

JOURNAL REVIEW
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Special Issue on “Universalization of Excellence”
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Abstract

As a new feature for the Journal, an attempt was made to make a review in respect of a special issue of a journal published in India, and it is SAMSMRITI-The SAMS Journal, Special Issue on “Universalization of Excellence”. The journal has seven sections including Reflections, Panel Discussion, Guest Article, Articles, Case Study, Interview, and Philosophical Ruminations. A more positive rather than critical perspective was adopted for the purpose of the review.

Sri Lankan Journal of Human Resource Management (SLJHRM) was commenced by me in 2007 when there was a dearth of research articles in the field of Human Resource Management (HRM) in Sri Lanka as a unique journal, which aims at promoting systematic and scientific research of the theory and practice of HRM, particularly in Sri Lanka. The primary purpose of SLJHRM is to publish research studies done by the academics of the Department of HRM, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka and their undergraduate and postgraduate students, being a journal that is different from the standards of a generally accepted journal. In this issue, I decided to write a review of a special issue of a journal published in India with an expectation of expanding the horizon of SLJHRM. The perspective adopted for the review is indeed more positive rather than critical.

As a matter of fact, SAMSMRITI-The SAMS Journal is a unique journal. It has Reflections, Panel Discussion, Guest Article, Articles, Case Study, Interview, and Philosophical Ruminations.

A path-breaking article "Universalisation of Excellence: The Varied Dimensions" by Prof. B. R. Sant, Retired Scientist, CSIR was published in November 01-07, 2021 issue of Association of Indian University's Mouthpiece 'University News', A Weekly Journal of Higher Education. After reading the article Prof. K. C. Mishra, Principal, Sambhram Academy of Management Studies, Bangalore happened to be the first from far and near to get connected with Prof Sant immediately. They continued to dialogue among them journeying towards "excellence" and trying to know more from each other. Then Prof. Mishra read Professor Sant's path-breaking book "Towards Achieving Excellence in Teaching and Learning: Some Thoughts" published in 2006, reprinted in 2007 and went deep into the concept lucidly

narrated. Then some programs on this core theme were also conducted by the Institution. The B-School led by Prof. Mishra decided to bring out a Special Issue of their Bi-Annual Journal "SAMSKRITI" on the theme "Universalisation of Excellence (UoE)". It was expected that the Special Issue like a Book can teach us the essence of UoE on the one hand and, on the other, an honor for Professor Sant for his outstanding contributions in this new concept to involve all people to be extremely good, outstanding in what they do.

After reading the New Avatar of 'SAMSKRITI' it was felt to write the Journal Review. The B-School now visualizes its new role (Exemplar, Expression, Inclusion) of their Journal- very much innovative rather than following the stereotype system, encouraging prospective authors to ask a clear and direct research question at the beginning of their work rather than "exploring", "studying" or "reaching" at the problem. Professor Sant has reminded us about the dawn of excellence in all our actions, thoughts and everything instead of mere good, better or best. The B-School salutes to the nonagenarian Scientist-Professor who is like a rock to propagate and practice Excellence and is ready to face challenges for UoE. According to Prof. K.C. Mishra, Editor-in-Chief of the Journal, let's all aspire to understand and then practice excellence in all our activities. UoE in Dr. Kalam's language is ECKA (Excellence-cum-Knowledge Acquisition).

In the **Reflections** section, the 5-Page article of Professor Sant "*Learning and Practicing of Excellence under Atmanirbhar Bharat's (Fourth) Pillar of Vibrant Demography*" reflects the urgent need to implement UoE for the entire society's peak performance and focus is on reaching, learning and practicing of excellence as a National Movement. Atmanirbhar Bharat denotes Self-reliant India Campaign. As per the reflective article, 'Excellence' is a strangely powerful word stirring the mind; and even with different meanings, everyone interprets it in terms of high standards.

Dr. Charles L Lowery's article "*Mahatma Gandhi's Moral Literacy as Global Leadership*" discusses leading and managing change in education as a public business. He stresses that educational leaders who are School Administrators must recognize the ethical obligation to society as much as to their organization. The article adopts the Gandhi-mindset as a start in education leadership; and details Gandhi as a moral democratic agent, an educator, and a transformative leader. Furthermore, it discusses leadership as a global educational concern.

The fascinating article "*Excellence is the Only Way*" written by Prof. K.C. Mishra reflects author's personal experiences of the key-principles to achieve excellence: to have the hunger for Excellence, be adaptable, never give up, develop passion for Excellence, benchmark against the best, believe that we can do it, build concrete strategy, learn from the Best, work really hard, and focus on efforts.

The **Panel Discussion** is perhaps the heart of the Journal on UoE. The Key- Note address and other presentations cleared many doubts about UoE. According to Brigadier P. Ganesham, it is possible for a person to attain the pinnacle of excellence provided that he or she has passion and interest towards his/her work. Also, he pointed out that the role of excellence in

Armed Forces always has been an example: first Nation, then forces and at last the leader. Mr. C.V. Krishna Rao' main subject of discussion was 'Positive Attitude paves the way to Excellence' and viewed Excellence as an integrated approach in an institution where each and every member equally needs to perform to get the best output. Dr. Chetan Singai interestingly characterized "Excellence" as a drive from inside, not outside; it is not for someone else to notice but for our own satisfaction and efficiency; and excelling is exclusive of the fact whether someone else appreciates or not. Furthermore, he emphasized that excellence is context specific and must be embedded in process and not merely in inputs and outcomes enabling a systemic perspective that ensures sustainability and continuity of excellence. Prof. K.C. Mishra (Moderator) noted out that Excellence is a continuous process and a clear set of values and beliefs that is practiced and reinforced by individuals can really fulfill our goal of achieving excellence in all that we do. Further he gave a wakeup call "let's sincerely work". It is possible to notice that the panel discussion report further presents a description of Japan as a story of sustained excellence, questions and answers session, and concluding remarks by the moderator. At the end of the report there are four annexures including the one that contains the original article written by Prof. B.R. Sant titled *UNIVERSALISATION OF EXCELLENCE: THE VARIED DIMENSIONS*. I believe that the report is very useful for the reader.

The **Guest Article** is about Non-Performing Loans and Banking Sector: Evidence from Bangladesh written by Dr. Nisar Ahmed, Dr. Md. Taslim Uddin, Bohishajahan, and Md. Joynal Abedin. The paper has its objectives: to primarily identify the main bank-specific and external determinants of Non-Performing Loans in the commercial banks listed in Dhaka stock exchange from the period 2008–2019; and to portray the relation of these variables in addition to demonstrating the trending of Non-Performing Loans in Bangladesh. The variables include Return on equity, Bank's total assets, Capital adequacy ratio, Loans to deposit ratio, Inefficiency ratio, Non-interest income ratio, Annual percentage growth rate of GDP, and Annual average inflation rate. According to the empirical results the Bank specific factors have a significant impact on the level of Non-Performing Loans. The macroeconomic variables such as GDP and inflation rate do not have a significant impact on Non-Performing Loans. I believe that the findings have useful implications.

Under the **Articles** section, there are two articles published and the first one was written by Dr. Zabiulla and it is about Women in India's Entrepreneurial Ecosystem: Perspectives from Financial Access and Government Initiatives. This is a descriptive article based on secondary data. It was observed that women entrepreneurship has been recognized as an important source of economic growth, and women still represent a minority of all entrepreneurs. Women face gender-based barriers to starting and growing their businesses. It concludes that by using various schemes, promotion of women entrepreneurs is being done by the government and some developmental organizations and the author stresses the need of promoting women entrepreneurship and creating a platform for strengthening the entrepreneurial base in India. The second article has its title "Role of Multimedia in Transforming the Society" written by S. Amreetha and Dr. L. Raja. This article describes the historical evolution of multimedia and discusses how multimedia transforms society in

today's world. These two articles are informational ones and not a kind of empirical scientific studies. However, they are useful for students' learning.

In the **Case Study** section, three authors namely Asso. Prof. Sujith Nair, Asso. Prof. Medhanie Gaim, and Prof. Tomas Blomquist wrote a case study with the title "*Value Creation in Start-up Corporate Collaboration*". The organization selected for the case study is Ignite Sweden which is a non-profit initiative that aims to foster innovation and accelerate commercialization by connecting startups (newly established businesses) to large companies and public organizations. This non-profit program deals with establishing tighter bonds between its vibrant startup scene, established companies and public organizations so they can initiate commercial collaborations. It details value creation within an interactive space in four categorized ways: Matching, Integrating, Rerouting, and Creating. The effort taken by the authors is praiseworthy.

In **Interview** section, a useful conversation has been given between Prof. Baboo M. Nair being the interviewee and Prof. K.C. Mishra being the interviewer. The interview is in respect of Reflections on Food Processing Industry with Prof. Baboo M. Nair who is a Professor Emeritus at the Department of Food Engineering, Food Technology and Nutrition, Lund University, Sweden. Indeed, the formal written version of the results of this interview is of some utility.

In **Philosophical Ruminations** section, Prof. K.C. Mishra writes "*Improving one's own creativity, aiming for excellence rather than trying to reach the stage of perfection is the order for a genuine personality.*" In an interesting and innovative way, he differentiates between Perfection-ism and Excellence-ism, and presents a considered thought that excellence-ism is clearly an onward journey towards something higher and higher with display of 'can do' attitude.

I would like to conclude with the Final Message of this Special Issue of the Journal. That is: Excellence Is NOT BEING BEST but it is DOING ONE'S BEST. We are in need of pushing ourselves to deliver the highest quality performance in everything we do. The issue is a must-read by all who desire to practice excellence in all that they do. I have no hesitation to write here that the issue is an Excellent effort by Sambhram Academy of Management Studies led by Prof K.C. Mishra.

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