

CONFERENCE REPORT

International Conference on Management Cases (ICMC), 2011, Greater Noida, India

Professors GD Sardana and Tojo Thatchenkery

A Brief on ICMC 2011

The case pedagogy is a powerful approach in management development. Its main advantage is that it is a “question-oriented” as opposed to solution-based approach. ILO (Case Method in Management Development, 1980) observes that the case method is based on the belief that participants in management education and training programmes can efficiently improve their understanding of the management process and enhance their competence by studying, contemplating and discussing actual situations. In its quest for continued excellence and research orientation in management education, and in its endeavour to be a partner in the spread of knowledge, BIMTECH (Birla Institute of Management Technology) took the initiative of organizing an International Conference on Management Cases 2011 on December 1-2nd, 2011 at its campus in Greater Noida. The initiative was formally approved by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, and jointly organized by BIMTECH and the School of Public Policy, George Mason University, Arlington, Virginia, USA. It took shape with the singular objective of creating a platform for academics, practitioners in management, research scholars and students of management studies to share their experiences on decision making in management related issues through cases, case studies and research cases.

The conference was structured around unique features: only previously unpublished cases from live situations, undisguised, and with permission to use primary sources of data and information were to be accepted. The conference also tied up with eight international

journals of repute for consideration of select cases from the conference for publication in regular or special issues.

ICMC2011 received a huge response. Over 100 manuscripts were received from eminent scholars, academics, practitioners and research scholars. A strenuous double blind review process followed and finally we selected 62 case studies. These came from Australia, France, Finland, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Nepal, Poland, Sweden, Thailand, the USA and India. Some of the distinguished academicians, researchers, and practitioners who contributed research papers and graced the conference with their presence included Professors Gary Stockport (University of Western Australia), Paul Lapoule (Novacia, Paris) Hanna Lehtimaki (University of Tampere, Finland), Roland Livingston (Webster College, USA); Louise Shelley (George Mason University, USA), Anthony Smith, Debra King, Richard Meyers, Elizabeth Mast (all from Eastern Mennonite University, Virginia, USA), and Monica Thiel (United States Department of Agriculture, USA) and Jason Boundry (San Francisco State University, USA). Participants also included Christian Linder (University of Stuttgart, Germany); Dhruv Gautam (Kathmandu University, Nepal); Nishant Kumar (Stockholm University, Sweden). From the east, those who participated included John Walsh (Shinawatra University, Thailand); Iijima Masaki (Aichi Gakuin University, Japan) and Hiro Mitsuyama (Fuki Byora Co., Japan). A large number of very senior academics and research scholars from Colorado Technical University, USA also attended and these included Professor Joanne Preston (Dean of Research and Doctoral Programmes), Daphne DePorres, Monty Miller, Michael Peterson, Melanie Lawler, Wanda Tisby Cousar, Ron Newton and Mamta Trivedi, as well as Monica Thiel (PhD candidate, University of Tilburg, The Netherlands).

The strength of participation from India was also impressive and included distinguished names from industry and academia, such as Dr. Dinesh Likhi (Director Mishra Dhatu Nigam, Hyderabad); Smita

Mazumdar (School of Business Management, NMIMS University), Saroj Koul (Dean, Jindal School of Management); KM Mital (Director, Gift School of Human Values and Management Ethos, New Delhi); V.L Narasimham (University of Petroleum and Energy Studies); Sriparna Basu (Amity School of Management); Anuja Pande (All India Management Association), Poonam Sharma (Jaipuria School of Management, Greater Noida), Alok Goel (IIT, Roorkee); Surabhi Singh(IMS, Noida); G.C.Nag (IBS, Mumbai), Harjit Singh (Galgotia University, Greater Noida); Ashutosh Sarkar (NSHM College of Management Technology, Kolkata) and Roma Chauhan (IILM, Greater Noida). Our own BIMTECH fraternity did not lag behind and also came up with excellent papers. The presenters included the following faculty members: Professor Dey, Gagan Katiyar, G.N.Patel, Manosi Choudhury, Smriti Pande and our very brilliant students Ashish Makwana, Geetika Dham, Tijo Eldho George, Stuti Arora, Annie Matoo, Charu Saxena and Lakshmi Ninan.



Figure 1: Attendees at ICMC 2011

The Inaugural Session

ICMC2011 got off to an auspicious start by invoking the blessings of Saraswati, the goddess of learning, when attending dignitaries lit the lamp of knowledge. Professor Harivansh Chaturvedi (Director of BIMTECH), presiding over the function, welcomed the dignitaries and distinguished delegates. Tracing the history of BIMTECH and the involvement of the House of Birlas in the cause of education, he referred to various BIMTECH initiatives to further case writing. He hoped that the next two days would provide an opportunity to interact and to add to the realm of knowledge.

Dr. Sugata Ghosh, Vice President, Sage Publications, India, Guest of Honour, presented in his very inimitable style a scholarly case on the insights and decision-making faced by the printing industry.

Shri A.C. Chaturvedi, Executive Director (Power Management Institute & Chief Knowledge Officer, NTPC Ltd.), graced the event as the Chief Guest of the inaugural ceremony. In his keynote address, he complimented BIMTECH for this intensive industry-academia collaboration. Talking about the varied, many faceted benefits of a case study, he mentioned that through this method: "... faculty receive intellectual stimulation, providing them with ongoing opportunities for continuous education. Field cases, conducted in tandem with a host company or organization, connect faculty directly with practice. The method places great emphasis on innovation and review. Also, it is a continuous intellectual challenge for instructors as it requires both a mastery of case details and the ability effectively to lead a discussion whose direction is always partly unpredictable because it is driven by students' expertise, preparation and passions."

Earlier, Prof. G.D. Sardana (BIMTECH, Conference Co-Chair) briefed the delegates on the objectives of the conference, provided an outline of the structure of the conference and its schedule for the presentation of the cases.

The formal release of the set of two volumes of the conference book followed. Professor Sardana announced that the two books would be entitled: *Building Competencies for Sustainability and Organizational Excellence*, and *Positive Initiatives for Organizational Change and Transformation*. They are published by Macmillan, New Delhi.

The books featured all 62 cases accepted for the conference in full text. The cases represent a collection of cutting-edge practice and the latest research regarding the critical task of creating sustainable organizational practices for a world that works for all. The second volume focuses on the role of positive organizational behaviour for creating transformational change.



Figure 2: The Conference Book in Two Volumes Is Released.

The inaugural session came to a close with a vote of thanks from Professor Tojo Thatchenkery (Professor and Director of the Organization Development and Knowledge Management Programme at the School of Public Policy, George Mason University, Virginia,

USA and Conference Co-Chair). Professor Thatchenkery expressed the hope that the conference would go from strength to strength. He thanked BIMTECH for its excellent preparations and the hospitality.

The Plenary Sessions

A plenary session was organized for each day of the conference. Devoted to contemporary issues, these sessions were thought-provoking and created considerable and informed debate among the audience. The keynote addresses came from the well-known authorities on the subjects and the audience remained spellbound during the presentations.

The first day plenary session saw keynote speeches from two celebrities, Dr. Dinesh Kumar Likhi (Director, Production and Marketing, Mishra Dhatu Nigam Limited, Hyderabad, India) and Professor Louise Shelley (Director, Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center, School of Public Policy, George Mason University). The session was very ably chaired by Professor Anupam Verma and delved into the theme of Ethics and Organizational Sustainability: Comparative Perspectives. Speaking first, Professor Shelley traced ethics in business in the USA and outside. Her suggested solutions warmed many Indian hearts; these included the "... greater involvement of civil society - this is a new focus for civil society; greater media training for journalists with expertise in financial issues, so they have the capacity to investigate." Dr. Likhi took up at length the issues concerning sustainability of organizations and encompassed such areas as effectiveness, capacity building and capacity development, interfacing resource development domains, and sensitivity to the world around linking ethics, the human element and governance. A plenary session with a theme on organizational transformation was chaired on the second day by Professor Thatchenkery. In his initial remarks, he referred to the importance of tools such as Appreciative Intelligence and human relations in organizational transformation. The celebrity keynote addresses were

delivered by Professor Roland Livingston (Webster College, USA), who spoke on the topic of “The Power of the Heart and Head in Managing Change” and Hanna Lehtimaki (University of Tempere, Finland) who took up the case of Nokia Tyres, while explaining the research process and the principles behind the notable successes that company has achieved.

Concurrent Technical Sessions

Sixty two cases were presented and discussed in 15 concurrent technical sessions spread over two days. The sessions were organized on such themes as Strategies for Organizational Excellence, Competencies and Organizing for Transformation, Strategic Sustainability Issues, Monitoring Performance, Focus on Appreciative Intelligence and Positive Psychology, Social Networks and Organizational Change. Each of the cases was allocated a minimum of 15 minutes for presentation by the authors and another 15-20 minutes for discussion and response to queries. The conference ended with a well attended Valedictory session. This session was used as an ‘Open Space’ for delegates to express their opinions.



Figure 3: A Keynote Address in Progress