Foreword

These are interesting times! Academics happens to be at this remarkable cusp of democratisation of information and by that extension, learning, and a quest for truth in application. Accessibility through technology has put theoretical knowledge on the anvil of accountability as the focus shifts ever more from what one can do to what one actually does, increasingly so in leadership and management – the most sensitive and humane aspects of our society. And rightly so, for never before have so many people have been face-to-face with so many and such perils as we do now – even a small counting of which shall turn this space morbid. But again, never before have we faced such large number of people who are getting increasingly aware of the choices available to them.

And, choices is where lies the test for leadership and management. Any management programme worth its name in today’s day and age must be comprehensive enough to provide a general view of the field, must be intense enough to influence personal stewardship, and must be well-founded in theories as well as have adequately explored operational aspects. That is a lot to ask for. But that is what is needed.

The efficacy of any management education program or for that matter any educational endeavour depends predominantly on the transfer of ‘knowledge, skills and attitudes’, the three cornerstones of learning, imparted in these programs to the real world. Given that knowledge itself has further three components, the declarative, the procedural and the strategic, it is imminent that different methods of instruction be developed to effectively deliver these individual components. Further, there are individual differences in terms of ability, culture, sex, personality, and others that necessitate different methods to be adopted and adapted for effective transfer.

If it be said that India’s traditional education system – the Vedic system – has some light to throw on leadership and management, it can certainly be seen in terms of a solid foundation in personal stewardship of life, ethics, sociology, and critical thinking viz. the Upanishads, etc. It used different pedagogical tools such as memorization through rote, storytelling, critical analysis through discussions, seminars, and ‘question and answer’ sessions, and individual coaching. In all, though, the traditional Indian approach happens to be a very integrated one, and richly so, for it discusses, most of all, the importance of leading by example. A leader is one who shows the way by embodying all that he/she wants others to aspire to – be it in terms material, social, or individual. I believe this to be the core of ethical leadership.

In the context of modern management education, given the rapid technological changes and cultural amalgamations, new pedagogies need to evolve. This book edited by Tiwari and Nafees couldn’t have come at a better time since management education itself is undergoing a sea change. Institutes around the globe are looking to update their curricula to meet the changing needs of the industry, and evolve delivery mechanisms suited to this changed content.
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Rahul, Mishra and Gupta take a close look at multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary pedagogy, and report that it is plausibly successful in making participants more employable. Kalisz examines how the crowd learns and remembers over time in the context, and traces its history, concepts, and its influence on future learning process, including the changing role of the management educators. Pierce and Velliaris critically analyse the ‘Storyboard’ methodology where a digital story-telling assessment task is introduced into a ‘Communication in Organisations’ course that enhances the proficiency and the engagement with the discipline, for a culturally diverse set of students. Sinha and Sinha trace the growth and evolution of teaching and compare the epistemological differences between the East and the West.

Tshabangu looks at the role of instructor in virtual environments and suggests how enhancing action learning in virtual classrooms is key to advancing critical thinking, nourishing learning experiences and enhancing performance, and activating student interest. Ryan uses extensive interviews, observations, self-assessment of youth leadership skills, and secondary data that show the effectiveness of “California Cadet Corps” on promoting leadership development as well as other relevant skills and attitudes.

Tandon conducted a survey of Indian B-school faculty to explore the different teaching methods used by B-school faculty members, and the response to using literature as a Management teaching tool. Tandon and Tiwari, in their respective works, look at paradigm shifts in pedagogical approaches to Heutagogy and Synergogies, thus centring learning on the learner rather than the instructor.

Nandi and Simm establish that learning and knowing are two different aspects, and argue that the aim of higher education is to prepare students for the real world and the classroom is the simulated environment where students collaborate and learning facilitates transfer of knowledge. Jha identifies the drivers and inhibitors of change as well as the importance of role played by change agents and change leaders, approaches for strategic execution and evaluation of change process.

Heaton presents the system of Consciousness-Based Education (CBE), which incorporates the Transcendental Meditation program and argues through empirical evidence that it integrates experiential, intellectual, pedagogical, and environmental features all aimed at developing students toward enlightened consciousness. Retna conducted a qualitative research in a New Zealand University based on Gardner’s framework of disciplined, synthesising, creating, respectful and ethical mindsets to understand how students from two disciplines reacted to the five mindsets, and concluded that even though there were some similarities and differences in perceptions by the students, the ethical mindset was strongly demonstrated by all respondents.

Theodotou and Papastathopoulos discuss the theoretical framework of management and leadership of change, focusing on the construct of power in educational institutions. Illustrating a change event in a school in Greece, they argue that the manner in which managers and leaders utilise their power strongly influences effective organisational change and their role in the organisation. Lastly, Sund describes the exploratory results of a survey carried out among final year bachelor students attending a strategic management course that suggests that a significant number of students view virtual learning environments as a substitute for lectures.

The corporate world too is fast changing. Earlier, while executives had to measure up against one another within the safe bounds of inter-cultural exchange, now this inter-cultural space has ceded to international space in terms of achievement. While jobs fly from one country to the other chasing low-cost labour, capital seems to chart its own unique route, often beyond the scope for neat models of management. This chaos, if you will, or dynamism, are pushing management education to recognize the need for change, or may be growth would be a good way to put it.
When we grow, we do more than change. We change to adapt better to our environment, and it is best if we grow in a way that improves our environment itself. That could be the aim of leadership in management education, going forward. This book makes a foray in that direction, a much welcome one.

Himanshu Rai
Dean, MISB Bocconi and SDA Professor of Organization & HRM, Milan