of any situation is possible only when it is communicated in the language well understood by the receiver of the message. This could be an understanding of what a product is for, how to do a job in the way the Company wants it done, the company culture and behaviour as an employee of the Company can all be better understood if communicated in the receiver's native language. A number of Multinational Companies have entered India in the recent past. Originally it was trial and error for them in terms of the languages to be used. Recently they have been setting up procedures for the necessary languages to be used in different contexts. Languages used for communication between superiors and the middle level managers are different from the languages used between the middle level managers and the lower level of employees. In order to find out these trends, an empirical study was conducted among the respondents belonging to twelve different multinational corporations and the results are herein submitted in this paper. This paper has been divided into sections such as the introduction, the importance of local languages in India, a profile of the multinationals surveyed, the results of the study and the concluding remarks.

Key terms: *Culture, Language, Multinational Corporations.*

1.0. Introduction

Culture defines society and the behavioural characteristics of the members of a society are determined by the culture of the society to which they belong. Language as a component of culture plays a dominant role in the determination of the behaviour of people belonging to a culture. Language is a means of communication without which communication cannot be achieved in its right perspective. Communication becomes effective only when a message is transmitted and understood in the

same context in which it was sent. Language at its most simple is a means of communication, but psychologists and linguists now believe that the language we use can influence our behaviour and how we interact with the outside world. (BBC News, 2002). Today, as the world economy is in a state of constant transition due to globalization, language has become a vital skill in every business organization. Multinational corporations were once well ensconced in their domestic countries without a need for entering the international market. Many drivers of change, such as globalization and liberalization led to these corporations entering into so many countries that today their revenue grossed outside their countries is much more than the domestic revenue. This is because international business crosses the borders of domestic countries and enters into several other countries, popularizes their products and gains a foothold in their countries of operations. It even becomes difficult to identify the country of origin because their foreign offshoots are larger than the parent companies. The Welsh language is to be introduced into Microsoft Windows as part of a project to increase usage by minority language speakers. It is one of 40 new languages due to be added in response to complaints from around the world that youngsters were losing their native tongues. Microsoft programmes already run in 40 languages including English, Spanish, Arabic and Chinese variants. The company's worldwide public sector senior vice president Maggie Wilderotter has said that they were working with governments and academics to develop the languages over the next year, for Microsoft Windows XP and Microsoft Office 2003. (BBC News, 2004). Each country has its own language. This makes it imperative for international managers to be able to communicate in more languages than their own. The Associated Press reported in January, 2006 that the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee was considering a proposal to allocate US $1.3 billion to public schools for teaching Chinese language and culture. 00.(Mukerjee, 2006). To further complicate issues, many times some countries have more than one language spoken within its boundaries. These languages may also be the ones that are spoken by other countries as well, such as the English, French or the Spanish language which have crossed borders due to earlier colonization, or they could be local languages that are spoken only by the native people of that country. The number of languages in a country determines the amount of diversity in the country. Since India has several languages and dialects, the variance of diversity is quite large as compared to other countries of its size. Whenever businesses have had partners belonging to more than one country, they have either learnt each others' language for communication purposes or have devised a language of their own. Such is the importance of language in international business. It has been suggested that the knowledge of English offers a 'window to the world'. For many people around the world it opens up career prospects and opportunities to travel. It is estimated that 1.3 billion people will use English as a first or second language by 2050. (BBC Radio 4). The English and the Chinese put together 'Pidgin English' for the purpose of conducting business with each other. Pidgin English was the name given to a Chinese-English-Portuguese pidgin used for commerce in the Canton region during the 18th and 19th centuries. It is suggested that the word "Pidgin" is acquired from the Chinese pronunciation of the word business, but it may also be "Pigeon English" in reference to the carrier pigeon. (Wikipedia)

The importance of understanding and communicating well in a language familiar to the people with whom an international manager conducts business stems from the following two dimensions. Language can either be an enabler or a deterrent to business. When the international business uses a language familiar to the local users of the language, they attach a familiarity to the identification of the company as well as to the product. A foreign business is generally viewed as 'them' against 'us'. When a local language is used, the 'them' will most likely become one amongst 'us'. This kind of acceptance is important because the company is better accepted, and the products of the company can enjoy better sales figures. This will further lead to long term relationships and stronger business ties. Language can be a deterrent when the international business is unable to transmit the message it wants to

convey by using a language that is unfamiliar to the local consumers. Consumers may be skeptical to try out the product about which they are not clear about. Further they may misunderstand what the product stands for. The very reason for which they may use the product may differ from what the product is meant for. When satisfaction of the need for which the product is used does not come by in such cases, the product will be rejected and consumers may not try to use it ever again. It is also important to remember that consumers can become advocates of a product when they are satisfied by using it. If dissatisfaction happens in product usage, then local consumers not only individually, but as a group can totally reject the product. Further, whenever local people opine about a product, other local people listen to these opinions more than listening to a foreign company. The risk of not only product rejection, but also the rejection of the whole company as such can happen. Therefore, utmost care needs to be taken in conveying the message about the product and the company and this should be done preferably in the local language. Caution should be exercised on the translation of the language as well so as to convey the right meaning.

In order for language to be an enabler, which is the better option of the two dimensions, businesses need to adapt either:

a. Their communication strategies to the language: Consumers of a host country will tend to think of the foreign company as 'us', whenever the language barrier has been overcome. Sales pick up, and the barriers of communication are overcome. The largest community in a country and its culture determine the national culture of the country of operations for an international business. The language used by the largest community is also the language used by the majority in that country. Therefore businesses need to identify the largest community in the new country that they enter into. The language of this community must be identified and communication towards the host country consumer has to be done in this language.

b. Adapt the product strategies viz., name and description of their product offering to the language. Selling a company's product directly in a foreign market or globally in many foreign markets at the same time, entails a great sufficient amount of risk. The product name should convey the right image in the foreign countries the business plans to operate in. Therefore, the product has to be suitably evaluated for marketing in the foreign market with different languages and cultures. The areas in which the company has to concentrate in this context are product design, packaging, channel relationships, brand names, symbols, advertising visuals and themes, identity, image and positioning of product and company, prices, target customers, suppliers of marketing services, presentations and manuals. Both these strategies can bring in rich benefits as observed in several cases by international businesses.

Sometimes ordinary english words translated for overseas consumers may have unforeseen repercussions. Most products that have been successful in the domestic market will eventually be marketed abroad and the most appropriate time to research the product or brand name for foreign connotations is at the time of entry or even earlier. It is not only very expensive to change the name of the product once the product has been launched but also irrepairable damages to consumers' sentiments may have been made. It is, therefore, of utmost importance that the name of the product should be an asset rather than a detriment in other cultures. Prior research on the product names for cultural appropriateness and for the impact a new name may have on people in foreign cultures is imperative. One in four international companies in the East of England is losing business as a result of language barriers, a survey has found. The findings are in an East of England Development Agency (EEDA) study. The survey of 329 companies across the region found that 47 per cent experienced language barriers, with 25 per cent reporting that it had lost them business due to this barrier. It found that only 10 per cent of the firms had a formal language strategy (BBC News, 2004).

1.1. The Importance of Local Languages in India

A Hindi publisher says: "Remember that oft-quoted

figure of 360 million people who can read but do not read any newspaper? Two-thirds of these are Hindi speaking consumers." "Behind the mushrooming of new and parallel Hindi newspaper brands lies the story of a buoyant advertising market in the Hindi-speaking states. Publishers who are launching second titles in the same market see merit, therefore, in segmenting their readers and offering more focused audiences. It is obvious that the understanding of markets and marketing has reached new levels in Hindi publishing". Analysing the data crunched from Indian Readership Surveys between 1998 and 2005, A S Raghunath, a print media consultant, says, "At the end of the day, a Times of India will not deliver an audience in Gorakhpur. Advertisers will have to use the Hindi medium." (Bansal, 2006). Jagran Prakashan Ltd and Yahoo India have jointly announced the launch of a new co-branded Hindi news and current affairs internet property. The partnership will create a richer online Hindi user experience. (Business Standard, 2007)

From the above reports it is evident that a vernacular language is gaining in importance over that of the accepted lingua franca of our country, i.e., English. There are several multinational corporations in India with a base in Bangalore. Given this background, it was decided to conduct a survey of multinational corporations with a presence in Bangalore to find out the various language issues they face and the strategies they utilize to overcome barriers if any as well as the competitive strategies they utilise to make use of language as a strategic advantage.

This paper was conceptualised as an offshoot of the PhD thesis done with the respondents of 61 multinationals who participated in the study titled " Strategy-Culture Fit of Selected Multinational Corporations- An Empirical Study" wherein the different components of culture were studied. The various components of culture were classified as education, language, ways of communication, social structure, social mobility, religion, and attitude towards age, attitude towards time and reward systems in the said study. This paper has been written with an intention of finding out the impact that language as a single component of culture has on communication in international business. The said thesis examined the impact of culture based on the various components and how international businesses attune their strategies to the culture of the country of operations. This paper studies the current trends adapted by international businesses in India. A detailed study of the patterns of language usage has been done with the respondents of twelve multinationals with a presence in Bangalore. It will bring to the forefront how multinationals have been dealing with the differences in language, the number of languages they are supposed to know as employees of multinationals with a base in Bangalore, the training in languages offered by their employers and the official language used in business.

1.2. Profile of the Multinationals Surveyed

As per the table-1, there are four respondent companies whose origin is India, two from the United Kingdom, two from the United States of America, two from Canada, one from the Netherlands and one from Singapore. There is a wide array of activities conducted by these companies, ranging from aviation aircraft, security systems, semi conductors, telecom hardware and software, web servers, manufacture of scanners and printers, construction adhesives, manufacture of insulin, banking, financial and investment products, business process outsourcing and earth moving equipment. The intention of identifying these companies was to get as wide a coverage as possible for the exposure of languages in the context of service oriented companies or pure manufacturing companies.

1.3. The Results of the Study

1.3.1. The Official Language or the Lingua Franca of International Businesses in India

English is undoubtedly the lingua franca for multinationals based in Bangalore. All the companies used English as the official language in business. English is a commonly accepted and spoken language in Bangalore as well as in most parts of India, yet it still is a foreign language. Therefore, it was necessary to find out whether it was mandatory to know the English language before recruiting.

Company	Business Category	Home Country	Countries of operation	Employees		Connections with India
				Worldwide	In India	
A1	Aviation aircraft engineering	Canada	150	10,000	110	Joint venture with indian entity
B2	Semi conductors	Netherlands	140	37,000	800	Fully owned subsidiary
C3	Security systems, fire security Systems and access, CCTV	India	08	1,200	800	Indian company with foreign operations
D4	Application servers, web servers, databases and software services	USA	50	3,50,000	45,000	Fully owned subsidiary
E5	Telecom hardware and software	Singapore	6	6,700	4,000	Fully owned private company
F6	Consumer goods like printers, laptops, palmtops, photocopying machines, scanners	Canada	12	1,51,000	30,000	Fully owned subsidiary
G7	Tile adhesives, tiles, construction adhesives	Trent, United Kingdom	26	40,000	300	Fully owned subsidiary
H8	Simva statins, insulin	India	45	2,500	2,300	Indian export oriented unit
I9	Business Process Outsourcing	India	04	12,000	7,000	Fully owned subsidiary
J10	Banking, financial products, investment products	USA	40	10,00,000	2,00,000	Fully owned subsidiary
K11	BPO and IT services	United Kingdom	02	19,000	12,000	Acquisition of an existing Indian Company
L12	Earth moving equipment	India	02	1,500	1,500	Joint venture

Table 1 Profile of Respondent Companies

1.3.2. Mandatory requirement of English

In all the companies surveyed there is a mandatory requirement of the English language. It was then necessary to find out whether any tests were conducted in the English language at the entry level of recruitment.

1.3.3. Tests of English

Not all companies insist on entry level written tests in the English language. Some companies conduct tests in English grammar. Some companies, especially those who insist on a long term association of the employee with the company do conduct tests in the English language. They agree on a score of above three on a scale of five in terms of fluency in the language. In some companies, a language team has been appointed and they are responsible for writing the brochures of the company. In fact, such teams exist for all languages, whereby either a native speaker of the language or a qualified translator is on the team for specific countries or for specific product lines. For example, there exists a team who speaks fluent Japanese and who is responsible for any Japanese written material or for specific product lines that need to be introduced in

Japan. In some companies, oral spoken English tests are conducted for the marketing force and for those employees who are supposed to handle overseas operations in any capacity.

It is obvious that the English language still presides in importance over all other languages though it is a foreign language for India. Yet not all employees, especially the employees at the lower level are comfortable with English for working purposes. Therefore it was necessary to investigate as to which were the unofficial languages that were spoken among the employees in the working environment.

1.3.4. The Unofficial Languages

All international businesses use the local languages unofficially, depending on the region of operation. Yet English still scores over all other languages in its usage. Even unofficially, businesses use English more than any other language. In a foreign country of operations the languages that were preferred to be used were, Chinese, French, German, Spanish and Japanese. These languages depended on the country in which the business had operations. In Bangalore, all local languages like Kannada, Malayalam, Telugu, Tamil, Urdu and the national language Hindi are spoken in international businesses. Local people have been employed in operations in all Multinational Corporations who have a base in Bangalore. Whenever an Indian employee converses with a foreigner they inevitably use English only, irrespective of the nationality of the foreigner, but when they converse among themselves, they use local languages. The India technical head of one of the companies said that their headquarters was in Germany and the top bosses were all German. Yet, when they converse with the Indian Technical head, they conversed in English only. This has been a policy for conversation with any foreign employee, not necessarily an Indian employee. In this company, there are sales offices all over Southern India. When the technical head needs to communicate with the regional technical staff he requires to use local languages such as Kannada, Malayalam, Telugu and Tamil.

If there were English as well as other languages spoken at the workplace it had to be found out whether companies imparted training in any of these languages.

1.3.5. Training in Languages

Many companies impart training to the employees in English grammar and sentence formation. In fact training programmes in English are outsourced by several companies. Training programmes in languages other than English are not common for all employees. Employees deputed for overseas assignments are trained in the specific language required in that country. Some companies give a month's training along with a translator for better understanding of the foreign language. Most companies specifically said that employees with customer interaction roles required language skills. For the others, skill in the accepted lingua franca was enough. All local employees are required to know the local languages irrespective of their roles in the organization. Some companies who base their foreign employees in their home country, train such staff in the language used in the home country. A Dutch company surveyed trained their Indian employees who had to be based in Holland, in the Dutch language.

1.3.6. Localisation of Languages in Documentation

Localization in terms of using local languages does take place in written documentation. All user manuals and brochures are translated into local languages. Specialists in the local languages are employed to write the user manual and such other documentation that is to be used in the local market. Some companies said that employing local language specialists helped avoid not only language problems but also cultural problems. Further, within India also certain amount of localization is done as per different states. Local people are employed in the sales force as well in order to increase the comfort level of the consumers. For example, a Gujarati employee approaches Gujarati customers and speaks in the Gujarati language to create a rapport between them.

1.3.7. Exposure to Foreign Languages

Most companies do not insist on even a modest exposure to any foreign languages other than English. In some companies it is a hidden request for some exposure to at least one foreign language. In some other companies employees are told about the necessity of exposure to foreign languages, but not insisted upon. For selection to the higher cadre of jobs, being adept in foreign languages is preferable. Some companies opined that as the employee climbs up the organization ladder he needs to lead teams whose members may not all be from the same country and so foreign language proficiency is a necessity. Generally for the Bangalore multinational job scenario, proficiency in the English language as well as local languages is considered sufficient. Only one company which deals with security systems insists on a minimum exposure to foreign languages. Yet some employees opined that proficiency in foreign languages is a value addition to their qualifications, the English language opens up chances for them to go to the UK and the US, but for foreign assignments in other countries, other languages are mandatory. For employees who perform customer-interaction roles, proficiency in German, French and Spanish languages is preferred. Most of the multinationals were of the opinion that the requirement for particular foreign languages was client specific.

1.3.8. Multilingual means Better Prospects

Being bilingual or multilingual certainly seems to have advantages. Multi lingual skill in the local languages is advantageous for all jobs, but when an opportunity for a foreign assignment arises, the chances of considering an employee who has foreign language skills is higher. Some companies mentioned that the global sourcing department required multilingual skills more than any other departments.

1.3.9. Change in Language Requirement

Given the changing scenario in Bangalore, with multinationals flooding the state, it was necessary to find out whether there has been any change in the requirement for languages in the past few years. Most companies did not find any change, but one factor that stood out was the recent inclusion of the national language, Hindi, in the list of local languages that are necessary to be spoken in business circles in Bangalore. As for foreign languages, in addition to the other languages, one company mentioned that the Korean language also needs to be learnt in recent times.

1.3.10. Localization of Product Names

Though various advertisements are seen in the media that include Hindi words in the messages conveyed, none of the companies surveyed had customized or localized their product names to meet local language demands. Their products were sold all over the world using the same names in whichever country they chose to operate in.

1.3.11. Foreign Phrases in Conversations

Some companies felt that it is necessary to use some phrases that foreigners frequently themselves use in conversations. They opined that it increases the comfort level in conversations because foreigners feel that these are adapting efforts made towards them. Even an accent like theirs helped. Companies also cautioned that whenever some phrases are not understood properly, they should not be used because foreigners can get offended very easily and are quite sensitive to these issues. Other companies strictly warned against using phrases and said that the conversation should be restricted to the English language. Customers who are not in the peer group need to be handled very tactfully in conversation. Any slightest disturbance can aid in simply losing the customer. People from the UK like to use formal channels for work procedures and for communication. People from the US do not mind if chat messages convey business correspondence. Some companies felt that phrases that are generally used by foreigners have to used carefully. In the UK, the word ‘anyway’ was still the same, but in the US, it became ‘anyways’. When speaking to the Chinese and Japanese business counterparts, it was necessary to speak slowly so that they could understand better. Further some companies were of the opinion that

Indians should avoid using the colloquial phrases that they use locally when speaking English, in order to avoid confusion among foreigners in understanding what is being conveyed.

1.3.12. Working Styles

One important fact that emerged without probing in this study was that the working styles of Indians was very different from that of Europeans. Irrespective of being on duty on a project, Europeans like to space out their working patterns. Time with family, weekend breaks are as important to them as getting back to work and executing the project well afterwards. As compared to them, Indians have a different working style. When on a project they sacrifice their free time to get the project done. When unpleasant news needs to be told, Europeans like to be told about it straightaway, without beating about the bush. Indians, on the other hand like to delay and cushion the unpleasant news before it is told.

1.4. Conclusions

Finally, author Donald De Palma quotes the former German Chancellor Willy Brandt: ``If I am selling to you, I speak your language. If I am buying, dann muessen Sie Deutsch sprechen.' Roughly translated, If I'm buying from you, you speak my language. (Mukherjee, 2006). This quote sums up the feeling that all consumers have as a requirement today. Businesses which cross borders essentially have to adapt language strategies for success in their new countries of operations. Bilingual employees are more valuable because they can communicate with more than one type of customer. Employees who are not fluent in the lingua franca of business may not share their ideas with management because they are not comfortable speaking. And those ideas left unsaid could cost the company money in the long run. (Holmes Tamara) Universities have also been offering courses in English and other languages to suit the necessities of conducting business after having identified the need for proficiency in languages. The Times of India has reported on July 27, 2007, that a language of 1,500 words called Globish, a language meant for all professional communications globally has been propounded by Jean-Paul Nerriere, a former IBM vice-president, who thinks that there is need for a language that could help professionals to connect across languages and cultures. (Sinha, 2007).

In this paper, a sincere attempt has been made to uncover the language adaptation strategies made by international businesses in India. There is immense scope for further research in the field of language as a component of culture in studying the language used for different types and levels of documentation, in business meetings that are conducted at various levels, domestically or across borders, and any such intricate inner circle details that this study has not been able to unravel. It requires an indepth, on the spot study of more than one international business organisation indulging in businesses of different types. There is also scope for a detailed study on the other components of culture.

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Product Design as a Critical Success Factor in TQM Organizations

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Abstract

Globally, the automotive industry is transforming itself- from the design studios, to the modular assembly to the new shop floor practices, to delight the customer. Perhaps the most dynamic change and also the biggest challenge in the automotive industry is its relationship with the customers. Increasingly customers are being given the opportunity to customize their purchases, including everything from exterior shape to the interior features. In order to comply to the requirements of the global customers, a constant vigil on product innovation through better and better design is the solution. TQM is recognized as a competitive edge worldwide. Especially in manufacturing sector in order to deliver better and better (Dean and Bowen, 1994).This paper tries to understand how the Indian auto component industry has delivered better products to customers' requirements by integrating the TQM philosophy into their processes. This study on TQM implementation in Indian auto component industries was focused on auto component manufacturing companies in and around Chennai, Tamilnadu. Primary data was collected from the quality managers and executives of QS 9000 / TS 16949 certified auto Component-manufacturing companies in Chennai. The data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire. Extensive review of literature established factors which were critical for TQM in organisations. Statistical analysis of these critical success factors was performed in order to understand the important drivers of TQM among certified auto component manufacturers. This study was an attempt to categorise the key drivers of TQM and evolve strategies to leverage the critical success factors to the organisational growth. Since the study was limited only to auto component manufacturers in and around Chennai, the study can be extended to other Indian auto component clusters, Pune and Gurgaon. Also an analogous study can be conducted among non-certified suppliers to original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), who are implementing TQM practices. Despite these limitations, however, the study does sheds light on the important Critical Success Factors (CSFs) on TQM, namely supplier quality management, process management and product design. Since the focus of this paper is on product innovation and design in the automotive industry, the role of product design as a very important critical success factor for TQM implementation is discussed in greater detail.

Keywords: *Critical Success Factors, Total Quality Management*

1. Introduction

Post liberalization and new economic reforms in 1992, Indian auto industries in specific, started to gear up to meet the requirements of their global customers. The entry of foreign auto companies during the early 90's changed quality standards and impacted the complexity of the parts required by the Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs). The Indian component manufacturers had to be not only competitive globally, but also reduce their defect rates dramatically and master new technologies. In order to comply with the requirements of the global customers, a constant vigil on product innovation through better and better design was the solution. They started practicing TQM philosophy to compete and win. This paper tries to understand how the Indian auto component industry has delivered better products to customers' requirements by integrating the TQM philosophy into their processes and evolving better products to suit the customers. This empirical paper is based on a research conducted to study the critical success factors (CSFs) for TQM implementation in QS 9000 certified auto component manufacturing companies in and around Chennai, Tamilnadu.

2. Review of literature

The CSFs of TQM can be described as best practices or ways in which "firms and their employees undertake business activities in all key processes: leadership, planning, customers, suppliers, community relations , production and supply of products and services, and their use in benchmarking ……"(Australian Manufacturing Council, 1994, p.1). Identifying CSFs is the key for structuring environmental analysis and organisational strategies for successful implementation of TQM. There is an important link between environmental analysis and CSFs leading to organisational success (Digman 1990). The critical success factor analysis method has an important meaning to TQM through identification of core processes that are critical in Total quality management implementation. Also a quality management program needs to identify critical performance indicators or success factors to gauge its success.

Saraph et al.(1989) conducted a pioneering study to identify the CSFs of TQM that must exist in a business unit to achieve effective quality management. He also developed measures of each critical success factor and overall organisational quality management. Many empirical research studies followed after Saraph's work, in order to test and understand the TQM CSFs, viz., Anderson et al (1994), Rao et al.(1999) and Flynn et al (1995). From a review of all these studies, it can be concluded that most of the TQM CSFs are commonly proven in all the studies. Those common factors were chosen as the CSFs of the framework of this study.

The identified ten CSFs included in this study are : Top Management Commitment, Strategic Planning, Quality Measurement, Benchmarking, Training, HR Focus, Process Management , Supplier Quality Management, Customer Focus and Product Design.

The outcomes of TQM concentrate on the achievements of the organisation towards its stakeholders (those who have an interest in the organisation) and how they can be measured and targeted. Identifying the effect of TQM on organisational performance is an important body of TQM research. Most empirical research shows how TQM influences a wide extent of result, such as employee and customer satisfaction, product quality, economic results and so on (Dow et al., 1999). Thus the outcomes included in this framework are customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction, supplier satisfaction and operational performance.

3. Framework of the study

Among the most demonstrative philosophies of the TQM, Business Excellence Models such as the Malcolm Baldrige Award and the EFQM are well accepted, Saraph, Benson and Schroder (1989), Black and Porter (1996), Anderson, Rungtusanatham and Schroeder (1994). Among Excellence models, the Baldrige criteria is a conceptual framework that addresses the principal domains of TQM, is updated to reflect current thinking on TQM and is not limited to a single perspective Dean and Bowen (1994). Based on this perspective of literature and consensus was obtained from TQM experts, Malcolm Baldrige Award Criterion was adopted as the basis for the frame work of this study as shown in Diagram 1.

The logic behind this business excellence model is that by improving 'how the organisation operates' – the 'CSFs' – there will be an inevitable improvement in the 'results' (outcomes).

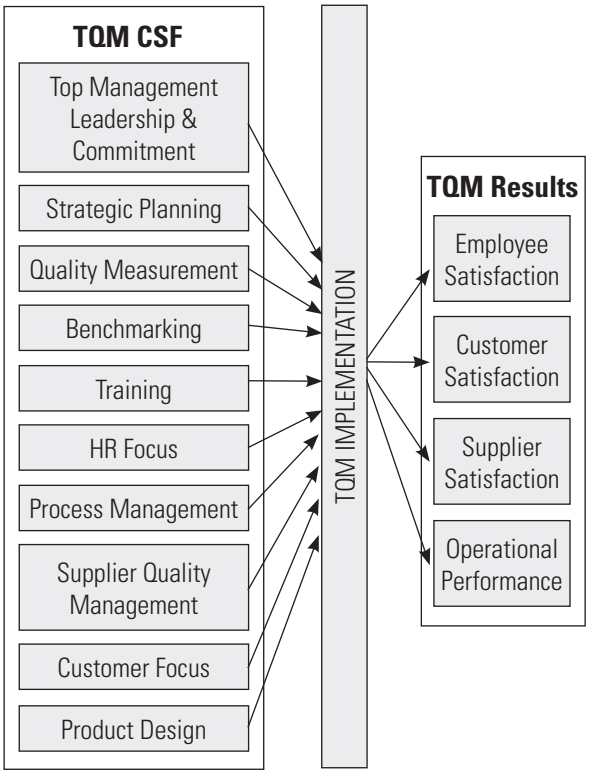


Diagram 1 Framework of the Study

4. Hypothesis of the Study

As this study tries to understand the importance given to these CSFs and Outcomes in certified auto component manufacturing companies, the null hypothesis formulated is as follows:

Ho: There is no difference in perceived level of importance of TQM CSFs and outcomes.

5. Research Instrument

Based on the review of literature, post identification of the CSFs and the outcomes, items were developed to measure each dimension (critical success factor / outcome) of the study. Totally fourteen dimensions, which were developed formed the research instrument (structured questionnaire). The respondents were asked to evaluate the emphasis of the various dimensions on a five-point scale.

6. Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument was empirically tested for validity by CFA (Confirmatory Factor Analysis), correlation and regression. The reliability was established by establishing Cronbach's coefficient alpha.

Individual items in the model have to be investigated to see how closely they represent the same construct (Ahire et al 1996). Then for unidimensionality checking, a measurement model is specified for each construct and CFA is run for all the constructs. The resulting Comparative Fit Index (CFI) is equal to the discrepancy function adjusted for sample size and usually ranges from 0 to 1, with a larger indicating better value fit. Recommended values for CFI are 0.9 and above (very good), 0.8 and above (good) and 0.7 and above (satisfactory) (Hu and Bentler 1999). Since all the CFI values for this study were above 0.7 as shown in table 1, a satisfactory unidimensionality for the scales was established. This instrument has factoral validity because the items have loaded as they were hypothesized, when the items were constructed.

Since the measurement instrument was developed based on defined quality management practices of Saraph et al (1989), Powell (1995) and Samson and Terziovski (1999), it is therefore considered to have content validity. In the present study, as there are fourteen constructs, a total of 91 discriminant validity checks (that is 14C2) have been carried out. All the 91 tests were statistically significant at a level of 0.01, indicating that all the 14 constructs are distinct constructs – a strong demonstration of discriminant validity.

Reliability relates to the extent to which an experiment, test, or any measuring procedure yields the same results on repeated trials (Carmines and Zeller 1979). Internal consistency is measured by calculating a statistic known as Cronbach's coefficient alpha (Nunnally 1978, Cronbach 1951). Coefficient alpha measures internal consistency reliability among a group of items combined to form a single scale. It is a statistic that reflects the

No	Variable	No of Items	RMSEA	BFI	CFI
	Critical Success Factors				
1	Top Management Leadership	11	0.25	0.756	0.767
2	Strategic Planning	3	0.07	0.972	0.984
3	Quality Measurement	16	0.25	0.722	0.735
4	Benchmarking	4	0.15	0.888	0.904
5	Training	4	0.20	0.960	0.963
6	HR Focus	8	0.12	0.944	0.957
7	Process Management	11	0.30	0.780	0.787
8	Supplier Quality Management	9	0.24	0.883	0.890
9	Customer Focus	8	0.30	0.852	0.857
10	Product Design	11	0.22	0.865	0.874
	Outcomes				
11	Employee Satisfaction	4	0.34	0.956	0.957
12	Customer Satisfaction	4	0.15	0.988	0.990
13	Supplier Relationship	3	0.00	0.974	0.998
14	Operational Performance	12	0.31	0.778	0.785

Table 1 Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis*

*EQS software (for Windows 6.0) was used to conduct the confirmatory factor analysis.

homogeneity of the scale. The value of Cronbach's alpha above 0.7 is usually acceptable (Nunnally 1978). The Cronbach's alpha values for this study were above 0.7 as shown in table 2.

Thus this testifies that all the scales are internally consistent and have acceptable reliability values in their original form.

7. Design and Methodology

Primary data were collected from certified auto component-manufacturing units in and around Chennai, Tamilnadu, India. Chennai was primarily chosen, as it is the leading auto component cluster, contributing to more than 45% of Indian auto component exports. It also has a concentrated auto industrial belt, which leading international major auto players have made their base. Among the 13 Indian Deming award winning companies, eight companies are based in Chennai thus driving a TQM culture in the Tamilnadu automotive industry. It has the largest number of ISO/QS Certified

Construct	Cronbach's coefficient alpha (a)
Critical Success Factors	
Top management	0.9303
Strategic planning	0.7119
Quality measurement	0.9705
Benchmarking	0.7002
Training	0.8186
HR focus	0.9164
Process management	0.9773
Supplier quality management	0.9708
Customer focus	0.9680
Product design	0.9754
Outcomes	
Employee satisfaction	0.9615
Customer satisfaction	0.9273
Supplier relationship	0.9416
Operational Performance	0.9839

Table 2 Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha (a) Values

automotive Companies in India (ACMA Report 2006).

The master list of certified companies was obtained from quality certifications bodies Bureau Veritas Quality International (BVQI) and Det Norse Veritas (DNV). Companies with more than two year of certification were only chosen for the study, as they would be able to assess any impact of the quality certification on TQM in their organizations. The respondents of this study were quality managers and executives who were working for more than three years in the company. Data was obtained from 135 certified companies, with a response rate of 43% .

8. Statistical Analysis

In order to identify the key CSFs and outcomes of TQM implementation, the descriptives (mean and standard deviation) of the collected data were obtained for all the ten CSFs and four outcome variables and the results are as shown in table 3.

9. Analysis and Discussion

It can be observed that among the CSFs, the respondents perceived supplier Quality Management(4.14) as the most important CSF of TQM implementation, closely followed by Process Management (4.10) and Product Design (4.01) . Whereas among outcomes, Supplier relationship (4.33) was perceived as the most important outcome of TQM implementation.

Thus the hypothesis Ho is rejected.

The focus on Supplier Quality Management (4.14) as the most important enabler of TQM implementation, can be attributed to the intent of the QS 9000 standard itself. The intent of the standard is to force automotive supplier organisations to build systems that prevent the occurrence of problems and allow for continuous improvement to prevent recurring problems Tom et al (2000). Companies select vendors based on an evaluation criterion. These 'supplier partners' team with the companies in meeting customer, government and safety requirements.

The enabler perceived to be second important was Process Management (4.10). QS 9000 standard is fundamentally based on ISO 9000 standard quality assurance standard. The primary focus in this standard is basically on standardising procedures and work flow, so as to have better process control. Thus the emphasis on supplier management and process management can be attributed to the intent of the QS 9000 standard itself (http://www.qs-9000.org).

Focus on product design is also perceived to be a very important CSF for TQM implementation. Product Design is one of the most important non-price factors which determines the success of a product. As the product life cycle matures, more competitors enter the market and the chief role of design is in product differentiation; through quality, appearance, performance, ease of use, reliability, reparability and so on (Walsh et. al. 1992). Simply having a customer focus and acquiring customers may not be sufficient for success since customers can be easily lost if new entrants in the market attract them. Therefore companies must strive to attain customer loyalty and retention by understanding the customer requirements and designing products accordingly.

Product Design is seen as being relevant in today's Indian automotive industry, and the following factors also act as catalysts:

- World Bank and Indian EXIM policy (post liberalization) has favoured the opening up of markets through tariff reduction. This has exposed local producers to cheaper and better designed products, so firms are being challenged on both domestic and export markets.
- Particularly in the automotive industry , product characteristics such as design, frequency of new product introduction and quality are becoming increasingly important. Price competitiveness (while still important) is diminishing in priority (Kaplinsky, 2005).
- The newly industrialised countries of South East Asia have successfully used product design to produce competitive products for world markets.

Among the outcomes of TQM, Supplier relationship (4.33) was perceived as the most important outcome of TQM implementation. QS 9000 is a mandatory automotive standard to be complied with to become a

supplier to the OEM and tier 1 companies. It prescribes a dedicated team of quality suppliers. Supplier relationship was perceived as the most important outcome as they have built a strong supplier base. The least important outcome of TQM implementation was operational performance. Operational performance here implies shop floor performance in terms of productivity, set up time and others. This may be because of the fact the respondents were not able to correlate the shop floor performance to the TQM practices. This is substantiated by Flynn B.B., Schroeder R.G. and Sakakibara S.(1995), who feel that it is very difficult to detect statistically the direct effects of TQM by using outcome criteria such as operational performance. Thus further investigation needs to be done specifically in auto industry to understand the impact of TQM implementation on operational performance.

10. Limitations and Scope for Further Research

This study has some limitations, which may be considered for future research. Although the survey results were derived from a single industry, that is the Indian auto component industry, the study was restricted to companies in and around Chennai. Future research may collect data from other regions or auto clusters, Pune and NCR. In order to improve external validity of the instrument, additional studies would be needed, with increased sample sizes, geographical diversity, organisation type and so on.

The findings are based on the use of self-reported survey data, which may be affected by response biases. It is also important to validate if that other major constructs related to TQM implementation process (including communication, employee participation, degree of empowerment) should be added to the conceptual framework underlying this study.

It is proposed that future research be conducted in other types of organisations such as service and other manufacturing sectors, using a similar approach. New studies can be conducted to explore the relationship between the variables within the context of the country, location factors, culture, firm and industry type and other external and internal factors.

Sl No.	CSFs	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Top Management Leadership & Commitment	3.73	0.27
2	Strategic Planning	2.71	0.47
3	Quality Measurement	3.52	0.19
4	Benchmarking	3.12	0.34
5	Training	3.53	0.25
6	HR Focus	3.83	0.21
7	**Process Management**	**4.10**	**0.23**
8	**Supplier Quality Management**	**4.14**	**0.18**
9	Customer Focus	3.98	0.23
10	**Product Design**	**4.01**	**0.20**
Outcomes			
11	Employee Satisfaction	4.13	0.36
12	Customer Satisfaction	4.31	0.23
13	Supplier Relationship	4.33	0.34
14	Operational Performance	3.93	0.22

Table 3 Descriptives – Mean and Standard Deviation (N=135)

11. Conclusions

Globally, the automotive industry is transforming itself- from the design studios, to the modular assembly to the new shop floor practices, to delight the customer. Perhaps the most dynamic change and also the biggest challenge in the auto industry is its relationship with the customers. Increasingly customers are being given the opportunity to customize their purchases, including everything from exterior shape to the interior features. Customers are not only looking for customisation, but also want speed of delivery. The 'order to delivery' time – is steadily reducing, in a sense the production process is shrinking! And of necessity, so is the design process, which is compelled to keep up with the velocity of consumer trends. In order to comply to the requirements of the "New Order Global Customer", product design has to be a dynamic process embedded in the TQM way of work life.

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A Study on The Effectiveness of Search Engines in E-Marketing*

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Abstract

E-marketing plays a major role in the globalised environment, as it contributes to the economic growth and ease of trading. Considering marketing as an economic engine to drive global development, this research seeks to understand the practices and activities of electronic marketing, marketing performance and the effectiveness of search engines. In order to do this a comparative study is made between various search engines. The research also highlights the techniques of measuring e-marketing performance. The main aim of this work is to identify links between the conceptual framework and empirical analysis in the field of e-business, in particular, e-marketing because they appear to be highly integrated, and if reviewed separately may present distorted results. A purposive sampling approach was used,. Quantitative data was collected through structured questionnaires for testing hypotheses and address the research objectives.

Keywords/ Phrases: *E-marketing, Search Engines, Consumer Perceptions.*

1. Introduction

Contemporary business strategies employ E-marketing techniques to promote the product lines by creating websites with blogging software and invoking them from the main sales site. Agencies like Google, Yahoo and affiliate programs such as Amazon, eBay and Commission Junction help business agencies to promote their products through web based technologies. E-marketing (Electronic marketing) is a modern business practice associated with trading of goods and services through internet and other electronic means.

According to Strauss and Frost (2001) E-marketing is defined as: "The use of electronic data and applications for planning and executing the conception, distribution and pricing of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives". E-marketing techniques should be efficient in mining the customer and also exchange the information between the customer and the organization taking into consideration the factors such as speed, accuracy, security etc. This paper deals with impact and analysis on marketing performance and effectiveness in the E-business.

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1.1. The problem

Consumers are increasingly using internet for their marketing activities. Marketers use e-marketing as an effective tool to reach potential customers and thereby receive instantaneous results. It is to be noted that consumer behavior is a significant factor in every form of marketing. In this context it is essential to study the relationship between the-marketing performance and e-marketing strategies and also know the effect of e-marketing on all the-marketing activities of the business. Hence the research problem is to find the impact of marketing performance and effectiveness of E-marketing strategies.

1.2. Objectives

The objectives of the study are,

1) To analyze the relationship of e-marketing with marketing performance;
2) To analyze the consumer perceptions towards various search engines; and
3) To suggest strategies to organizations in improving their e-marketing activities.

1.3. Hypotheses

In view of the literature review and the previous discussion on E-marketing strategies, the following hypotheses have been constructed. The study comprises of conceptual and empirical work to test these hypotheses.

Following are the hypotheses statements:

H1: E-marketing could give marketers access to large number of consumers

H2: There are significant differences among users of different search engines towards e-marketing.

1.4. Limitations of Research

A number of constraints served as limitations in this study. These included the sample size, access to computers and homogeneity of subjects. The use of purposive sampling method and homogeneous structure of the sample made the obtained results difficult to generalize to a larger population. The research work is limited to few Internet users.

2. Review of Literature

Philip Kotler, in his early books, defines marketing as an activity to achieve specific goals. In his own words "Marketing is human activity directed at satisfying needs and wants through exchange processes" (Kotler, 2006). This definition is very well respected among the-marketing scholars but it does not make the idea of marketing simpler. A self explanatory and more descriptive definition of marketing has given at cfdccariboo.com; they recognize-marketing as the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to satisfy customers. (cfdccariboo.com/glossary.htm). This definition enlightens marketing in a simple manner and the activities like planning and promotion is brought into the domain of marketing and emphasis on the customer satisfaction. Marketing practitioners and academics have devoted considerable effort in studying Business – to – Business (B2B) e-marketing. Although there are a wide range of researches conducted on B2B [Hoffman et al. (1999), Hoffman and Novak (1996), Porter (2001) …], but there is a very few number of researches on B2B in Small Business Enterprise's, one of it had been conducted by Ng (2005) to develop a preliminary framework to select B2B e-business models.

Day (1990) argues that the firms' survival depends on its capacity and that value is defined by customers. The value should be measured to understand the-marketing performance and success factors. Kokkinaki & Ambler (1999) outline six categories for marketing performance and success measures. They are

- Financial measures
- Competitive market measures
- Consumer Behavior measures
- Consumer Intermediate measures
- Direct Customer measures and
- Innovative measures

3. Methodology

Primary and secondary data are collected for the purpose of the study. Primary data is collected through questionnaire and interviews to address the various

levels of study. The questions were appropriate and easy for the respondent to answer based on the general principle of having a structured methodology, strategy and techniques employed. A descriptive design was adopted to describe the attitudes, opinions and views of internet users.

3.1. Sampling design

The target population was identified as all the internet users of Bangalore city. Unit of investigation was identified as all the internet users who visit browsing centers in Bangalore city. As no comprehensive sampling frame of the population was available, samples for the study were chosen by using systematic random sampling due to time and cost feasibility. Every fifth customer entering or leaving browsing centers was selected as a sample respondent. The data was collected from 100 internet users across browsing centers.

4. Analysis and Interpretations

4.1. Most Widely Used Search Engine

The findings point out that the most widely used search engine is Google (53%), followed by Yahoo (28%), MSN (16%) and others (3%). The study further crystallized the demographic groups to identify the most widely used search engines by different groups. The chi-square results show no significant differences among the age, gender and income groups' which goes to show across all the groups the preference for search engine remains uniform. Google is the most widely used search engine across all the demographic groups.

Preferences	AGE					Total
	Less than 18	18-25 years	25 to 35 years	35 to 45 years	45+	
Google	12	22	12	5	2	53
Yahoo	4	13	7	4	0	28
MSN	6	7	3	0	0	16
Others	1	2	0	0	0	3
Total	23	44	22	9	2	100

Table 1 Preference of Search Engines Across Age Groups

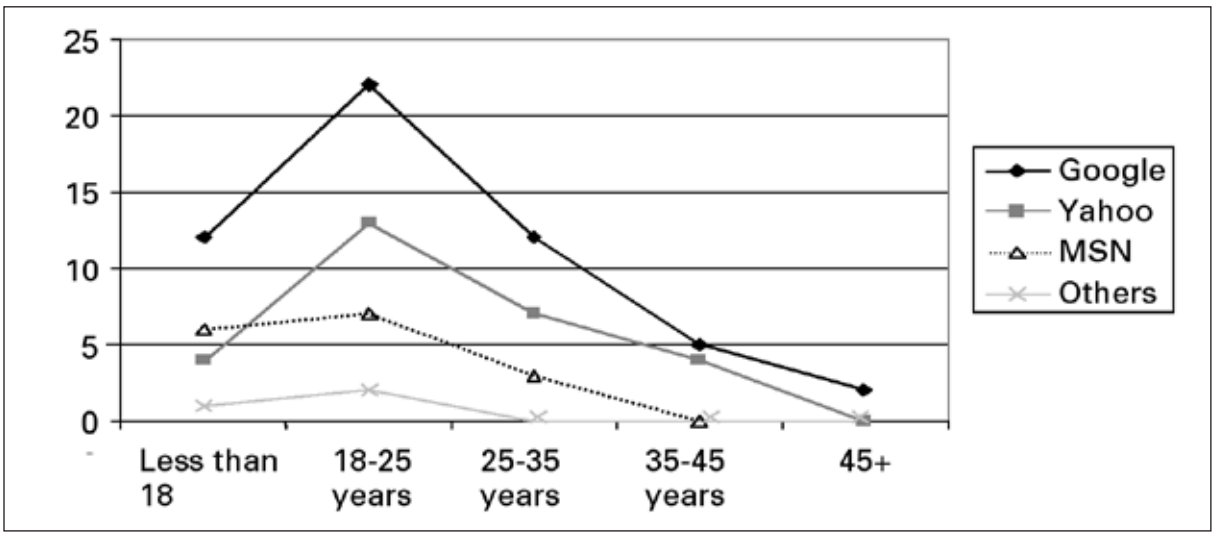


Figure 1 Preference of Search Engines Across Age Groups

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.217(a)	12	.768
Likelihood Ratio	11.064	12	.523
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.847	1	.092

Table 2 Chi-Square Tests

Preferences	GENDER		Total
	Male	Female	
Google	31	22	53
Yahoo	15	13	28
MSN	5	11	16
Others	0	3	3
Total	51	49	100

Table 3 Preferences of Search Engines Across Gender

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.884(a)	3	.076
Likelihood Ratio	8.104	3	.044
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.762	1	.016

Table 4 Chi-Square Tests

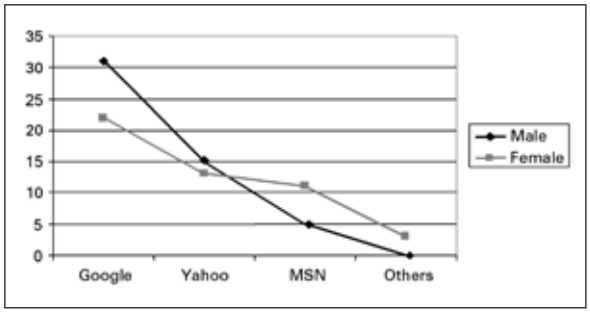


Figure 2 Preferences of Search Engines Across Gender

Preferences	INCOME				Total
	Less than 10000/ month	10000-15000/ month	15000 to 20000/month	Above 20000/ month	
Google	8	20	8	17	53
Yahoo	7	6	3	12	28
MSN	3	6	1	6	16
Others	1	1	1	0	3
Total	19	33	13	35	100

Table 5 Preferences of Search Engines Across Income Groups

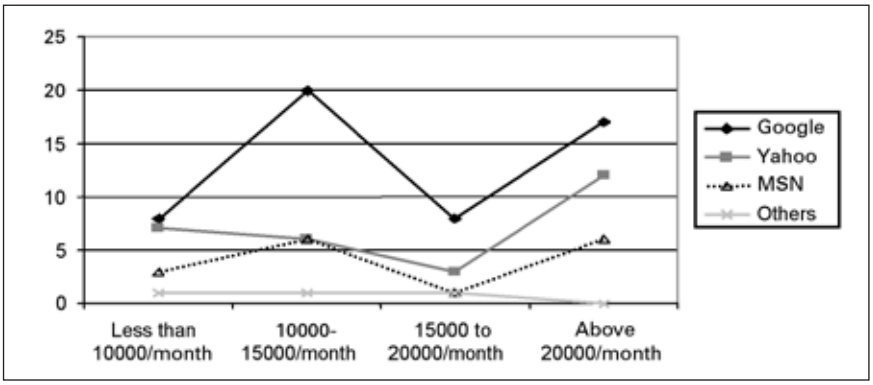


Figure 3 Preferences of Search Engines Across Income Groups

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.384(a)	9	.701
Likelihood Ratio	7.312	9	.605
Linear-by-Linear Association	.183	1	.669

Table 6 Chi-Square Tests

4.2. Reach across different brands

The table-7 shows the users perception towards e-marketing. 78% of the respondents feel that e-marketing is effective in reaching many people. Again the chi-square results show that there is no significant difference among different search engine users and there is uniformity in their opinion towards reach of e-marketing business.

	Google	Yahoo	MSN	Others	Total
Reaches Many	41	21	14	2	78
Reaches few	12	7	2	1	22
Total	53	28	16	3	100

Table 7 Reach Across Different Brands

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.226(a)	3	.747
Likelihood Ratio	1.315	3	.726
Linear-by-Linear Association	.113	1	.737

Table 8 Chi-Square Tests

4.3. Awareness of e-marketing business among consumers

64% of the respondents claim that they understand the e-marketing business, while 27% of them admit that they do not understand the process of e-marketing business while 9% of them are not clear. The chi-square results show that there is no significant difference among different search engine users and there is uniformity in their opinion towards awareness of e-marketing business.

	Google	Yahoo	MSN	Others	Total
Understand the business	39	16	8	1	64
Doesn't understand	9	10	7	1	27
Can't say	5	2	1	1	9
Total	53	28	16	3	100

Table 9 Awareness Across Different Brands

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.589(a)	6	.198
Likelihood Ratio	7.866	6	.248
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.211	1	.073

Table 10 Chi-Square Tests

4.4. E-marketing as a tool to build relationship with the consumers

74% of the respondents claim that e-marketing is a tool which helps build relationship with the customers, while 12% opined otherwise and 14% of them are not clear. The chi-square results show significant differences among different search engine users with regards to their opinion towards e-marketing as a tool to build relationship with the customers. From table 11 it is clear that users of Google strongly feel that e-marketing is an important tool to build relationship with customers whilst users of Yahoo hold different opinion and opine that e-marketing doesn't help build relationship with customers.

	Google	Yahoo	MSN	Others	Total
Helps marketers build relationship	50	10	12	2	74
Doesn't	3	15	3	0	21
Can't say	0	3	1	1	5
Total	53	28	16	3	100

Table 11 E-marketing as a Tool to Build Relationship with the Consumers

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.199(a)	6	.045
Likelihood Ratio	6.539	6	.366
Linear-by-Linear Association	.043	1	.837

Table 12 Chi-Square Tests

4.5. Conversion of search visits to sales

One more important aspect of the study was to find the impact of sales. 54 % of the respondents say that search visits actually convert to sales. 46% of the respondents say that search visits don't convert to sales. Most of the Google users say that search visits are converted to sales (42 out of 53). Users of yahoo and MSN say there search visits are not converted to sales. These differences are confirmed by chi-square results which show significant differences at .05 levels of confidence.

	Google	Yahoo	MSN	Others	Total
Search visits convert to sales	42	10	2	0	54
Search visits not convert to sales	11	18	14	3	46
Total	53	28	16	3	100

Table 13 Conversion of Search Visits to Sales

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.350(a)	3	.002
Likelihood Ratio	17.457	3	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	15.063	1	.000

Table 14 Chi-Square Tests

5.0. Conclusions and Recommendations

This research strongly supports the value of e-marketing. The findings of research prove that e-marketing is effective and fast method to access large number of potential consumers. The fast based progress brings in great scope of opportunities of marketers to increase the audience through wider market access. The constantly changing market conditions which are based on technology helps us in discovering interesting facts about consumer behavior as well as approach of the marketers. It could be found that the customer activity as listed below would enable the marketer to formulate his strategies.

The findings point out that the most widely used search engine is Google (53%) followed by Yahoo (28%). The study further crystallized the demographic groups to identify the most widely used search engines by different groups. The chi-square results do not show significant differences among the age, gender and income groups' which goes to show across all the groups the preference for search engine remains uniform.

Majority of the respondents (78%) feel that e-marketing is effective in reaching many people. The chi-square results show that there is no significant difference among different search engine users and there is uniformity in their opinion towards reach of e-marketing business.

Majority of the respondents (64%) claim that they understand the e-marketing business; the chi-square results show that there is no significant difference among different search engine users and there is uniformity in their opinion towards awareness of e-marketing business.

Majority of the respondents (74%) claim that e-marketing is a tool which helps build relationship with the customers. The chi-square results show significant differences among different search engine users with regards to their opinion towards e-marketing as a tool to build relationship with the customers. The study revealed that users of Google strongly feel that e-marketing is an important tool to build relationship with customers whilst users of Yahoo hold different opinion and opine that e-marketing doesn't help build relationship with customers.

One more important aspect of the study was to find the impact of sales. Good number of respondents (54%) agreed that the search visits actually convert to sales.

However, the following steps could be taken by marketers to improve the-marketing strategies thereby creating impact and enhancing the-marketing performance:

1) Converting browsers to prospective "buyers"
2) Strategies have to be formulated so as to catch the eyes of the beholder.
3) When a browser is online it is very essential for the organization to see that he is converted as a regular visitor of the website and thereby converting him as a prospective buyer.
4) Quality of Service is one of the attributes and that plays a significant role in positioning in consumers mind. There should be a strong human resource and software assistant, for answering the queries of the customers, dispatching goods and follow-up.
5) Online catalogues to fully transactional sites from the basic brochures and all other necessary information must be extended offering full support to the customers from acquisition, retention, and all other stages of the buying process. The mechanism should be very sophisticated in offering online services to both prospects and customers.
6) The users of Internet are skeptical in using e-marketing services, basically due to fraud by unauthorized group. To eliminate such fraud the industries should provide a strong security network with firewall and password protection.

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Fooled by Randomness - The Hidden Role of Chance in Life and in Markets

Nassim Nicholas Taleb, -- 2001, Texere LLC

Reviewer: Jacob Thomas[1] and Lalith Achoth[2]

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2. University of Veterinary Sciences, Bangalore

Nassim Nicholas Taleb as his name indicates has a complex origin: Greek-Turkish probably, domiciled in the U.S. No wonder, chance becomes the hero of his life. The survivor wins the bet. There is little scope for planning or for direction. Still Taleb admittedly made money in the Wall Street. Is it only chance or clever observation coupled with scrupulous risk aversion? One would never know from the book. Because this charming book is about neither markets nor chance, and money is kept at a place where it should be. It is about Taleb's love of philosophy, mathematics and literature. How love of knowledge can transcend the narrow streets of super-specialisation and embrace a classicist view is what he is trying to tell us in the book.

It should be a mandatory first read for researchers in any discipline. Taleb's eclectic interests range from anything mathematical and scientific to the literary and poetic. There is hardly anything left intellectual or artistic which Taleb does not have an opinion about.

Probability for Taleb, it is not the calculation of odds in a deterministic way, it is more about the understanding, in a stoic manner, of the fact that we know very little about what is outside us and probably more importantly, what is within us.

His abject contempt for newspapers and the media in general is something all sane people share. His puzzle on the false positives in testing of costly drugs deserves to be the warming signal to all those who troop to the Big-name hospitals, with Bigger-name specialists who hand out death verdicts, sweet -coated with "Don't worry, we will manage it. We have excellent facilities here; meaning "It may take a few months or a couple of years for the patient to die. And anyway, the longer, the better; for the bottom-line of our hospital.".

Though a voracious reader of medical literature, I find it astonishing that Taleb is completely blind to the possibilities of alternate medicine. In fact he says there is only one medicine, no alternative. Coming from the disciple of Karl Popper who believed that everything scientific should be falsifiable, it only proves what Taleb is trying all along to prove: we are capable of some knowledge, but application of it to our own lives is an entirely different matter, and intellectual intolerance can hide safely in the most liberal and sceptical of minds.

Taleb is no crusty, disappointed academic who has failed in his political manoeuvres to be the head of the department of a university. His passion for learning is

intrinsic. His survival in the Wall Street shows his clever artistry. Still, if the man says it is only chance, it shows his unbelievable modesty. Let us hope chance favours the production of more Talebs on this planet. Till then, let us try to learn something from his book.

The story of Nero, the hero of the book who finally gets taken away by the Black Swan shows the book carries a long tradition dating back to the classical Greek tragedies. I don't want to tell you the whole story. Go out, buy this book, read it and then go out again to buy his latest one, The Black Swan : The Impact of the Highly Improbable.

Sorry I have to end as, I have to stop here. I am in a hurry. I am going out to buy "The Black Swan."

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The Pygmalion Manager

Mr.Moid Siddiqui, Prism Book Pvt. Ltd, 2008

Reviewer: Aisha M. Sheriff, *University of Mysore, Mysore*

The author Moid Siddiqui has been grateful to 'The Pygmalion' and gracious to 'The Galateas' with whose support and contributions he became successful. His book 'The Pygmalion Manager' portrays his flair for mythology and other literary classics. The leadership primer modeled from these streams only speaks for his creativity.

The legendry Pygmalion representing passion has been linked to a leader's role in a lucid style. Critically examining the theatre works on Pygmalion, the author shows defiance to Bernard Shaw's Pygmalion who does not possess passionate bondage and draws the first lesson in leadership which proves 'The difference between a lady and a flower girl is not how she behaves, but how she is treated'. He extends this to the real corporate world to demonstrate the subordinates' performance is directly linked to manager's expectations. In simple you get what you expect! He calls this the Pygmalion Effect!

His writing unravels thoughtful messages in simple style with fascinating illustrations to reach every reader be it a child, an elite or an expert. The author believes Purity of love, faith and trust is fundamental in incarnating a Pygmalion manager. This approach he says helps in reconciling the commercial relationship between employer and employees. He further reiterates that faith and trust keep the organization humming.

Moid Siddiqui's prolific writing quotes exemplary incidents from films, popular books, religious scriptures, legendry stories, scientific theories, plays and experiences of self and others which displays vivacity in his enunciation. The instances described are mind-boggling leaving behind a desire in the reader to recall.

'Passion is priceless and powerful'. The author explains the formation of passion through the process of Kundalini-a traditional meditative system in Hindu Philosophy by generating energy through various energy centres or chakras and consciously transferring them into passion which becomes the fuel for pushing the mission forward.

Managing through Pygmalion requires managing from the mind to beat competition (fear) managing from the heart to care for customers (love) and managing from the soul to serve society (compassion). He explains how miracles happen because of the strong power of the sub-conscious mind known as 'Placebo Effect' that results in positive outcomes.

A real Pygmalion manager perceives things positively, holistically and intuitively by seeing the unseen and hearing the unheard. His key role is in transforming people and maintaining congruity by reducing the gap between competence and commitment and blending personal humility and professional will. He believes success is within. Pygmalion is the semblance of positive attitude and optimism. The author suggests interesting approaches and techniques for a high degree of introspection and reflection to cultivate positive

discipline. He advices every individual to develop a 'personal signature' to look distinct! Mr.Siddiqui cautions that the antithesis to Pygmalion manager is breeding Gotcha culture-A culture where people play games leading to team destruction and organizational collapse.

The author inspires the reader to set high standards to experience the Pygmalion effect and suggests the notion of self-fulfilling prophecy to create the Galatea effect. He beautifully exhibits how the latter is more potent than the former in its influence on the employees' performance.

Before bidding adieu he suggests exercising Moments of Truth and not to make place for the disaster of Moments of Misery. What should remain to the end is the Moments of Magic which he has so well demonstrated in his this book.

The beginning of the book is interesting. It turns into a serious but convincing description with moral overtones. Being practical it is able to retain the readers' attention. Towards the end, the book inspires the reader to experiment with the integrative model that has been innovatively conceived by the author to remain for all times.

I call 'The Pygmalion Manager' a book of thousand wisdoms which can be a panacea for corporate ills. The quotes and thoughts; anecdotes and incidents drawn from peoples' experiences and writings have been sequenced and synergized wonderfully. The techniques he suggests can create miracles at the workplace too! To give you a rejuvenated feeling, you'll have to read the book!