

## **USING THE CASE STUDY METHOD**

### **[A review of the position of Professor Sadri on the subject]**

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There is no gainsaying the fact that Professors Sorab and Jayashree Sadri are a very well-known and well-respected couple in academic world of Management Sciences. One of the most prevalent teaching methodologies in B Schools in the use of the Case Method of instruction. There are only a handful of nationally known experts in this area and one such is Dr Sorab Sadri who is currently Professor and Director at Manipal University Jaipur. This author has academically interacted with him for the last six months and this short paper is a product of this interaction and a review of his ideas on the subject. This is being published as this author believes that few persons in the academic world are aware of the minutiae involved in this method and yet use this method of instruction often to the detriment of students. This paper, the author opines, will be of great assistance to fresh instructors in B Schools. As the title of the paper states, this is an attempt to review and summate Sorab Sadri's work on case studies in the field of Management Sciences.

Sorab Sadri is somewhat of an enigma. In Nigeria during the late 1970s he used to be referred to thus: *We teach economics to students but Professor Sadri teaches economics to us*. In England his professor had stated in the 1980s that *with his critical pen Sorab tries to enact the ghastly dance of death*. (His Ph D thesis at London Univ was on the antihistory of Unilever PLC from 1930 to 1980. At XLRI in the 1990s they said *Dr Sadri speaks and writes passionately about the common man in a language that the common man would seldom understand*. For the last two decades Sadri's work seems to be a Marxist critique of the Indian ideological left. Hence reviewing his academic work is not an easy task by any means. This author has restricted herself to a review of Sadri's work in the andrology of Management Sciences only.

Let this author at the outset define her position as Sadri always insists we do. We tend to use the term pedagogy, unfortunately, very loosely. According to the Wikipedia, Johann Friedrich Herbart was the founding father of the conceptualization of pedagogy, or, the theory of education. Herbart's educational

philosophy and pedagogy highlighted the correlation between personal development and the resulting benefits to society. In other words, Herbart proposed that humans become fulfilled once they establish themselves as productive citizens. Herbartianism refers to the movement underpinned by Herbart's theoretical perspectives. Referring to the teaching process, Herbart suggested 5 steps as crucial components. Specifically, these 5 steps include: preparation, presentation, association, generalization, and application. Herbart suggests that pedagogy relates to having assumptions as an educator and a specific set of abilities with a deliberate end goal in mind.

Sadri states that in general pedagogy in B-Schools can be divided into four types. (a) The didactic type where the professor comes to the podium and lectures in true classical style. There is a fair deal of oratory and seldom if ever are lectures read from a set of notes. The professor is completely a master of the subject on which he is propounding his/her thoughts. Questions are usually taken up at the end of the class and selectively so. This is the classic Oxbridge model that Sadri uses. (b) The classroom interactivity type where the professor comes to class with no transparencies or notes but engages the lecture in a discussion mode and there is a great deal of use of the chalk and board. The professor is leading the class and hand holding it through a pre-planned learning process. There is some discussion but it is controlled. This is what Jayashree usually uses. (c) The presentations type where the professor has prepared a power point presentation or have a set of transparencies, which he/she takes the class through. This presentation is on a particular topic and considerable homework has been done on the subject before the professor comes to class. (d) The case study type where learning is imparted with short case studies. This is also the point where androgogy replaces and joins hands with pedagogy and this is precisely what this compendium of short case studies attempts to help the facilitator of Human Resources Management with: to use androgogy to impart learning and reinforce the theory imparted through pedagogy.

Unfortunately, this author has observed that in some Colleges when the instructor does not want to prepare a lecture and takes the easy route of discussion to kill time, he/she sometimes uses short case studies. In addition, there is a fair degree of confusion on what a case study is and this is evident when students prepare

case studies as a part of a competition or an assignment. Sadri has argued that the role of the instructor is important and he / she must come well prepared otherwise students will open their mouths before engaging their brains into gear. Ideally both Sadri and Jayashree have argued, that the professor *who writes the case* must develop it as he goes along and gains student feedback year after year.

Based on the discussions with Professor Sadri and the author's own experience, cases used in B-Schools can be *categorised* variously in terms of its *form* thus.

- (a) *Short case*: a brief narration or illustration that serves to reinforce a general point of view through using practical relevance. The student can view reality through his/her own personal frame of reference as in values and beliefs. The length of such a case varies from one to five pages. These are used by facilitators in classroom situations for explaining the nuances of behavioural sciences and human resources management.
- (b) *Classic case*: these are long studies giving detailed and factual accounts regarding maximum relevant material in the given context of the business situation. The student becomes an analyst who can spend up to a week studying and deciphering the nuances of the cases. The length of such a case can even extend up to sixty pages. These are usually used in strategy related subjects.
- (c) *Technical case*: these describe a technique, process or system of analysis without taking account of the human factor. The student learns how to analyse and document given data to draw meaningful conclusions. These are usually used in finance and operations related subjects where calculations are called for and a business or organisationally relevant problem has to be solved.
- (d) *Complex cases*: these are usually complicated and aimed at bringing out deep rooted issues and are often a mix of individual, organisational and cultural forces that impinge upon industry and business. The coverage of such cases is wider than others and is used at the end of a postgraduate course when the student has already mastered several subject specialisations enabling a *comprehensive* analysis.

When cases are categorised in terms of *content* they could be either *open ended* or *close ended* in character. In the former instance participants have to find out the problem, exercise their minds and propose alternative solutions to one or more scenarios that may emerge. In the latter instance, the problem has been identified and a solution is sought given the assumptions and constraints.

Such a case either open ended or close ended can be of three kinds thus.

First, a **case history** details a series of events leading up to a conclusion. It is a researched body of work, which tells us a trend adopted in an organization or the contribution of a particular kind of leader. In a way, the presentation could be biographical. The learning derived is in terms of what happened and why it happened so.

Second is a **case analysis** that presents a set of data and either expects the student to analyse it or leads the students through the process of analysis. A good example is to be found in inter-sectoral growth in an economy, where the analyst sees trends and attempts to ascribe reasons for a particular success or failure of policy. Another good example can be found in market surveys that highlight consumer demand for a particular commodity in preference to another or as in financial data where a company's health is examined.

Third is a **case study** where an event, a set of events or policies is narrated in story form such that in analysing it the student imbibes a definite and pre-programmed learning. The facts are normally not massaged beyond recognition although the identities of the actors may be often be concealed in the larger interest of society. Fake names and places are given but the facts are generally not tampered with. This is generally the case study in HRD where the case study is used to impart a theory or a pre-determined learning.

Experts in Strategic HRD have treated the subject of ego at some length. At the risk of repetition let me reiterate that mankind's greatest enemy is his/her own self, his/her ego. Unmasking the ego can be very traumatic but its therapeutic value cannot be underestimated. The purpose of these *short case studies* is to help

the student / participant / facilitator to unmask his/her ego and confront reality, or perceptions thereof. Even professors of management need to unmask their ego if they are to achieve real intellectual progress. The easiest way to do so is to encourage free flow of ideas when the case is being discussed, inviting innovative solutions even when they clearly go against the grain of accepted wisdom and constantly revising the case to make it more realistic and relevant to objective social reality. In a humble way, this has been done with every single case study posited herein.

The problems depicted in case studies developed by Sadri are unique, in that they do not restrict themselves to either a country or a sector. Rather,

they are relevant to all business and industry in the capitalist periphery that seeks to thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They are important for all HR facilitators and teachers of HR since it enables them to bridge the gap between perception and reality in such a way that perception becomes the reality. This is where perception proves to be infinitely superior to description. In addition, in the **age of the intellect** and the predominant position occupied by the **knowledge worker**, Sadri has argued that HR intervention has become that much complex and inevitable. People who think of HR as a soft option are merely showing their own ignorance of objective social reality. Industries have a lot more in common, than they are credited for and so the appeal of most well written short case studies is to a wider audience.

Certain facets, we all know, are common to all industries that depend on technology and the knowledge worker to propel their growth. Principal among these is selection of personnel, attrition levels and re-skilling of manpower. Since his famous work *Geometry of HR* (2002) trust, teamwork and transparency are the benchmarks against which effective project outcomes could be viewed. To some extent one could even, (he claims) say that all these short case studies relate to the human aspects of project management. However, almost every activity is a separate project in the high tech sector. In addition, this is the age of the knowledge worker whose loyalty is believed by many HR experts to belong to technology and nothing else. Hence, for them, HR intervention is the only way of creating a sense of belongingness and training where continuous upgrading of skills are needed, keeps attrition levels low.

Following Sadri subsequent research by this author has unearthed two fallacies especially in the case of the knowledge worker. First, the term knowledge worker itself needs some understanding. Is cobbler, a tailor or a blacksmith not using his knowledge to work? Second, any skill contains an element of knowledge within it. Hence, how can we describe *only* the employee in high-tech industry as being a knowledge worker? After all, the professors in classrooms teach on the basis of some knowledge and so can we not describe them as knowledge workers too? This comprises the first fallacy i.e. one of definition. The second fallacy arises out of a belief regarding employee loyalty. Throughout the works of Sadri (2002 - 2016), the contention has remained that that the employee is loyal only to his/her own values. As long as individual values are in accord with organisational values, the employee will remain on the job. The moment these values differ the employee either changes the personal values or

quits the organisation.

That is why, this author like Sadri argues that, three types of organisations always have high attrition rates.

(a) An organisation managed by a CEO with a *feudal-mercantilist-trader* mind-set and having knowledge workers.

(b) An organisation that is by the nature of its business operating in the short run i.e. on a project to project or assignment to assignment basis. Once the task is over the employees automatically leave the organisation.

(c) An organisation that hires people on contracts rather than for long-term employment. Once the contract is over it may or may not be renewed. Free market capitalism and the withering away of the employee union are solely to blame for this malaise. In all these three instances, the commitment of the employee is questionable and the belongingness need is negligible. This belongingness need is two edged: the employee acts as if he/she belongs to the organisation and that the organisation belongs to him/her. Both Sadri and Jayashree have posited that any organisation or any HRD intervention that fails to bring about this two edged belongingness fails to retain people.

Similarly, this author found, many CEOs do not invest in training as they point towards high attrition rates and state that money spent on training is a waste. On the contrary, we argue that it is always better to have a trained workforce who may leave for greener

pastures than to try to compete globally with manpower on rolls that possess out dated skills and expertise..

The author's experience shows that most inter-personal problems in management are *ego based*. This often takes the form of *attitude based* and *behaviour based* being attached. The employee/ subordinate is often said to have a problem managing his/her ego. This may not be true. When a senior manager tells an executive (reporting to him/her) that the executive has an attitude problem, many a time what the senior manager is actually saying is that *I need a yes man and you are not he*. We would all agree that reading in between the lines of messages is a cultivated art in many ways and no training except that in the *school of hard knocks* can help.

However, there is little that cannot be understood with a little bit of healthy open-minded introspection and frank exchange of views. In his work Sadri has made a significant attempt to *de-mystify management* and break that halo placed by the managerial ego and sustained in the name of managerial prerogatives. In so doing he has always tried to lay bare the vital areas where Senior Level Management intervention can make a difference. But this cannot be done on the basis of either *historicism* or *empiricism*. It has to be based on the subjective perceptions of objective

social reality. Objectivity like excellence can only be approximated and so to claim objectivity is in itself a subjective statement. This HR Managers must be well aware of since it is our experience that many of them tend to speak with an air of absolute certainty about things that they possess absolute ignorance. This, according to the present author, must be avoided at all cost and one way of doing so is to understand what perception is? It is what reality seems like to the beholder. This author based on her interactions with Sadri similarly opines that:

*Perception is the antithesis of knowledge. It is characterized by spontaneity, totality and discontinuity. It occurs when there is no escape from a challenge into ideals; when there is no interference with the fact one observes; when time is not used as a mechanism for postponement; and when adaptive techniques do not intervene between a challenge and one's response to it.*

The background of this perception lies the unerring belief that no matter how technologically superior and organization or a technocrat is, he/she cannot afford to overlook either the human being behind the exterior of the employee or break the very rules he/she has laid down for others. In short very HRD intervention must have a very humane face and the attitude towards all parties involve must be one of fairness, equity and propriety. The dignity of mankind as well as that of the organisation must always be respected. That is a point on which all right thinking scholars will agree. In addition to this, the following points emerged from the lengthy deliberations.

- The concept of value (generation and contribution) is an integral part of Corporate Strategy.
- HRD cannot be divorced from the process of Business Policy formulation and execution.
- In the final analysis it is the Corporate Culture and the Ethics of the Managers, which will delineate the form, and content of the Behavioural Dynamics of the organization.
- The ultimate aim of Strategic HRD intervention then would be to increase the satisfaction levels of the internal customer through a vibrant corporate culture and to leverage core competencies for gaining advantage over other players.

It is a truism that as the ambit of competition is internationalised, the

corporations, which will survive, are definitely those who have a value based business policy and a management strategy founded on ethics. Others will be consigned to the wayside along the great motorway of history. In most Management Schools students get a good grounding in Economics, Marketing and Finance with the result that teaching a full semester course would imply that the curriculum traverses such a path as has not been covered by either of the three mother disciplines, for fear of repetition. Hence, the approach from a position of *Man Management* was resorted to both by Sadri and by Jayashree in their works.

In line with Sadri this author also opines that the greatest danger to a logical mind comes from *uncertainties, not from risk*. This is because there is a theory for calculating risk but there is no way of understanding or calculating uncertainty. Similarly, the greatest danger to the smooth functioning of an organization comes from *external uncertainties*, which Sadri calls the mutable nature of social reality and which are often caused by the market conditions. We all know that the greatest enemy of a manager is his/her ego and ego is always inversely proportionate to the manager's competency.

Further, the danger to the smooth running of the organization comes from internal uncertainties, which are mostly caused by lack of *clarity* at the level of vision, mission, goal and role. In addition to the negative impact caused by uncertainty, it is the *definition* of the *problem* and the *premise*, which goes a long way in removing uncertainty by bringing about clarity. Once a situation is properly defined, the limitations are known and the variables affecting its behaviour have been identified, it ceases to be uncertain and therefore poses little danger to the logical mind. It is almost a truism that even with the best of systems, reality continues to remain opaque and decisions are made under conditions of relative uncertainty. The art and the science of management, in the main, are geared towards removing the cobwebs and reducing the level of uncertainty. HR plays a positive, proactive and facilitating role in this activity by laying down employee friendly policies, and ensuring their compliance without losing sight of the fact that organizational objectives have to be met.

In this new age of globalised competition four aspects have assumed enormous importance and must never be lost sight of. These are Corporate Governance, Total Quality Management, Core Competency and Business Ethics. This is brought out clearly in all high level discussions involving Strategic HR. This is something one cannot afford to overlook in the analysis of case studies.

While actualizing Sadri's case studies, taken invariably from real life data in the fast track industries, one belief was reinforced. Just

as metaphysics is not easily understood and the ritual of religion is something, which the majority are more comfortable with, so too, the majority of managers are comfortable, when others do their thinking for them. However, they wish to retain their power so they feel so themselves indispensable that they continue to wear that false halo. Using an analogy, some like Sadri could argue that God had to make the Devil to ensure His perpetual employment and importance. In the same manner, managers create problems only to solve them, feel good about it and retain their own importance. They try to play God. In a lighter vein Sadri often says that God was chased out of heaven by Marx acentury and half ago, Freud banished God into the unconscious self and Nietzsche declared that God is dead. ,

The author's experience shows that leaders are not necessarily managers and *vice versa*. The former envisions and leads, the latter follows and obeys. However, like a good leader, a good manager is one whose team functions as efficiently as in his absence as it did in his presence. Conscious Management through positive and proactive strategic HR interventions must aim at creating such a climate throughout the organization, such that problems are not intentionally created only to be solved and the mediocrity take credit theretofore.

Taking the example cited above further, Sadri claims that the Bible erred when it claimed that man was made in the image of God. Rather this immensity that engulfs us, this *magna mater*, is too vast, complicated and profound for our puny brains to understand. The mind-body genome of man is grossly inadequate and can never comprehend this nature that surrounds us. So man makes God in his own image: a forgiving God, an angry God, a fearful God, a loving God, a beautiful God, and so on. This is because we see what we want to see, hear what we want to hear and willingly block out that which is unpalatable. So is true of our perception of all reality.

The case study approach to learning nevertheless has been quite contentious. Some management trainers replace prepared lectures by giving out short case studies for discussion to fill in the time. In such instances, the case study degenerates into story telling sessions. There are some again who use short case studies

to reinforce a message. In such instances the case study becomes a parable or a homily. This is what teachers who appeal to the sentiment and the heart are more comfortable in doing. However, pontificating is not necessarily an intellectual or academic exercise and must be consciously avoided. Here the intention of casestudies is to bring out

learning through the discussion. The discussants would have arrived at a solution or an outcome, which they will *own*, and therefore, be committed to. This outcome will lead to a theory and form the basis of action at any point where value is being added to the product or the process chain.

This author opines, there can be no single correct solution to any case study since social reality is mutable in nature and the human mind is difficult to comprehend. Ideally what serious students of the managerial science should do is to place themselves in the shoes of the executive and then take an informed decision. Having taken the decision, they must demonstrate how to execute it. In addition, having executed the decision, they need to see that their superiors, peers and subordinates *accept* it. They are all participants who, as responsible managers, are expected to read the cases and come prepared for a full-fledged discussion in class. The facilitator/teacher is advised not to take up more than one case study *per* day. Each session should ideally begin with a strong theoretical input, and then followed by the case study so the learning will thus be re-enforced through case discussions. Hints questions and issues given at the end of the case are at best tautological and should *never* be taken very seriously, since in doing so innovation and creativity will be sacrificed and the purpose of learning itself will be defeated.

Sadri says that theory must emanate from the discussion and *not* precede it. Some tips for discussion have been given at the end of each case, but as managers and technocrats (both those in waiting and those in position), you cannot be expected to restrict your intellect to these points. These tips are more meant for the facilitator who has to make sure that the discussion does not go out of control. Let the spirits wander, let the mind charter new territories and let not the constraints of conventional wisdom fetter your thoughts: *cast off the fetish of society*.

Unlike what some fundamentalists, spiritualists and normative thinkers would wish to argue (to this author) it is fairly certain that reality cannot be seen in clear black and white terms. It is a vast grey area with shades in between. How one behaves within that vast grey area depends on how well an executive one is and where one's values lie. But merely attending a training program, as some management theorists tend to argue cannot facilitate change and bring about development. A conscious effort to change and having an open mind often works wonders. The author is reminded of some professors who attend a summer school in Oxford and call themselves an alumni of Oxford or a person at another University whose Ph D guide is a Professor of IIM calls himself to be a product of

### IIIM.

Learning does not end with classroom interaction. Rather, it begins there. A useful book that we shall recommend that every middle level manager read is Gerry Johnson and Keran Scholes (1997) *Exploring Corporate Strategy: Text and Cases* (Prentice Hall). Another good book, which our fellow professionals will learn from and that has recently entered, the Indian market is Lyle M Spencer Jr (1995). If the reader just wishes to have a compendium of Indian Short case studies based on value based policy then this author recommends the collection *Business Ethics: Concepts and Cases* (Tata McGraw Hill 1998). To glean an understanding of the ethical dilemma and managerial responses to it, readers and students of management as well as senior executives should consider reading *The Theory and Practice of Managerial Ethics*. A good compendium, which every student of man management must have, is *Geometry of HR*, which was brought out by Himalaya Publishing House in 2002. Another noteworthy collection of Sadri's cases can also be found in *Business Excellence through Ethics and Governance* (2016).

Based on the author's discussions with Sadri and at the risk and expense of being called normative, the following pieces of advice are worth handing down to all managers during executive development programs wherein these cases could be used.

- Never forget the human being behind the mind-body genome of the employee. Respect the person in every man, for he is ultimately an aspect of that great immensity.
- The primary product is *people driven* and the loyalty of knowledge workers is seemingly to technology. However, technology is a unique commodity that we buy without seeing. For, if we see it we need not buy it. Hence, it is absurd to have loyalty to a commodity. Loyalty can only be to one's values.
- There must be *absolute clarity* of vision, mission, goal and role.
- Managers must *learn* to walk their talk, think holistically and act locally.
- Decisions are best taken democratically but enforced autocratically.
- Trust and faith relationships hold the key to synergy and growth.
- Managers who contradict themselves or are inconsistent in their decision-making are poor leaders and not trusted by those down

the line.

- Transparency in decision-making is crucial to building faith and trust.
- Communication must *freely* take place in all directions, truthfully and politely. There must sufficient maturity to take and receive criticism provided it is well meant.
- One must avoid using criticism to re-enforce one's presumed superiority or to *retain* control.
- Empowerment must accompany accountability: they are not mutually exclusive,
- Managers must learn to be *constructively unrealistic* so that breakthrough is possible.
- Managers must not only act *ethically* but also others must see them as acting so.
- Values and Ethics can be imbibed but never imposed.
- One cannot afford to forget opportunity costs due to a preoccupation with actual costs although one cannot overlook actual costs in themselves.
- Even the basic concepts of Human Resource Management are being re-engineered.
- Many HR and especially Training and Arbitration functions are being outsourced and the right choice of HRD consultants can make or break a company. Negotiation skills assume importance and purchasing needs to be added to the current MBA syllabus.
- Quality must be *built into* the system and procedures must be streamlined and followed scrupulously.
- Do not delegate authority upwards and always take positive charge of the situation? (Your superior may not be as efficient as you think or he poses to be).
- Under no circumstances must one resort to either apple-polishing or petty politicking. These are contemptible and below managerial dignity.
- If someone speaks ill of others in front of you and in their absence watch him well. He will most likely be doing that to you too. He may mean well, but he is a slave of habit.
- Always commit to deliver and deliver as committed without compromising your values. It helps to ask yourself: does your action *add value*?
- Bullying, passing the buck, taking undue credit, harassment, fudging facts, whistle blowing, discrimination etc., are signs of

mediocrity, insecurity and general managerial immaturity. [Once the fear of the bully or blackmailer is taken out from the mind of the victim, the bully loses his power.]

Sadri has all along maintained that the present era is typified by a change process heralded by the concurrent collapse (of old beliefs and structures), on one hand, and a quantum change (in technology and its outcomes), on the other. This change he further adds is nonlinear and non-Newtonian. Developing a value based corporate culture is the need of the hour. Achieving this through strategic HR interventions is hardly likely to happen without a proper understanding of the basic beliefs, values and ethics along which the business of the organization is conducted.

It is a truism that a non-conformist conscience is the harbinger of change and a necessary component of the HR Manager's psyche. One cannot and should not dismiss this. This non-conformist behaviour comes from an inner belief, a value system that stands against the tide of accepted public opinion. Possessing this quality is what makes the difference between chalk and cheese, the leader and the follower, the creative-innovator and the mercantilist-feudal minded mediocrat-bureaucrat. What makes a leader walk his talk, blaze a trail or lead from the front by example? Does this come from within the person or is it caused by some externality? Is the decision-maker acting in a rational, mechanical robotic manner each time a dilemma is confronted? Does he depend on his sixth sense or his intuition? Alternatively, does he fall back on some inherent values and beliefs? Is he supposed to

be sufficiently "angry" or "uncomfortable" to want change?

Would the rational decision-maker follow the Sadri-Jayashree (1997) five-step model elaborated here at length or adopt the Kitson and Campbell (1966) five-step methodology used by management students? Alternatively, would the teacher and the taught take the oft-trodden path and restrict their analysis to SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunities and threats)? This certainly appears to be practice among many facilitators.

The second analytical structure mentioned above, is well known to all academics that use the case study method of imparting learning seriously. However, the Kitson and Cambell model is more apt for cases in finance, marketing and production management while the Sadri and Jayashree Model is more suited for cases in Human resources Management, Organisational Development and Diagnosis. Facilitators should

especially take care not to allow discussions to degenerate into story telling sessions where students open their mouths without bothering to engage their brain into gear, and the facilitator nods his acquiescence if he/she has not done the homework properly. The case study approach ideally links theory to practice so that knowledge creation and learning result from it. Hence, a case is never static. As it is used increasingly, varied feedbacks are received and the author acts on some of these feedbacks to enrich the case and make the discussion based learning that much intellectually interesting.

The students should be aware that the choice of the model is highly subjective and depends on the facilitator's preference.

The Kitson and Campbell methodology consists of the following steps:

- a) Identify the problem**
- b) Generate alternate solutions**
- c) Evaluate alternatives using the cost-benefit analysis**
- d) Select the solution**
- e) Implement the chosen solution.**

If the decision-maker will depend on his subjectivity instead, then what is the ideological basis of his decision? For some managers it is fashionable to say they are non-ideological. Little do they realize that in so saying they are making an ideological statement! Anyone who has been in a decision making position long enough will vouchsafe for the fact that more than 90% of decisions are based on the subjective perception of an objective social reality. This subjectivity takes us into a discussion on ethics that is something that can make or break an organization.

The Sadri and Jayashree *Five Ds of Corporate Strategy* provide the facilitator as well as the analyst with a unique instrument to study these cases. The HR Specialist cannot lose this fact either, since he is involved in decision-making and decision executing all the time. Pressures of work, shortage of time, listening to the boss's views, and the need to make quick decisions in a competitive world often tempt the HR Specialist to bypass these 5 Ds. However there is ample evidence to show that when the chips are down it is the HR Specialist who rues the fact that corners were cut in the name of expediency. This gives the profession and the profession a poorer image than they deserve.

To recap the 5 Ds:

1. **Diagnosis** of the Organization before deciding whether HR intervention is required.
2. **Definition** of the problem and the ambit of enquiry so that the parameters of the solution are bounded and the constraints are taken

into account.

3. **Designing** a solution which will address the issues germane to the organization and which spring from the diagnosis.
4. **Development** of the strategy so that it synchronizes with organizational requirements as well the environmental constraints.
5. **Delivering** the results by implementing the strategy and activating the process of HR intervention so that desired goals be met.

What makes the second methodology superior to the first one is the inclusion of the *sixth or hidden D* that stands for **data and documentation**. We Indians are particularly poor on this aspect, as many an organisation has found out on eve of any accreditation exercise. Perhaps the fact that adequate data and documentation was not preserved is the reason why in our present day the knowledge of Ayurveda, Vastushastra, and Vedic Mathematics is so dependent on beliefs rather than on science.

Research and experience of this author shows that good leadership comes from within the individual's self. It comes from a sense of self-esteem and an inherent belief in oneself. The strength of conviction can move mountains and make giants out of dwarfs. All great leaders have this common trait even when

their ideologies or *modus operandi* differs. What made great corporate leaders to stand out like beacon lights were their high self-esteem, strong sense of values, respect for mankind and an inherent humility. Values are imbibed and can rarely be imposed on anyone, as any scholar will agree. In analysing case studies the Management student within a limited time allocated for it, the individual or group taking on the task will (hopefully) undergo an intellectual and emotional involvement that will prepare them to face similar situations in real life as when the manager in waiting is metamorphosed into a manager in action. In all cases the participant is encouraged to think outside the euphemistic box, free the spirit and be constructively illogical. The fact that many students will very often not have the administrative experience and will lack the ability to comprehend the complexity and start looking for the non-existent one best solution to the issues will be easily overcome when the horizons of imagination are extended and fetish of structured reason is cast aside.

When analysing these all management cases the participants, this author opines, should bear in mind the four fallacies of positive social science.

Scholars like Sadri have always avoided and rather depended on objectivity and bounded rationality to understand the given situation. These fallacies, which participants must avoid, are explained below.

- *The fallacy of composition*: When what is true for a part is taken to be true of the whole as well. One cannot forget that the whole is more than the sum of its parts and has its own identity and characteristic as well.
- *The fallacy of accident*: When what is true for a whole is taken to be true for the part as well. When we speak of characteristics of the whole certain generalities and averages are used. This is not necessarily the case when we speak of a particular part.
- *Post hoc sed non-proctor hoc*: When we assume that an occurrence after the event was because of the event. Sequencing of occurrences is usually random in real life and we cannot ascribe motive or reason to something merely because one occurrence followed another.
- *Correlation does not amount to causation*: Just because two variables are related statistically to each other it does not follow that one causes the other.

One sure shot way to make a mark and leave one's footsteps on the sands of time is to stand by certain values and ethics come what may, and, rely heavily on good governance practices if excellence is to be approximated. This is neither simple nor easy. Nevertheless, it is strongly recommended.

Especially H R experts must remember at all times this famous tenet of Karl Marx: *Man is the beginning and the end of all analysis; he is both the subject and the object of all inquiry.* (Here the word *man* is gender neutral and refers to mankind). Anybody who respects himself will surely respect others. In addition, if anyone wants to be respected, he/she must begin by respecting the other. Trust, faith, transparency, honesty, respect and love are virtues that must be cherished and they are always reciprocal. For instance, one cannot expect to be trusted by others if one does not give others the trust that is due to them. The influence of the internal as well as the external environment cannot be assumed away or under estimated. This is because, in the end, to quote Fredrick Engels, *Every man, like every country, makes his own destiny; but he makes it under certain specific conditions over which he has little control.*

Sadri finally argues that it would be always better for participants to use statistics judiciously and not read too much meaning into them. In short,

one needs to remember Confucius who proclaimed that *do not look for reason when reason need not exist*. A healthy mistrust for statistical inferences is safe although statistical evidence cannot and should not be completely discounted. George Bernard Shaw, the first Director of the London School of Economics and Political Science had once thus remarked: *Statistics is like a blind man looking for a black cat in a dark room that does not exist*. This is where statistics stops becoming an end in itself and starts becoming one of the important instruments to augment decision-making. And management students must take their cue from both Sadri and Shaw.

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