Champions from the campus

BOOK REVIEW

When I agreed to do this review, I was unsure whether the book would hold my interest for a complete reading. I was pleasantly surprised to find that my fear was misplaced. More than that, the book offered a wealth of information and strengthened my positive feelings for the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) system and its graduates. I could, of course, relate that for someone who has been part of the system for nearly half a century, this required little reinforcement from outside.

The writers are three very young alumni of IITs-Madras, Delhi, and Bombay. In fact, two of them are still students at the university at the time of writing this review. This fact itself tells a story of the enormous ambition, motivation, and spirit of young IITs alumni who are at the forefront of innovation and entrepreneurship. The book offers a wealth of information on the various areas of life that these young IIT alumni have explored and succeeded in.

The book is divided into four parts: The Journey, The Gift, The Challenge, and The Lesson. Each part is accompanied by a biographical sketch of the entrepreneur, along with details of the start-up and its success story. The book is an excellent resource for anyone interested in entrepreneurship and innovation.

The Journey is an account of the entrepreneurial journey of the three young alumni. The Gift is about the various entrepreneurship initiatives and activities they have undertaken to support and encourage entrepreneurship in India. The Challenge is about the various challenges and obstacles they faced and how they overcame them. The Lesson is about the importance of innovation and entrepreneurship in today's world and how it can transform society.

The book is a must-read for anyone interested in entrepreneurship and innovation. It is a testament to the power of innovation and the potential of young entrepreneurs. The book is an inspiration to all those who dream of creating a successful start-up and making a positive impact on society.
What does it take to be a true engineer?

Every year, lakhs of students appear for the engineering entrance exams, be it AIEEE or IIT-JEE. Close to 1 million students, around this time of the year, are busy revising their syllabus for the Boards that begin in March, and are eager to achieve their life-long dreams and aims to enter the best college and university to groom and write their future.

Engineering as a career has attracted the student fraternity of the country in a big way and a large number of aspirants taking the engineering exams is a proof of this rise in demand. Engineering is a multi-disciplined field with new disciplines and branches being added with the advancement of science and technology.

The rat race of “being the best” has made students cross their own bar. They are well aware that clearing these entrances is not a cake walk. Every student who wants to be an engineer dreams of pursuing the degree from IIT. But it is very important to understand that preparation for IIT Entrance Examination (IIT-JEE) requires rigorous hard work as competition for the limited seats at the prestigious IITs is increasing every year.

Students start preparing as early as Class 9 itself. The All India Engineering /Architecture Entrance Examinations (AIEEE) is the largest entrance examination in the world. It is the exam for admission to engineering or architecture undergraduate courses in India.

Engineering is amongst the few professions where creativity and ingenuity knows no bounds. Moreover, if you are the one among those looking for challenging opportunities than engineering is the ideal profession to opt for.

As a profession, it offers a wide range of career possibilities. From the design of fighter planes to that of pacemakers for hearts from boring holes deep in the earth for the petrochemicals to stepping on Mars, engineers play a pivotal role.

It is important to note that candidates who are giving their final examinations of Class 12 in 2012 are eligible to appear twice for the Joint Entrance Exam in consecutive years. Candidates who have passed Class 12 from a recognised Board are also eligible to sit for the exam. Here are some tips on how to crack the exam:

It is advisable to stay focused and maintain a positive attitude. Fretting over the exam will not be helpful; You will only be wasting your time. It is very important to develop speed.

Do not over-stress yourself, it is important to sleep five to six hours every night, especially three-four days before the exam to keep you physically and mentally fit. Short naps also help to regain freshness. Students should avoid oversleeping during the day.

It is important to focus on weak areas and improve your strength with concepts. Your mantra should be quality of time and not the quantity.

This year, the IIT-JEE exam and AIEEE is slated for April 8 and April 29, 2012 respectively. If you aspire to land a top rank in an esteemed university, then this is the right time to brush up your fundamentals skills and re-energise yourself for D-day.

The advent of globalisation and liberalisation in the early 90s has brought in a revolutionary change. Engineers have the ability to bring about an impactful change. They can bring blueprints alive. They use a barren land as a canvas and spill colours to make a new painting in the name of invention and technology.

(The writer is Head of FITT-JEE, Noida.)

Ramesh Batlish
Business Standard ND 22/03/2012
P-16

‘Decline in high-quality applicants from India into US business PhD courses’

Less than two months after India’s Soumitra Dutta took over as the dean at US’s Cornell University’s Johnson Business School, SRLATA A ZAHEER became the first Indian woman to head the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota. In an emailed interview to M Saraswathy, she shares her goals and India plans.

Edited excerpts:

How does it feel to be the first Indian woman dean of a US school?
Our school has no gender issue. We had a woman dean just before me. In fact, the US’ higher education is at the forefront, with many women deans and presidents at top universities. It will hopefully act as a beacon to help shake the glass ceiling in other sectors. Also, while I may be the first Indian woman dean of a top-tier US business school, I know several Indian women who are deans, provosts and chaired professors at several respectable universities here.

What are your plans upon becoming the dean?
Reaching out in person and through extensive crowdsourcing to listen to all of our stakeholders — students, faculty, staff, the business community and the alumni — and articulating a pathway to our future.

How would you deal with financial resources-related issues, given a gradual decrease in state funding for the school?
In the last five-plus years, state funding has been reduced from approximately 20 per cent of our budget to less than five per cent. As a result, we have found ways to grow revenue from other sources. We will continue to look at all possible sources.

Does your school have India on its mind?
We have a strong relationship with the ISB (Indian School of Business) at Hyderabad. My husband, Aks, and I were both on its founding international academic council; Aks has taught there every year since its inception. We negotiated an agreement with ISB, where one of our professors, Ravi Bapna, chairs ISB’s SRTTNE information technology centre, and several other of our faculty teach at ISB. Additionally, our executive MBA students from our Vienna programme (one of the three international executive MBA programmes we have), others are in Warsaw and in Guangzhou, visit ISB every year. Our students have done live cases and field trips in India. The India seminar you mention was one of those cases. We are in talks with a major Indian business schools about starting an international executive MBA in India.

Indians are increasingly holding top positions at international institutes. Would it be right to say that the US has now started to realise the potential of Indians as future leaders?
The US system is deeply meritocratic, so national origin is usually neither an asset nor a liability. A lot of students from the very best Indian schools came to the US to do their PhDs in the 1970s and the ’80s. What you are seeing now is their coming-of-age. In the past 15 years, however, we have seen a decline in the numbers of high-quality applicants from India into US business PhD programmes. This does not bode well either for more Indian-origin deans in the future or, of greater concern, to meet a growing need for research-trained faculty both in India and worldwide.
130 B-schools face closure

Kirtika Suneja
New Delhi, Mar 21

The business of running business schools isn’t easy. Around 130 management institutes or 4% of all B-schools in India are expected to close shop this year, twice as many as last year, thanks to faculty shortage, lack of students, substandard curriculum and poor infrastructure.

Topping the list of states whose business schools have applied to wind up is Andhra Pradesh with 36 such institutes, followed by Rajasthan with 25 and Uttar Pradesh with 18. Total seat capacity of all these institutes is almost 10,000. Recently, the Mumbai Business School wound up after three years of operation due to lack of students. It provided a one-year full-time programme in management, similar to the one offered by the Hyderabad-based Indian School of Business.

“Closure of management institutes is more common than engineering institutes because of relatively lower investments and the present soft market for management education. All these institutes will continue to operate for their existing batches but fresh admissions have been stopped,” said a senior official from the human resource development ministry.

Last year, 40 B-schools requested closure according to the All-India Indea Council for Technical Education (AICTE), which prescribes norms for faculty and approval for establishment of new institutes.

Experts said many B-schools were unable to fill all seats while some were unable to meet the criteria of AICTE and therefore had to shut shop. “Most of these institutes are in rural areas, without any relation with the industry and have poor admissions. There are no jobs in such remote areas and hence, they lose out on students,” said AICTE chairman SS Mantha.

130 B-schools...

India has nearly 4,000 B-schools with a capacity of 3.5 lakh seats. Every year, around 60-70 institutes get added to the list. The council is still processing the applications of institutes and closure can happen once the respective state government and affiliating university gives its no-objection certificate.

Continued on Page 2
E-commerce sites make a beeline for B-school grads

Shobha Roy
Abhishek Law
Kolkata, March 21

E-commerce sites have flocked to the premier B-schools particularly IIMs for campus recruitment this year.

The trend-setting move was a win-win for both the private equity backed e-tailers and B-schools who were anticipating lower opportunities in sectors such as finance and investment banking this placement season.

With a view to spreading their wings through professional managers, these sites have been making offers for mid-level management posts with specialisation in warehouse, logistics and support chain management, analytics and online marketing of products.

IIM-Kozhikode confirmed that sites such as Amazon, eBay, Flipkart and Yebhi.com have been some of the first time recruiters. Recruiters across other IIMs include Snapdeal, Naaptol and Lenskart. According to Mr Kashyap Vadapalli, Director, Category and Business Development, eBay India, without a brand value, start-ups might find it difficult to recruit people from the markets. “This makes them go to IIMs. eBay has built a brand over the years,” he added.

Flipkart, however, has a different take. “We have been hiring from the IIMs for the past couple of years. The response has been extremely positive. Talent from these colleges have an extra edge,” Mr Sujeet Kumar, President-Operations, Flipkart, said.

OFFERS
While Flipkart has made 23 offers across IIMs (it has 40 IIM grads so far); start-ups like Lenskart or relatively older players like Snapdeal have also made their presence felt at campus recruitments.

Snapdeal, making its debut at IIMs this year, has made 10 offers across IIMs – Lucknow (4), Calcutta (4) and Bangalore (2). A little over a year-old Lenskart – an online eyewear store – has come up with eight offers. Six of them are at IIM (Indore) while two at IIM (Lucknow).

“Overall we made 12 offers of which eight have been confirmed,” Mr Peyush Bansal, Founder, Lenskart said.

According to Mr Amith JM, student’s placement committee co-ordinator at IIM-Ahmedabad, the institute has witnessed significant participation from e-commerce companies this year. The huge private equity investments have necessitated the need for professional managers.

OTHER B-SCHOOLS
Some of the e-tailers are also looking at other premier B-schools. Flipkart confirmed its willingness to recruit from SP Jain, FMS and Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT).

“We missed out on recruitments at IIMs as most of the slots were taken. We might go to Narsee Monjee with around 10-odd offers,” Mr Sachin Singhal, head (e-commerce), Naaptol, said. Naaptol has made three offers at IIM (Calcutta) this year.

XLRI confirmed the receipt of a couple of offers from e-tailers this year. The institute is also planning to tweak its curriculum for catering to specific industries.

shobha@thehindu.co.in
abhisek.l@thehindu.co.in
Budget gives research at agri varsities a shot in the arm

VINAY UPADESHI & M. SADASHIVI
Ahmedabad/Mumbai, 20 March

The announcement of monetary grants for agricultural universities across the country has come as a much-needed respite. With the help of these monetary grants, research work at agri campuses are set to expedite, say institutes.

Among the grants announced include ₹100 crore each to Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) and Acharya N G Ranga Agricultural University (ANGRAU), Hyderabad; ₹50 crore each to University of Agricultural Sciences in Dharwad, Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University in Hissar, and Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology; and ₹25 crore for agri B-school, Institute of Rural Management, Anand (IRMA).

For ANGRAU, the grant of ₹100 crore will mean enhanced research in nano technology, biotechnology and bio control agents. "We had been intending to expedite research on nano technology and bio technology since long but lack of funds was an impediment. Now, we will be able to train our manpower in these areas," said Gilda Reddy, director, extension at ANGRAU, which has 12 colleges and 46 research stations across Andhra Pradesh under it.

Currently, of its total ₹350 crore annual requirement of funds, about 80 per cent comes from the state government while 20 per cent comes from Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and other Central schemes.

The University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, looks to utilise the funds for setting up an incubation centre in food science and technology. "We had been looking at promoting budding entrepreneur in food sciences sector, and the funds will be utilised for the same," said KR Hanchinal, vice-chancellor of UAS.

At KAU, officials say the ₹100 crore grant has been sanctioned in view of the academic and research accomplishments of KAU. KR Vishwanath, vice-chancellor of the institute said the institution that contributes ₹640 crore at an average per annum in Kerala's agricultural income has been confronting financial crisis for more than 10 years.

KAU plans to utilise this grant for establishing essential facilities, launching more new generation courses and revising syllabi, coordinating different activities, reforming administration, and inculcating a new management system based on e-governance.

Not just agriculture universities, even B-schools like IRMA have also received a grant of ₹25 crore for research. "We had asked for ₹25 crore as part of our expansion exercise. IRMA has had a year-long exercise of drawing up a plan for the next phase of growth. This plan includes ramping up the campus facilities to enable greater intake of students, offer diverse programmes and contribute to the professionalisation of management of programmes oriented towards growth of rural areas and rural enterprises and creation of centres of excellence in research," said Jeermol Unni, director of IRMA.

On its part, Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University will use the grants for the ongoing research projects at the institute. Joginder Singh Mallick, Public Relations Officer of the institute, said though they are pleased to get ₹50 crore, they would require more. "We had expected ₹100 crore from the centre for our research activities," said Mallick. The money will be used for replacing equipment that have become obsolete, procure new agriculture technology for R&D facility and build infrastructure.
Five habits of successful students

A habit is an unconscious pattern of behavior acquired through frequent repetition. It typically becomes automatic and before we realize it can be as binding as a chain of steel. Raising early in the morning, using a daily planner, and returning home to college, are examples of some habits. Charles Dickens, the famous author once said, “I never could have done what I have done without the habits of punctuality, order, and diligence, without the determination to concentrate myself on one subject at a time.” Developing a new habit or breaking one, can take two to four weeks, with constant practice.

What are winning habits?

There are early birds getting up in the wee hours of the morning to study and some night hawks, studying late into the night. Which set of habits do you think are more successful? Research has indicated that this is indeed difficult to conclude. Importantly, both habits point to the winning habit of maintaining a regular pattern in daily activities, or discipline.

- **Discipline**: Discipline is of paramount importance in academics, as well as your professional and personal life. Your internal body clock finds it easy to adapt to a regular pattern of sleeping, improving the quality of sleep and productivity during the day. Further, nutritionists think that regular and consistent eating habits positively influence health. Learn to manage your time, handling important and urgent tasks on priority.

Regularity in attending lectures is mandatory, unless there is a family or personal emergency. By missing lectures, you lag behind, creating additional academic pressure. Break the habit of missing lectures casually. Consult your professors for clarifications after missing lectures for genuine reasons, or for additional study materials. Professors like to guide serious students and can be your mentors too.

As a teenager, movies, late night parties, weekend tours etc., are common. Try not to yield to such temptations; instead, plan unwinding activities occasionally. Become a thorough professional, making discipline a way of life.

- **Persistent goal focus**: Discover your strengths and interests by taking an aptitude test. Use this assessment and consider appropriate career options. Consult a mentor and choose your career.

Pursue career goals with focus. Career challenges and difficulties can be daunting, distracting you away from your goals.

When faced with hurdles, persist by asking key questions: why is this strategy not working? Have I tried not considering an aspect? What are the alternate strategies available? Successful students learn from every difficult situation, and persist until their goals are achieved. By the power of your imagination, visualize the benefits of a dream career, to keep you energized and highly motivated.

- **Health, fitness & emotions**: With an array of tasks like classes, assignments, case studies, projects etc., academic life becomes demanding and stressful. Balance your academic and personal life, by managing time for sports, yoga or a relaxing hobby. A balanced life with regularity in sleep, diet, exercise, makes you physically fit and healthy.

- **Self-discipline**: Condition your mind to focus, irrespective of routine or challenging tasks. Overcome addictions and dependencies with emotional control, developing a positive self-image.

- **Concentration & study techniques**: You must combat any lack of concentration. For example, you may be forced to wake up late after a late night party, and rush to college, missing breakfast. Lack of sleep and grueling hunger make it difficult for you to concentrate on lectures. Therefore, you may find the classes boring, and indulge in conversations, texting, or even banking.

However, successful students manage to concentrate on the lecture, with strong listening habits. Become a part of a learning environment by understanding the syllabus and expecting the content of each class. Stay away from friends who wear you from scheduled activities. Engage in self-dialogue, developing the ability to say no.

Consider these learning techniques:

- Be open to continuous learning: Recognize learning opportunities from different methods (lectures, assignments, case studies, debates etc.), mediums (classroom, print/electronic/internet media, experience sharing etc.), and people (teachers, seniors, elders etc.)

- **Develop flexibility in thinking**: See the bigger picture, but still have an eye for detail. Develop lateral thinking (alternative points of view) and change your mindset, with new faces.

- **Develop accuracy focus**: Accuracy is required in many professions like Medicine, Engineering, Marketing, Music, Dance, Crafts. Recognize tasks where accuracy is critical.

- **Active listening and empathetic understanding**: Maintain eye contact with the professor; develop the right body language to indicate the extent of understanding.

- **Questioning is the key to wisdom**: Questioning helps in understanding the gaps between the known and the unknown. Understand concepts by posing “cause and effect” questions, getting additional information and data.

- **Seeking excellence**: Stephen Covey, author of the outstanding book, “The Seven Habits of Highly Successful People” says, “Our character is basically a composite of our habits. Because they are consistent, often unconscious patterns, they constantly daily express our character.”

Successful students have winning habits. They understand that life is a long process of learning and constantly work at educating themselves. Therefore, in pursuit of excellence, consider every achievement as a stepping stone to set higher standards.

For academic success, it’s crucial to develop career goals and an action plan. Implement the plan with discipline and persist until the goals are reached.

Greek philosopher Aristotle said, “We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.”

**Breaking a habit**

Old habits die hard; but the point is they do. Therefore, breaking a bad habit isn’t impossible. An effective way is to ask questions to yourself: What are the compelling reasons for the habit? What are the consequences of the bad habit? What are the benefits of breaking the habit? The answers to these, will provide the remedy too.

Every time you turn to the habit, remind yourself that you are choosing the bad consequences versus the benefits. With self-awareness of consequences and determination, challenge yourself each time you can break the bad habit. Reward yourself for breaking the habit successfully.

For success in academics or a profession, identify key strategies and persist with them, until they become habits. Winning habits act as powerful motivators, insulating you from failures and difficulties; they energize you to progress towards your goals and enable achieving personal excellence.
India’s water warriors

Abhijit Patnaik
abhijit.patnaik@hindustantimes.com

Urban India's water challenges are many. Resources are being spread thin, or not at all. Neighbours are fighting with each other over a few buckets of water. Faced with these challenges, some people are taking matters into their own hands for the benefit of the community.

Meet India's water warriors. Ruchi Singhal, a 43-year-old interior designer, lives in Saket, one of South Delhi's more affluent areas. She installed a rainwater harvesting (RWH) facility in her home in 2004. The economics of installing this were simple. "We save about 20-25% on our water bill every cycle," she said.

Singhal's children go to the area's prestigious Mother's International School. "The school had set up a RWH system, which is what inspired us," said the mother of two. Their house channels all rain water into pipes connected to a harvesting tank with a capacity of 3800 litres. This water is used for mopping, washing cars and gardening.

MINDSET MATTERS
Singhal is one of an increasing number of people across the nation who realise the importance of taking action now to prevent future water wars.

Vinod Tare, a professor at IIT Kanpur, specialises in water and waste-water treatment. He is a key person involved in the development of 'zero discharge toilets'. Aligarh, his hometown, does not have a sewerage system, making his home there a perfect testing ground for this technology. The ingenious system recycles toilet excrements in a safe manner, converting faecal matter into manure and passing the liquid through micro filters and reusing it for flushing.

Apart from individual efforts like Singhal's and Tare's, communities in rural areas are also waking up to better water management. Slum dwellers in the settlement of Kachpura, near Agra, are some of India's early adopters of water conservation technology. With the participation of the community, a Delhi-based NGO, CURE, has set up a waste-water treatment system there, which treats the waste from five clusters of slums in the area. The community was involved in the design, construction, operation and maintenance of the system.

Singhal wishes more people would change their lifestyles and mindsets and conserve earth's resources.

"I have a separate bucket to keep used water (after washing vegetables or half drunk glasses) with which we water the garden," she said. From composting biodegradable waste to using air-conditioning only at night, Singhal and her family reduce their water and carbon footprint as much as possible.

So, why does she think that more people don't adopt similar measures?

"Implementation of the law is poor. Even though it is mandatory for newly constructed buildings to have RWH facilities, people pay bribes and don't get it done," she said. "The price of water has to go up. When electricity bills went up, people started conserving it. The same goes for water."

Such people are but a drop in the ocean of individual initiatives that can help solve India's water crisis. Mindsets need to change now, since conservation is the need of the day."
SUBWAYS FOR SAFE PASSAGE

A survey conducted by the Delhi Traffic Police states that most of the accidents take place on the Ring Road and the Outer Ring Road due to the absence of foot overbridges or subways. Meanwhile, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) has decided to make pedestrians safe by constructing subways on the proposed Janakpuri West-Kalindi Kunj corridor. As of now, all the subways will be in south Delhi.

122 pedestrians were run over by vehicles while they were crossing the road in 2011

42 number of accidents on the Outer Ring Road, according to traffic police

The seven stations to get subways include: Munirka, RK Puram, IIT, Panchsheel Park, Chirag Delhi, Greater Kailash Enclave and Nehru Place

THE ISEET STORY, SO FAR

THE INDIAN SCIENCE ENGINEERING ELIGIBILITY TEST (ISEET) is the successor to the Joint Entrance Exam (IIT-JEE) and All-India Engineering Entrance Test (AIEEE)—and will become the gateway to India's top engineering colleges including the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and National Institutes of Technology (NITs).

THE ISEET IS SCHEDULED to begin from 2013, but so far there is no official confirmation on this. The ISEET is a result of the government's effort to reduce the burden on multiple entrance tests on students and an attempt to cut out the coaching class culture.

REPORTS CLAIM THAT ISEET will have two parts: Main and Advance, each of three hours duration. Both tests will be conducted on the same day—between 10am and 5pm. ISEET Main will be an objective type exam, and will test comprehension, critical thinking and logical reasoning. ISEET Advance will test problem-solving ability in basic science subjects.

THE TWO TESTS together will indicate a candidate’s scholastic level and aptitude for science and engineering.

ABOUT 40 PER CENT weightage will be given to Class 12 exams, and scores across all boards will be normalised. The combined weightage for the main and the advance paper under ISEET shall not, in any case, exceed 60 per cent.

THE CONCEPT OF ISEET was prepared by the T Ramasami Committee in April last year. Since 2008, the Ramasami Committee is the fourth attempt to reform the JEE. The first was an internal committee under VG Illichandy of IIT-Madras. He suggested scrapping of JEE, and considering Class 12 marks for IIT admission. Recommendations were neither made public nor discussed.

IN OCTOBER 2009, IIT Council suggested increasing eligibility cut-off from the existing 60 per cent to 80 per cent in Class 12. This was followed by the Acharya Committee of four IIT directors to suggest JEE reforms. It submitted an interim report for admission, based on weighted sum of normalised Class 12 marks along with proposed SAT-like examination.