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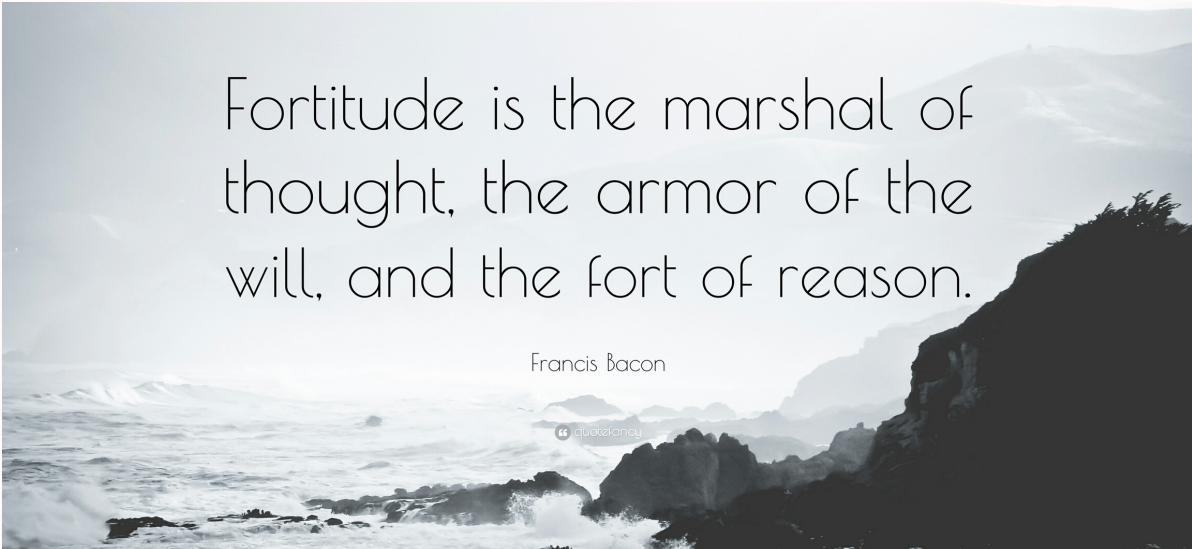**WINNER OF THE WORLD PASTRY CUP 2019, FRANCE**

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> Fortitude is the marshal of thought, the armor of the will, and the fort of reason.
>
> Francis Bacon

FORCES NETWORK
THE NETWORK THAT WORKS

From the Editor

Dear Reader,

We initially thought that it is likely to be a short engagement, but has on the contrary turned out to be a long term campaign, which needs to be fought with collective efforts, sincerity of purpose, adherence to laid down regulations, and above all, faith. The link obviously starts from 'me', and thus necessitates that all necessary precautions are to be taken without a second thought. Every one is required to behave and act socially responsible to ensure control of spread of COVID-19, till such time an effective cure for the same is found.

The prevailing circumstances have created an aura of ambiguity and uncertainty in always walks of life. Industries and organisations are badly impacted, and with the need of social distancing to be maintained, how work and activity is going to be carried out in the months to come is still incomprehensible. Some forms of work from home have started, and is getting fine tuned in the process, giving ideas to the organisations to resort to it and make it the norms for the time s to follow. There is definitely going to be a paradigm shift in the way we function and operate. Schools are unlikely to open for a long time, though studies are not being affected at present al on-line teaching is being resorted to.

Many training activities are now being carried out through Webinars. Even Forces Network carried out its first M2C Transition Workshop online, thereafter followed by few other trainings buoyed by the maiden success. It is a clear indication of the organisations being ready to intelligently embrace the challenge in this VUCA environment. Fortitude and resolve are going to be the mainstays to emerge as winners in such situations. We have to counter volatility with vision, meet uncertainty with understanding, react to complexity with clarity, and fight ambiguity with agility.

Whatever your need, the grace of fortitude gives you the strength and courage to face challenges and emergencies head-on. It doesn't mean that you are fearless. What it does mean is that you act in spite of fear, because action is necessary. Inaction under present circumstances surprisingly may not help maintain status quo, but may lead to deterioration of the situation instead. Checking folks to adhere to laid down regulation in respect of safety from COVID-19 is just one small part of it. So, let us step out and do our small part in the whole play. There are however many amongst us, who are going beyond the call of duty, and displaying very high levels of consciousness and humanity. Even if we can not emulate them, let us encourage them, and give a helping hand where ever and when ever possible.

So, let us resolve today to fight, united. Stay safe, till we meet next.

Cheers to Forces Network - the Network that Works!!!

Regards,
Lt Col Ranvir Singh

Events

First Online Military to Corporate (M2C) Transition Workshop by ForceNet

BY IQBAL SINGH

While Forces Network had planned a full day M2C Transition Workshop at New Delhi on 22 Mar 2020, the prevailing COVID-19 situation and the lock down restrictions made conduct of the physical workshop impossible. Under these prevailing circumstances it was then decided that the Workshop be conducted virtually online. The detailed schedule was created the workshop duration was enhanced from a single day to three days covering 14 instructional hours.

The curriculum of the Workshop was designed with a great deal of thought and our past experiences in conducting these workshops as well as the feedback received from participants helped us create the relevant scope of the Workshop. The Workshop kicked off on 17 Apr 2020 (Friday) in the evening with Iqbal Singh delivering a comprehensive talk on how an ideal M2C Transition including the job-hunting process should be planned.

The next day was majorly devoted to CV Making with the trainers first covering the Art and Science of CV making. Then we had the Trainers doing a CV makeover of three different CVs from three different domains ie HR, Security and Technology. Thereafter there was a two hour session wherein the participants made their CV right in the Workshop under the guidance of the trainers. The day ended with Meena Arora, a clinical psychologist and NLP Coach conducting an NLP exercise on the mindset reset.

On Day 3 we began with the mock interview wherein one candidate was interviewed by a panel of industry experts for a job role in HR. The panelists gave real time feedback on how the candidate could have done things better. Sanjiv Haldia a veteran HR professional then gave a talk on 'Tips to Successfully Negotiating Job Interviews' and another session on 'Understanding Salary Compensation'.

Personal branding is also an essential part today for a successful job search. Capt Uday then gave a presentation on how the military personnel can leverage several digital platforms of today to have a successful transition or job change.

Post lunch there was a fascinating session by Col Sajan on 'How to Find Your Passion'. This was followed by one hour of Open House where the participants could ask any query related to Transition. This was an extremely engaging session wherein the Trainers answered all the queries in a candid manner, while also adding the learnings from their own professional experiences.

The participants found that this session gave them a lot of clarity. The Workshop was a

great success and the participants feedback was extremely positive. To quote from the feedback of one participant, who said, "The Workshop has been an enlightening experience. Apart from being informative, it has also led me to have a transformational mindset and has better equipped me to prepared for M2C Transition." Other comments also echoed similar sentiments of great learning, relevant content and superlative delivery.

Finally, to be honest I was quite apprehensive about the efficacy of an online Workshop however that misconception in my mind has now given way to a firm belief abot the efficacy and better reach of such an exercise. In many ways an online workshop is far more engaging than a physical one if done in the right way.

Forces Network now looks forward to serving its members informing, educating and inspiring them from not just F2F event but also online events, from here onwards. Adapting to change especially in the VUCA environment is what Forces Network has been advocating to its members, and it gives much satisfaction to lead by example.

Forces Network has made the recording of the webinar available to its members who had registered for the same.

Cheers to the Forces Network - the Network that Works!!!

Lt Col Iqbal Singh *was commissioned on 19 Dec 1987 into 4th Battalion The Garhwal Rifles. He completed MTech after undergoing the EME Officers Degree Engineering course on Infantry vacancy, and subsequently graduated from the DSSC Wellington. The officer has also done a tenure in the Indian Army's Wargaming and Development Center (WARDEC). After hanging his boots in Jun 2008, he is currently working in a senior role in a large European telecom MNC based at New Delhi. He is a frequent speaker on various industry fora on technology topics especially Cloud Technology and Artificial Intelligence. He founded the Forces Network, now having 5400 plus members, on 04 Dec 2007 and continues to drive it to greater heights. He can be contacted at iqchucks@gmail.com*

Stars of Forces Network

A Forces Network Star is a member of the Forces Network who has gone on to achieve glory in the his/her corporate/civilian avatar. The aim of this series in not just to celebrate our successes from the veteran community, which unfortunately we do not do enough, but also to inspire others. The ultimate goal is to set up a virtuous self-sustaining cycle of inspiration leading to more successes in turn inspiring many more.

BY BIDISHA PANDEY

Capt Mayank Singh was commissioned in Mar 2007 into 207 Medium Regiment. After his five years of service in the Army, did General Management Program from IIM Lucknow. He is a Corporate Physical Security and Investigations Professional. Worked in top notch organization like Reliance, Airtel, Microsoft and Flipkart . Currently working as Regional Manager- Enterprise Risk Management, Security, Investigations & Compliance with Hill & Associates Ltd. He has done GOLD STANDARD certifications like CPP, PSP & PCI from ASIS International and he is also a Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE).

Life in the Army

Capt Mayank recollects the most memorable experience in the Indian Army to be the firing of the first round during his maiden firing practice camp in Rajasthan. Till then, he had seen the firing only in the videos of the Kargil War. Another memorable moment for him is of winning the mine laying competition won by his Regiment team which was led by him, and it happened just a few days prior to his release from the Army.

The bonding, the camaraderie, and the sense of belonging, in the officers and the men of the Regiment is something that shall stay with him forever.

Switching to the Security Domain

Being a non-techie and a commerce graduate, Capt Mayank knew that migrating to the technical domain would be difficult. However, expertise in the security domain came naturally to him. He saw himself as the perfect fit for the Physical Security sector.

He admits that he struggled a lot during his transition as he never interacted with any brother officers who were already there in the corporate, and he also had no clue about the preparations required to be done for the Military to Corporate transition. He did everything on his own, through his own research and maturity.

Career Progression

Capt Mayank had the opportunity to work with big names such as Reliance, Bharti Airtel, Microsoft and Flipkart in the Physical Security and Investigations domain. He says every tenure in each of these places has been a great learning experience. However, he feels there's a lot more to learn and looks forward to working in more diverse environments in future.

In the Armed Forces, one is supported fully by the brother officers and the men in the organisation, whereas in the corporate world, things are different, One is mostly on his own due to cut-throat competition. Promotions and growth in corporate solely depend on your performance, which is also dependent on motivation of the team that works under you.

A Day in the Life of a Security Professional

Capt Mayank believes that the main requirement for a security professional is to be available 24*7*365 days. A normal day comprises of checking the parade state/deployment status of the security team (as in the Army), interaction with multiple stakeholders like HR and Business Operations, attending to various requirements and crisis situations such as fire incidents, employee accidents, police interactions, medical emergencies, conducting fire drills, investigation of various types of cases, checking security requirements and interaction with various other external stakeholders and service providers.

Advice to Fellow Officers

According to Capt Mayank, officers preparing for the military to corporate transition need to give special attention to networking. Speaking and discussing your goals with officers who have successfully transitioned definitely makes things smoother. One should try and understand the current trends and requirements in the physical security domain. The physical security domain, at present, is not just about physical man-guarding, but also involves the use of various modern technologies and automation. Lastly, Gold standard certifications from ASIS such as CPP, PSP and PCI hold a lot of value in the market. Accomplishing these before your transition shall not only help you in gaining knowledge about the terms and technology used in corporate security but will also help you kick start your career in the security domain.
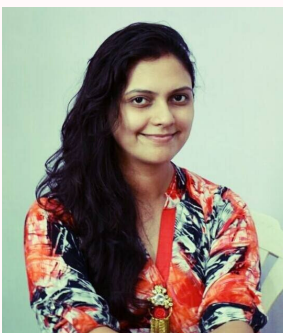
Bidisha Pandey *is a blogger who believes every individual has a story and a lot can be learnt from every story. More stories and interviews by her can be read on her blog site* www.sassyweekender.com

ForceNetPreneurs

In this series we plan to showcase a few entrepreneur members of Forces Network who have achieved a reasonable degree of success in their business ventures. The aim being to celebrate their success as also to learn from them with a view to motivating more amongst our community to take up entrepreneurship as a full time vocation. Finally – we do need job creators in greater numbers than job seekers.

BY RANVIR SINGH

Col Krishan Kumar Singh, was commissioned into 63 CAVALRY in Dec 1994. Later he raised and commanded a T-90 Regiment. He held prestigious instructional and staff appointments, including at the Army HQ. After a successful career he opted for PMR in 2017 for personal reasons. He has seven years of experience in working with DRDO, DPSUs, DGQA, Foreign OEMs, and Industry. Post retirement he founded "C2DL Pvt. Ltd" dealing in Defence and Logistics especially covering the needs of MSME in India. He is also the Director of "DEF & SEC DOCTORS" a franchisee vertical of "Business Doctors India" part of a global consultant group, and also acts as a Mentor for Defence Start-Ups and creation of ecosystem for defence in India.

Col Krishan Kumar Sharma, as Director C2DL Pvt Ltd has a hectic schedule, however a personal meeting to know about his entrepreneurial journey could always be arranged. Unfortunately, lock down instructions in the wake of COVID-19 scare precluded any such arrangement. Nevertheless, making full use of technology, a meeting was organised on line, with some interaction on phone, and some insights into the life of Col Krishan were gathered. Please read on.....

Ranvir: Tell us something about your background prior to joining the Army, and your subsequent Army career.

Krishan: I was born and brought up in Haridwar, did my schooling in Kendriya Vidyalaya, BHEL throughout, and then graduated from Chinmaya Degree College in Life Sciences. My father had also served in the Army, 63 CAV, and mother was a school teacher. On being commissioned in Dec 1994 from IMA Dehradun, I joined my father's Regiment i.e. 63 CAVALRY. Though later, I raised a T-90 Regiment and commanded it successfully. I have also served in the CI environment with HQ Kilo Force. I have performed exceedingly well on all my professional courses, bagging Best Student awards and Instructor gradings. I also served as GSO-1 Ops at Armoured Division, Instructor CL A at Military Intelligence School, PUNE, and as Director Inservice Equipment in Directorate of Mechanised Forces, Army HQ. However, in March 2017, I took PMR due to pressing family reasons.

Ranvir: Please give us more details about what you are presently engaged in.
Krishan: Currently I am running my own Consultancy Firm (C2DL PVT LTD) in the field

of Defence & Security. We also support Logistics System Support (ERP) to Airlines and Shipping Industry. Also I am a Mentor to Startups and on the Panel of Selection Committee of Startup Incubator with a University in Gujarat. Simultaneously, I am on board of two Start Ups currently based in Delhi and Mumbai.

Ranvir: What was the vision behind starting your venture? How did you make the start?

Krishan: Once I decided to apply for PMR, I had to choose a domain of work. Since my last assignment was to deal with all stakeholders in Defence Industry, I realised that the kind of domain knowledge accumulated with years of interaction with OEMs, DPSUs, DGQA and Indian MSMEs can be harnessed to assist them under MAKE IN INDIA. More over to start something of my own has been a dream realised once I was undergoing DGR Pre-Release Course at IIM Ahmedabad. During Stay at IIM one got chance to interact with Officials and Start-Up founders at CIIE, E Chai Network, EDI, GUSEC & VENTURE STUDIO and many other Incubators. The learning for own business idea was the START POINT for me. Business aspects were then crystalized at IIM Ahmedabad, which started with incorporation my own Company.

Ranvir: Please share important aspects related to the methodology/process of the activities you are presently engaged in.

Krishan: Consultation and Mentoring requires considerable amount of homework and research work in the domain which one is involved in. So the research work is always unending and we tried to remain updated on policies, current trends, market dynamics and Influencers. The liaison with major stakeholders helps in serving clients. For mentorship activities, our main focus and emphasis is on Team Building, Strategic Planning and Market Strategies to tackle the issues lined up for a StartUp from conceptualisation to marketing the finished product stages. Identifying the market gaps is critical to every Startup. Investment consultancy from seed funding to series

A&B investment is also an area we do influence for the StartUps and connect them with right players.

Ranvir: Any important projects undertaken by you over these years?

Krishan: A few important projects undertaken by us are:
- A defence consultancy project with two MNCs for a green field project in Africa.
- ERP support and design consultancy to a major Cargo Airlines in Europe by our Logistics Vertical.
- Two more Foreign clients are currently engaged in Investment and JV tieups with Indian Industry through us.
- Mentorship of a StartUp on development of UASS at IIT Mumbai is currently underway.
- Incubation of ARISTA VAULT (StartUp) by STPI and Electro-preneur Park is currently underway at Delhi University (South campus).

Ranvir: What were the challenges faced in this regard in your entrepreneurial journey? How did you overcome the challenges?

Krishan: Challenges are part of any professional journey, so we have to accept to takechallenges in our stride. Few challenges I encountered were:
- **Start A New Company**- We took guidance from a CA firm who guided the nuances of a Company incorporation and finer aspects of compliances.
- **Market Reach**- To start a new venture requires market connects and Networking helps. Reaching out to market players and influencers through various Online and Off line platform is the key.
- **Hiring Staff**- To keep the operating cost low, We resorted to outsourcing of services.
- **Marketing**- Its better to start using social media and client referral as the best way to expand the business that spending high amount on marketing in initial ears. Let your work speaks for itself.

Ranvir: How do you find your entrepreneurial journey so far? Any regrets?

Krishan: The journey so far had been exceptional and satisfying. NO regrets as I am kind of person who like unsupervised way of working. Which NOT only brings the added positive stress on me, also it gets best out of me. One is accountable of its own actions. Entrepreneurship has NO space for passengers.

Ranvir: What are your future plans going forward?

Krishan: We are looking to expand our business in Middle East and South East Asia very soon (Post COVID-19) for which the spade work is currently ON. I w

also plan to take our mentee StartUp to next level by next year with funding and launch of new products in the market, may be capture new market as well. For Example ARISTA VAULT is scheduled for US and DUBAI launch on AMAZON this year, and we are coming up with new series of products too in market. Alongside, filing of patents by our mentee StartUps is new KRA for this period.

Ranvir: There must have been great lessons during this tremendous entrepreneurial journey. Can you share a few from your experience?

Krishan: I would like to consider these on three planes, as follows:

- Risk Taking Ability: To be successful one has to hone the skills of taking calculated RISKS, and every time you may not succeed but you will at least get a fair idea of timely decisions to seize the opportunity.

- Preparation is the key to scale up your business. You can NOT do any thing if you are unprepared in terms of plan, ideas, resources and finances when a big opportunity knocks your door.

- Compliance: It is important to remain compliant with Industry standards to remain relevant in market. People loose out for NOT having requisite qualifying criteria to participate in Business. I see this as opportunity than as a hurdle.

Ranvir: So, what advice would you like to give to the fellow ForceNet members who want to take up entrepreneurship, or venture into similar domain?

Krishan: Traditionally all Officers are quite clued up in running small enterprises (sub units and units), Only aspect is that those who have followed the Regulations well will

be able to understand the dynamics in Corporate and adapt to the equivalent of the same which they followed in Services eg, HR, Security, Operations, Finances, Logistics and even PR. One must also prepare and skill themselves to enter into Entrepreneurship mode after analysing pros and cons dispassionately. And above all, the family support is a must.

Ranvir: From the entrepreneur's view point, what advice would you like to give to ForceNet Members, who are thinking on the lines of migration, either to settle down, pick up a job, or start their own venture?
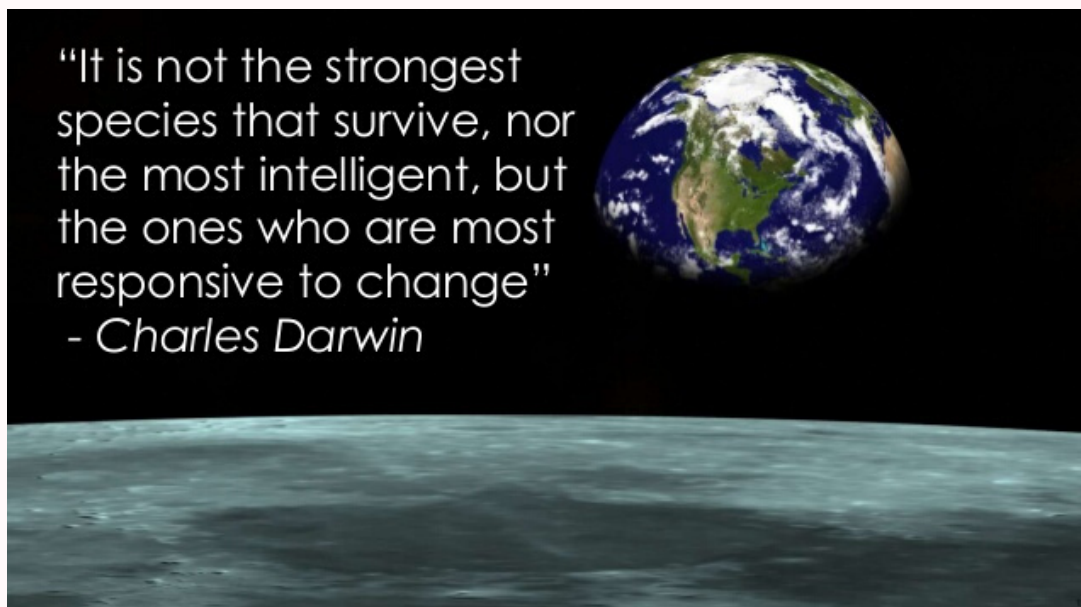
Krishan: Post COVID the whole world economics will be re-written, so migration to developed countries may NOT be advisable unless you get the MNC route open from INDIA itself. Pay packages are likely to be minimal at least for initial one to two financial years (especially in IT, marketing and Sales). Hence, one must choose the domain too, wisely.

Ranvir: **Thanks Krishan, for your valuable time. It was enriching to hear you.**

Krishan: It's been a pleasure for me too. I am available to any ForceNet member, who would like any additional information or assistance related to my domain of activity.

Lt Col Ranvir Singh, a product of Rashtriya Military School and and an alumnus of National Defence Academy, was commissioned into 2nd Battalion The Bihar Regiment in June 1988. He has served in all terrains of the country, held appointments at Armoured Brigade HQ, Area HQ, and HQ ARTRAC, and finally hung his boots in Jan 2009. Thereafter, as a Corporate Warrior, he has immensely contributed for last 10 years to recognised organisations like IL&FS Technologies Ltd, National Institute of Bank Management of RBI, and MMTC-PAMP India Pvt Ltd. He has a keen interest in the field of ever evolving Information Technology, and a flair for writing. He can be reached at ranvirsm@gmail.com

"It is not the strongest species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the ones who are most responsive to change"
- Charles Darwin

Expatriate Interview

In this series we plan to showcase the achievements of the members of Forces Network who have settled abroad and carved a niche for themselves through hard work, grit and determination. The aim is to bring to fore the mechanics of such transitions, and thereby quell the apprehensions of the larger community in the Network. Learning from each other would help us exploit our true potential in any part of the World. And, it could be beneficial for our families too.

BY RANVIR SINGH

Capt (IN) Sandeep Sharma, is an alumnus of 57th Course of National Defence Academy, He left the Navy in 2005 after serving as an Engineer on Ships, Dockyards and also at HQs. He did his MTech from IIT Bombay and MBA from Faculty of Management Studies, Delhi. After leaving the Navy he has worked in five countries with two MNCs and an Indonesian Shipping Company. He has been an expat for the last 12 years. He plans to move back to India in 2021 and set up his own consultancy.

It was an interaction through mails which helped me get a little insight into the life, service and experiences of Capt (IN) Sandeep Sharma. He very passionately shared the journey of life, and weaved his story as it unfolds in the following paragraphs, with a lot of gems to be picked up by the reader. Read on…..

The corporate journey so far and regrets….

It has been a fascinating experience. We never dreamt we would see so much in life. We have been expats for 12 years and counting. As far as regrets goes, I miss the uniform and possibility of senior positions in the Navy. Nevertheless, we made a choice, and so it's okay.

Some of the projects I undertook over the years…

Infrastructure development of Port Pipavav, Terminal expansion of Lagos container terminal and multiple container crane Projects in Shanghai were the major ones. Besides many other equipment Projects in Halifax and Indonesia.

The challenges I faced along this journey…

Getting used to Corporate Engineering standards, global specifications, working with multi-cultural colleagues, living in vastly differing countries and simultaneously attending to requirements in India were the main challenges.

And how I faced these challenges…

My Forces experience really helped. As mentioned earlier, my Companies valued leadership and strong values. A Danish boss once told me - 'If I had a choice between a good Engineer or a good Leader for an Engineering position, I would choose the latter. If he is good in both, then that is a bonus.' Also, we veterans are open to fresh challenges. For example, other Indian colleagues were often reluctant to leave Indian shores. Our constant shifting in service prepares us to move to new locations with ease.

Was there some vision for a post Navy career…

Actually, there was not much planning. I wanted to take it as it comes - which in hindsight, I would not recommend. My back up plan was the Merchant Navy. Other than that, we lead such sheltered lives in the Forces, that almost everything I experienced in my post Navy career was completely new. What really helped me was

my strong basics from Naval Engineering, leadership skills and sense of values. Mark my words, the latter two are greatly respected and acknowledged in the Corporate world! I also prepared myself by doing a part time MBA from FMS, University of Delhi. This did help besides being a fascinating experience, but that is another story.

A career in the Indian Navy.....

In the Navy I opted for the Marine Engineering stream and rose to the rank of Captain in 2002. My most memorable experiences were as Engineer Officer on a Missile Boat, Minesweeper and a Frigate, in Naval Dockyard Mumbai and in command of NSRY Port Blair. Early in the career, I spent some wonderful years in Naval College of Engineering at INS Shivaji, Lonavla and also whilst doing my MTech at IIT Bombay. In 2005, with the support of my wife, I decided to leave the Navy and pursue other options, even though I was otherwise doing well, career-wise in the Navy. I prepared myself for the Merchant Navy by doing the requisite courses and certifications from DG Shipping. However at that time, the Danish MNC Maersk was to set up a Port in Pipavav, Saurashtra, Gujarat and they selected me as the GM Engineering.

This was a multi-million dollar Project involving setting up the civil, equipment and electrical infrastructure of the new Port in a period of three years. It was a great creative experience. On completion, Maersk transferred me as an expat to Shanghai in their Crane Engineering Services division. We were basically doing Project Management for giant container cranes for Maersk Terminals all over the world. I moved with family and life was good in the modern bustling city of Shanghai. My children moved to International Schools and life for them changed dramatically. To further the expat experience, after four years I moved to Lagos heading a container terminal expansion Project. My son moved to University in the UK, daughter in Mercedes Benz International School in Pune and my wife was shuttling between the three of us and our parents! After 2.5 years, an ex-colleague of mine offered me a position of Director of Engineering in Halifax Container Terminal, Canada and we moved there. This was owned by Macquarie, an Australian MNC. At the same time, our daughter joined UBC Vancouver. Canada is a beautiful country, but the job was very tough because of the Union, weather and poor condition of the infrastructure. Not an ideal combination for an Engineer to deliver consistently! Nevertheless we trudged on, enjoying the country at the same time. After 2.5 yrs, we moved to Surabaya, Indonesia as an expat SVP in a Shipping Company - again on invitation. I look after their container terminal divisions. This was a move necessitated more by proximity to pressing home front requirements because of aging parents, even though we had Canadian PR by now. Since then we have been in Indonesia (visiting Bali often).

My background prior to joining the Navy....
Being the son of an Air Force officer, military life was already ingrained in me since childhood. I am from NDA 57th course Kilo Squadron.

Future plans....
We will return to India by end 2020 because we need to be with our parents. Also, I

will be 62 by early 2021 and maybe it is time to hang up my Corporate boots. But not to retire. I am thinking of consultancy mixed with some philanthropic work. Let us see how it develops. We intend to settle down in Pune.

Lessons I learnt along the way...
I think the biggest lesson for me was that we under value ourselves. We make a great asset to any organisation - honest, sincere, hard working, intelligent, result oriented. Most organisations love veterans for these traits. Domain competency is also not a big issue. Container Terminal Engineering is quite different from Naval Engineering. But the basics are the same. After a few hiccups, I never had a problem delivering.

Advice to fellow ForceNet members who may wish to take up an M2C career, or venture into similar domain....
Research, research, research. And have a Plan B, even a Plan C. After all, your families depend upon you. And if you have doubts, hold this giant step. Take the leap only when both you and your wife are convinced and have evaluated everything. But once you have stepped out, give it your everything and don't look back. You probably have to prove yourself in your first Corporate job, so work the hardest in the first few years after leaving Service.

A word of caution to ForceNet Members, thinking of emigrating, to settle down, pick up a job, or start their own venture....
I would strongly advice against emigration, unless you have a family with successful business interests and openings already there. At this stage, moving to the West is fraught with perils. You can get a Canadian or Australian PR, but you will find it a great struggle to get a decent job. More often than not, people land up in menial jobs. In Canada I saw and met Indians in difficult situations, including ex-Servicemen. And your savings evaporate very fast! Of course, there are good success stories too, but I fear this number is a minority. I could be wrong, but I definitely want to throw out a word of caution to aspiring ex-servicemen immigrants.

Authored by Lt Col Ranvir Singh, based on interaction with Capt (IN) Sandeep Sharma, through e-mails.


Lt Col Ranvir Singh, *a product of Rashtriya Military School and and an alumnus of National Defence Academy, was commissioned into 2nd Battalion The Bihar Regiment in June 1988. He has served in all terrains of the country, held appointments at Armoured Brigade HQ, Area HQ, and HQ ARTRAC, and finally hung his boots in Jan 2009. Thereafter, as a Corporate Warrior, he has immensely contributed for last 10 years to recognised organisations like IL&FS Technologies Ltd, National Institute of Bank Management of RBI, and MMTC-PAMP India Pvt Ltd. He has a keen interest in the field of ever evolving Information Technology, and a flair for writing. He can be reached at* ranvirsm@gmail.com

Guest Speak

THROUGH INTERACTION BY UDAY K SHRIWAS

Ronald Jean Degen is the Visiting Professor of Innovation, Entrepreneurship, Business Strategy, and Leadership at Ibmec Business School in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He is a Professional Electronic Engineer from the Instituto Mauá Institute of Technology São Paulo in Brazil, has a Post-Graduate Degree in Automation from the ETH Zurich in Switzerland; an MBA from the University of Michigan Ann Arbor in the USA, a Ph.D. from the International School of Management Paris in France, and a Private Sea Captain License from the Brazilian Navy.

Dr. Degen was the Vice Chairman of Masisa in Chile; the President CEO of Plycem in Central and North America; President and CEO of Amanco in Brazil and Argentina; President and CEO of CPFL in Brazil; President and CEO of Schindler in Brazil; General Manager and COO of Abril in Brazil; and the General Manager and CEO of Listel in Brazil, company he started. During his professional career he won many professional and academic distinctions. He is a Swiss citizen and speaks fluently English, German, French, Spanish, and Portuguese
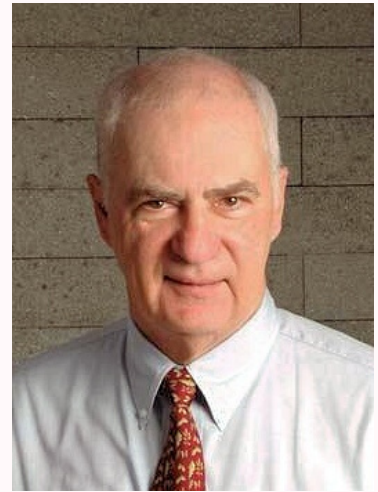
Wisdom, Uncertainty, and Ambiguity in Decisions

Introduction

In this paper, I discuss the risk of making decisions to solve problems or explore opportunities that may affect the future based on theories acquired from personal experiences or learned from experiences of others, and the research methods used to substantiate these theories. The trustworthiness of the research methods used to substantiate theories will determine the wisdom, uncertainty, and ambiguity of decisions based on these theories. Wisdom is the ability to make effective decisions based on proven experiences that allow accurate predictions of the outcomes and risks of the decisions. Uncertainty occurs when limited experiences do not allow accurate predictions of the outcomes and risks of the decisions. Ambiguity occurs when the experiences are vague, and the decision alternatives are difficult to define, making the outcomes and risks unpredictable.

We acquire knowledge of theories they use to make decisions through both direct and indirect experience. We acquire direct experience through our participation in decisions and their outcomes and risks. Indirect experiences we learn by studying other people's experiences with decisions in books, literature, courses, case studies, and consultants. Both direct and indirect experiences that substantiate theories that we use to make decisions are based on empirical evidence. The understanding of the empirical evidence and the research method used to obtain this evidence is essential for verifying the theories. The degree of accuracy of the empirical evidence is determined by the research method used to substantiate the empirical evidence and,

consequently, the theory. This degree of accuracy of the theories enables decision-makers to predict the risk of decisions based on these theories with some degree of confidence.

The use of theories to make decisions that were not correctly substantiated, can constitute major risks, and threaten the future. Unfortunately, many incur in these decision-making risks by using their experience to create personal theories, or by accepting theories from influencers or even academics without checking if they have been correctly substantiated. The consequences of the dissemination knowledge based on bad theories that have not been correctly substantiated constitute what Hayek (2008) called the pretense of knowledge.

In this paper, I discuss how theories base on experiences should be formed and substantiated to predict the outcomes and risks of decisions. The discussion has the purpose of assist in distinguishing between good and bad theories. Furthermore, I discuss the research methods that are used to substantiate theories and their applications and shortcomings.

Personal Experience

Most people use the knowledge acquired from their personal experiences with decisions to build their theories about decisions and the outcomes of decisions. Dewey (1997) identified these experiences as being the most important sources of knowledge. Drawing heavily on the work of Dewey, Kolb (1984) described the principle of knowledge acquisition through experience as what he called an experiential learning cycle (Figure 1). The cycle starts with living a concrete experience of doing something, followed by reflective observation on the experience (stepping back from the task and reviewing what has been done and experienced), before moving into the abstract conceptualization of the experience (interpreting the events and understanding the relationships between them), and finally active experimentation (considering how to put the new knowledge into practice).
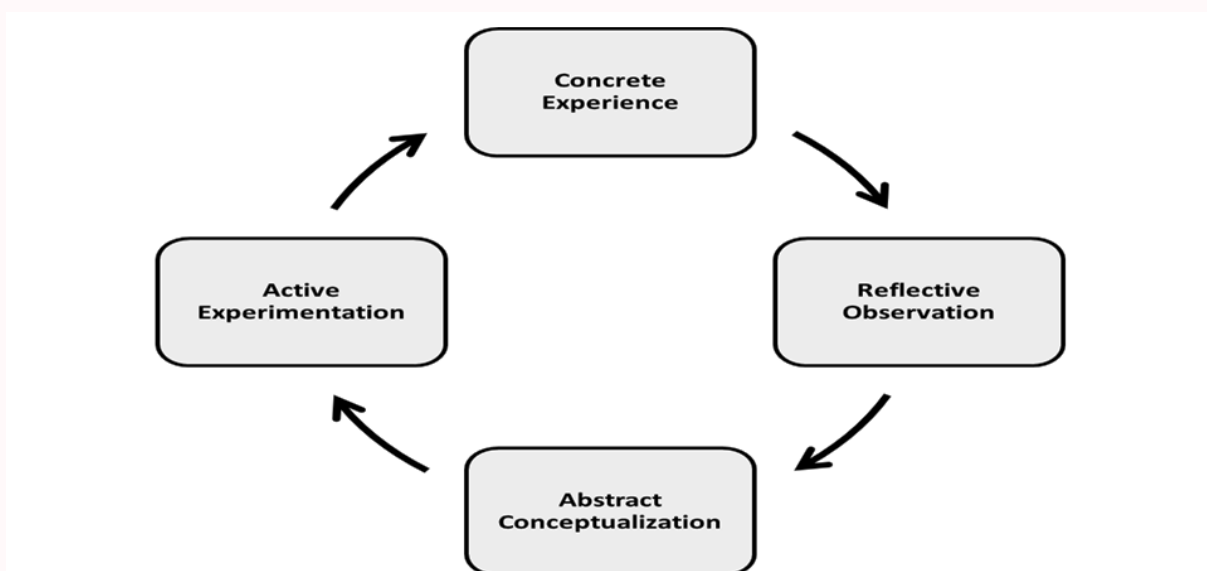

Figure 1: Kolb's experiential learning cycle (Adapted from Kolb, 1984, p. 76).

People use knowledge and theories that they have acquired from their personal experiences to make predictions as to what will happen next or to determine the actions that should be taken to refine or revise the way a task is to be handled. However, due to the pressure of day-to-day events, many do not take the time required for reflective observation and abstract conceptualization of their experiences. Thus, they fail to validate their experiences by interpreting correctly the events involved in the experiences and so understand all the nuances of the relationships between them. They easily transform their experiences into personal knowledge and theories that guide their decisions. In many cases, these theories become paradigms that are followed by them personally, and by the people they influence.

Personal knowledge and theories that are acquired by experience - like all knowledge and theories - must be constantly updated to take into consideration the continuous changes in the world. Change is ever-present in the universe, as was acknowledged by the Greek philosopher Heraclitus, as far in the past as 500BC with the famous saying: "You could not step twice into the same river; for other waters are ever flowing on to you" (Heraclitus, 2001). The use of theories on decision-making that have been constructed by using the knowledge that we have acquired by personal experience represents a major risk if these theories are not properly substantiated and updated as environment changes. Unfortunately, there are many instances where key influencers have built personal theories based on successful experiences that became paradigms for their followers, such that the followers do not see the changes that made these theories obsolete.

The same precaution must be taken with decision-making theories learned by studying other people's experiences with decisions in books, literature, courses, case studies, and consultants. This overconfidence on learned theories is particularly the case of young people fresh out universities. There are only very few experiences from others used in the construct of theories that are not affected by the fast-changing world. Most past experiences used to construct theories tend to lose some of their predictive value of outcome and risk with the changes. Consequently, the use of these theories without verifying how they were substantiated represents unpredictable risks.

The basic purpose of substantiating theories about decisions as acquired over time through personal experiences or through other people's experiences is to illustrate the risk of the outcome being worse than planned. Wisdom in management decisions is obtained by using this additional knowledge about the risk embedded in theories to plan for the eventuality that outcomes do not happen as expected.

Decision-Making

Drucker (2006), whose writings have contributed to the philosophical and practical foundations of modern management, explained what it takes to make effective decisions:

Most books on decision-making tell the reader: "First find the facts." But executives who make effective decisions know that one starts with opinions. These are, of

course, nothing but untested hypotheses and as such worthless unless tested against reality. To determine what is a fact requires first a criterion of relevance, especially on the appropriate measurement. This is the hinge of the effective decision, and usually the most controversial aspect (p. 143).

In the dynamic and continuously changing world of today, people are constantly faced with the need to make Drucker's effective decisions. They are responsible for making the right choice from among alternative ways of solving problems, or between possible opportunities. Every decision they make can fall on a continuum from absolute ambiguity to complete certainty (Zikmund et al., 2013). For this reason, people need to research in order to clarify the situation of both problems and opportunities: to determine the best decision and to understand (and possibly measure) the risk of the decisions not obtaining the expected outcome.

The research needed to make decisions usually focuses on two key aspects: reducing the ambiguity of problems or opportunities and determining the risk of the decision of not solving the problems or misjudging the opportunities (Figure 2). Ambiguity is the greatest risk in decisions. Without clarity about the problems or opportunities, the decisions needed to solve or explore them could misguided, and this would represent a major risk.
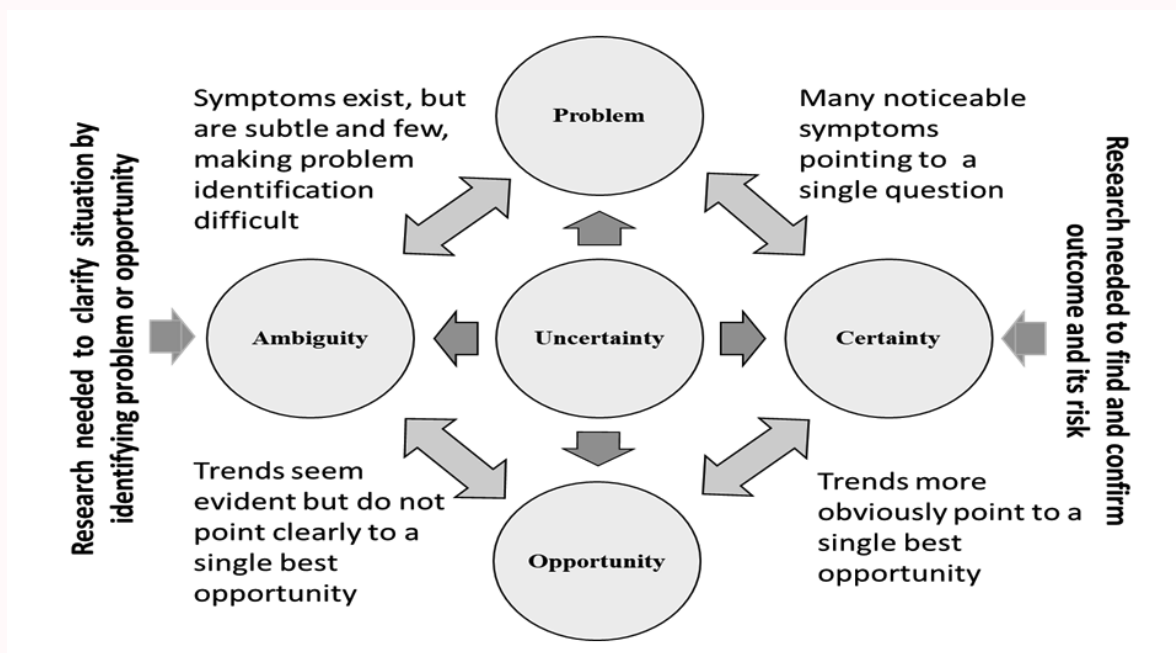

Figure 2: Describing decision-making situations for problems or opportunities, the research needed to reduce ambiguity and determine the best decision, and the risk of not obtaining the expected outcome (Adapted from Zikmund et al., 2013, p. 51).

The use of theories about decisions acquired from experiences that have not been correctly understood and analyzed may induce people to apply them to the wrong problem or opportunity. For this reason, it is important that they clearly understand the nature of the problem or opportunity for which the theory was created. This involves correctly interpreting and understanding the events that occurred and the relationships between them, accessing if the circumstances in which these events

occurred have changed over time, and reviewing the research method used to substantiate and determine the uncertainty (or the risk of not obtaining the expected outcome) of the theory before applying the theory to any situation. In this context, it is important to remember that change is inevitable and that only in very special circumstances do the events that occurred to substantiate the solution of a problem or the trends for an opportunity fail to change over time.

Understanding Theory

Theories acquired from experiences are - like all abstractions - used in many ways to include almost all descriptive statements about a phenomenon. The Anglo-Austrian philosopher Popper (2002) expressed this elegantly: "Theories are nets cast to catch what we call 'the world': to rationalize, to explain, and to master it. We endeavor to make the mesh ever finer and finer" (p. 59).

A simple way to think of theories is to consider them as models of reality or simplifications that enable a better understanding of the logic and relationships among different factors (Zikmund et al., 2013). Theories are, therefore, formal and testable explanations of events and include explanations of how some aspects relate to others. Zikmund et al. (2013) describe the basic building blocks of theories as:
- **Concepts**, which express (in words) various events and objects.
- **Propositions**, which are logical formal statements that assert some universal connections between concepts.
- **Hypotheses**, which are formal statements of unproven propositions that explain some outcomes that are empirically testable.
- **Empirical data**, which are the data used in the examination of hypotheses against reality in empirical testing.
- **Variables**, which includes anything that may assume different numerical values representing the empirical assessment of concepts.

Concepts and propositions occur at the level of abstraction, while hypotheses and variables operate at the empirical level.

Any analysis and substantiation of theories about decision must start from the abstract nature of concepts and propositions, before moving to the empirical of hypotheses, variables, testing, and substantiating of hypotheses that constitute theories. An understanding of the concepts, propositions, hypotheses, and variables that were tested and substantiated is fundamental for the analysis of theories. Only by deeply understanding how the theories were built, tested, and substantiated can a manager determine the ambiguity and uncertainty of the theory.

Types of Business Research

The research required to analyze and substantiate theories, and so reduce ambiguity and uncertainty in decision-making, was classified into three types by Zikmund, et al. (2013), based on purpose:

- **Exploratory** research, which is used to reduce ambiguous situations about problems or opportunities.
- **Descriptive** research, which tries to "paint a picture" of a given problem or opportunity by addressing who, what, when, where, and how questions.
- **Causal** research, which tries to identify cause-and-effect relationships in problems or opportunities.

The process of matching of each type of research to the situation is important for obtaining useful results.

These different types of research often form the building blocks of research projects. For example, exploratory research reduces ambiguity about the problem or opportunity and builds the foundation for descriptive research, which usually establishes the basis for causal research (Figure 3). Thus, before starting causal research to establish how decisions about some things will affect other things that follow, it is important to start with exploratory research (to reduce ambiguity about the problem or opportunity being studied), and then use descriptive research to understand the problem or opportunity by painting a picture (or description) of the problem or opportunity by addressing the who, what, when, where, and how questions. The reduction of ambiguity (or rather, the clarification) obtained by exploratory research, and the understanding of the problem or opportunity from descriptive research, permits educated predictions about the cause-and-effect relationship, which will then be tested by the causal research.
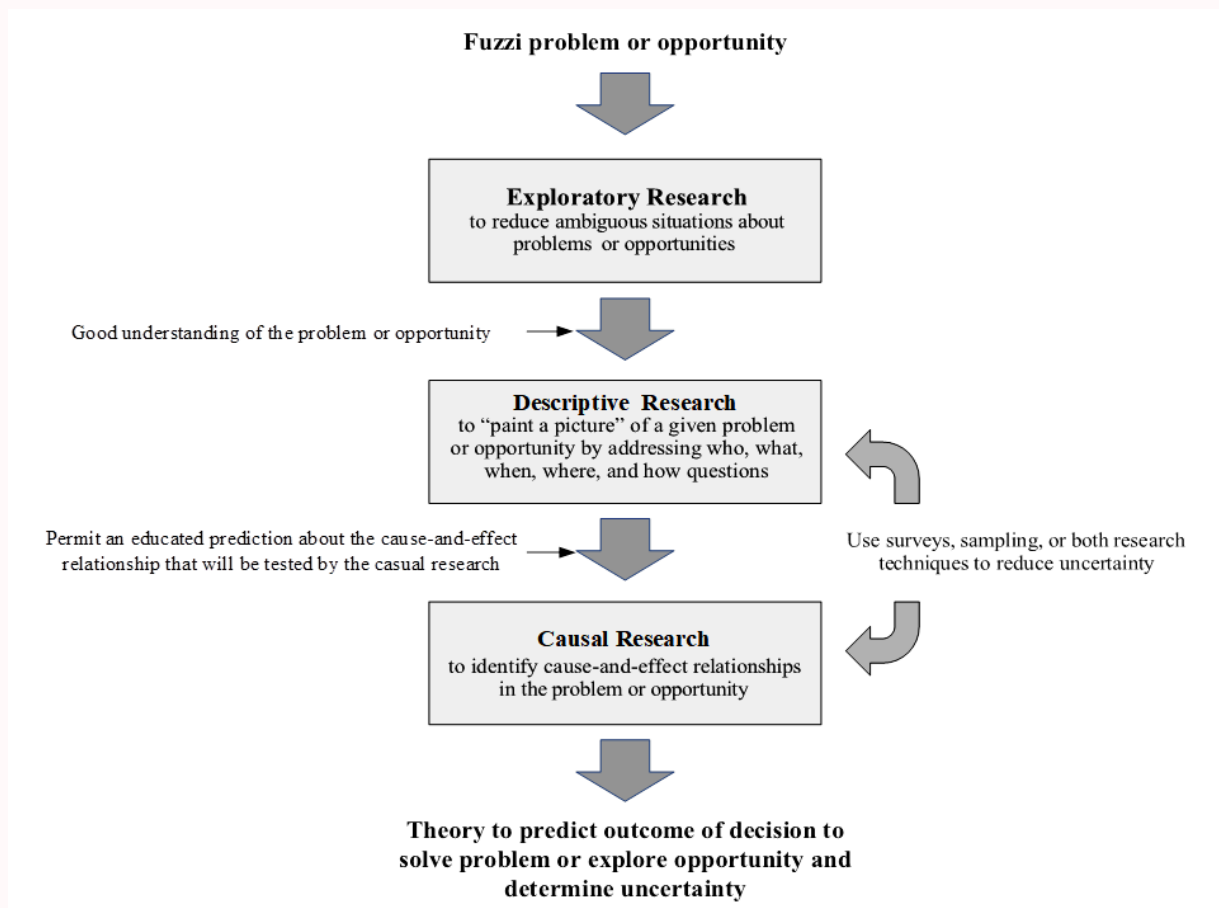

Figure 3: Types of research to reduce ambiguity and uncertainty in theories about decisions.

Both descriptive and causal research can be developed using one of or both of the following research techniques:
- **Survey**, which is the research technique in which a sample is interviewed in some form or the behavior of respondents is observed and described in some way.
- **Sampling**, which is the research technique that draws conclusions based on measurements of a portion of the population.

The most common research technique is the Survey, which is used by Gallup and other similar research organizations.

Philosophical Assumptions in Research

Before we describe the advantages and shortcomings of each method that is used in research to substantiate decision theories, it is important to understand the basic philosophical assumptions as these are implied in their use. Creswell (2009) described two predominant philosophical assumptions used in research. He called these worldviews:

- **Post-positivism** is the deterministic philosophy in which causes will probably determine effects or outcomes. The term post-positivism represents the modern thinking that challenged the traditional positivist notion of absolute truth knowledge, by recognizing that there cannot be such absolute truth when studying the behavior and actions of humans. Thus, decision-making theories substantiated under the assumptions of post-positivism objectively analyze the causation of the outcomes of decisions. The causations are reduced into small discrete sets of ideas or variables that comprise the hypotheses. These are then tested to substantiate decision-making theories.

- **Social constructivism** is the philosophy that seeks to understand the world in which people live, work, interact, and develop subjective meanings of their experiences with certain objects and things. Thus, decision- making theories substantiated under the assumptions of social constructivism subjectively analyze the causation of outcomes. The analysis of causations must consider that people develop subjective meanings of their experiences. These meanings are varied and multiple: leading to a complex interaction of views. These must be recorded and analyzed by interacting with the people directly in to subjectively substantiate the decision-making theories.

The post-positivist assumption is also called the scientific method, and this incorporates the traditional form of research (Figure 4). On the other hand, the social constructivism assumptions incorporate the search for meanings and understandings that are constructed by researchers as they engage with the people they are interpreting.
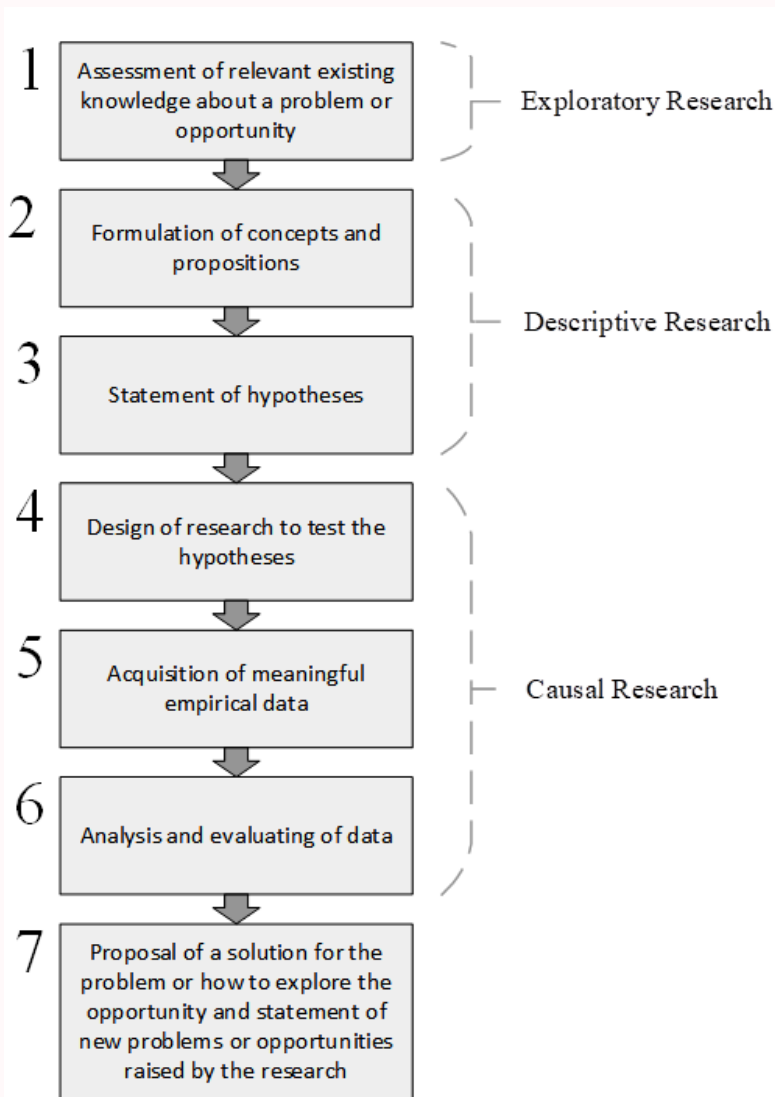
Figure 4: The seven steps for the scientific method and the appropriate research methods (Adapted from Zikmund et al., 2013, p. 44).

Cooper and Schindler (2012) explained that correct adherence to the procedures of the scientific method generates dependable research to support theories that can be used reliably for decision-making. In contrast, poor research (research that is carelessly planned and/or conducted) will result in theories that cannot be used to reduce decision-making risk. They define nine characteristics of the scientific method that guarantee good research:

- The purpose of the research is clearly defined to avoid ambiguity.
- The research process is detailed so that other researchers can replicate it.
- The research design is thoroughly planned to yield results that are as objective as possible by eliminating all biases of the researcher.
- High ethical standards are applied.
- Any limitations are frankly revealed, so that the decision - makers understand the uncertainties of the conclusions of the research.
- Adequate analysis of the needs of decision-makers is included.
- The findings that are presented should be unambiguous, comprehensive, reasonably presented, and easily understood by the decision-makers.
- Any conclusions are justified for the conditions under which conditions they seem to be valid.
- The researcher's experience is reflected on, to give confidence to decision-makers about the quality of the research and conclusions.

Research to substantiate theories that have correctly followed the scientific method and that was based on surveys, sampling, or both techniques will use quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods (a combination or association of quantitative and qualitative methods). Each method has its advantages and shortcomings, and these must be considered when decision theories are substantiated. These advantages and shortcomings determine the degree of uncertainty about the theory and the outcome and risk it postulates.

Research conducted under the social constructivism assumption, according to Creswell (2009) relies as much as possible on the participants' views on the situation being studied. The qualitative research questions become broad and general so that participants can construct the meaning of situations, typically forget in discussions and interaction with other persons (e.g., focus groups). The purpose is to understand what people say or do in their life settings. Often these subjective meanings are negotiated socially and historically. They are not simply imprinted on individuals but formed through interaction with others (hence social constructivism) and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives. Researchers that conduct this type of research recognize that their own background shapes their interpretations, and they position themselves in the research to acknowledge how their interpretations flow from their personal, cultural, and historical experiences (Creswell, 2009).

The quantitative research attempts precise measurement of a phenomenon. For this approach, research objectives are addressed through an empirical assessment that involves numerical measurement and analysis. The most common applications of this approach in business - according to Cooper and Schindler (2012) - are the measurement of consumer behavior, knowledge, opinions, or attitudes to answer questions related to how much, how often, how many, when, and who. The predominant applications of quantitative research involve causal research to identify cause-and-effect relationships in problems and opportunities.

Theories substantiated under the post-positivist assumptions that follow the procedures of the scientific methods use predominantly quantitative research to measure the underlying concepts and propositions of the theories. This approach uses scales that either directly or indirectly provide numerical values. These values are then used in the mathematical and statistical analysis to test and validate the hypotheses that substantiate the theories.

Creswell (2009) explained that quantitative approaches dominated research in social sciences from the late 19th century up until the mid-20th century and that the interest in qualitative research only increased during the late half of the 20th century, along with the development of mixed methods.

Conclusion

Wisdom, uncertainty, and ambiguity will always exist in decisions. The danger lies in the possibility for people to make decisions based on faulty theories that were acquired through personal experience or learned from the experience of others, and that don't generate the expected outcome. These decisions may sometimes put the future at risk. For this reason, I have presented and discussed the types of research and the philosophical assumption in research.

My purpose is to alert people of the risk of making decisions that are based on theories that have not been substantiated or incorrectly substantiated. To avoid this risk, it is important that people become wiser, more discerning, and more appropriately

skeptical to simplistic formulas and quick-fixx remedies (Rosenzweig, 2010).

In today's world, people are constantly exposed to a multitude of books and an overwhelming influx of articles from influencers, journalists, and academics who describe the latest prescriptions of principles for success. These all claim that if people follow their advice and implement these principles, they will be enduringly successful. People must understand that there are no "magic silver bullets" to success and learn to see through some of these delusions. Much of what appears in the press, in academic research, and in recent bestsellers does not pass any serious validation test. The best approach is to follow the advice of Rosenzweig (2010) and focus on the basic elements that drive the results, while recognizing the fundamental uncertainty at the heart of today's world.

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Capt Uday K Shriwas *was commissioned into the Corps of Signals, and served in various theaters during his service for five years, including in a newly raised RR Battalion. Thereafter he has worked with many renowned Companies, and is now the Relationship Leader with Yes Bank Ltd.*

Women Power

Spouses of Defence Officers have immense potential as individuals. While many of them have already established themselves as successful independent entities, a very large number still has to recognise and exploit their inherent hidden capabilities and worth. In this series we plan to showcase the achievements of such spouses of the members of Forces Network who have carved a niche for themselves through hard work, grit and determination, so as to provide adequate motivation to the others.

BY RANVIR SINGH

Ms Chandana Banerjee, is a multipotentialite military wife entrepreneur, an Air Force wife and homeschooling mom. She is a writer, creative writing teacher, artist, micro business coach to military wives and moms, and a green wellness coach. She is also the Amazon #1 bestselling author of "The Work-At-Home Military Wife", and is passionate about helping military wives & moms create work-from-home micro ventures around their talents and hobbies.

Ranvir: **Please tell us about yourself and what you do, and how you started.**

Chandana: I am a writer, Amazon bestselling author of 'The Work-At-Home Military Wife', creative writing teacher, artist and founder of my handmade art brand 'Jugnoo Story Art', a work-from-home micro business coach for moms and military wives, and a green wellness coach at Gorgeous Girls Go Green. I'm a 'multipotentialite' and enjoy creating work-from-home entrepreneurial opportunities in all these different fields from the remote bases we are posted to. I've been married to a fighter pilot in the Indian Air Force for a decade-and-a-half and am a homeschooling mom.

My primary profession and common thread that runs through almost everything I do, is writing. Though I started writing for publications when I was in high school, I plunged into full-time freelance journalism and content writing for national and international publications and websites after I got married and moved to an Air Force base smack dab in the middle of mustard fields. My first online venture was 'Pink Elephant Writing Studio', and I learnt a gamut of lessons (some hard ones) as a first time solopreneur. I still write on a freelance basis for international publications and use my writing skills to create content for different streams.

Over the years and through different seasons of life and postings, my work and professional avatar has morphed and changed to fit the requirements at hand, and I've launched multiple micro businesses crafted around my skills and interests.

I write a lifestyle blog https://chandanabanerjee.com, where I turn the spotlight on

Fauji wives who build brands, moms and military wives aspiring to start self-employed careers, homeschooling in India and creating a sustainable at-home lifestyle. I also self-publish ebooks; have a Youtube channel; teach workshops on creating micro businesses, green wellness and creative writing; spread awareness about green living through www.gorgeousgirlsgogreen.com; and, make and sell quirky handmade art via my art 'bakery' Jugnoo Story Art.

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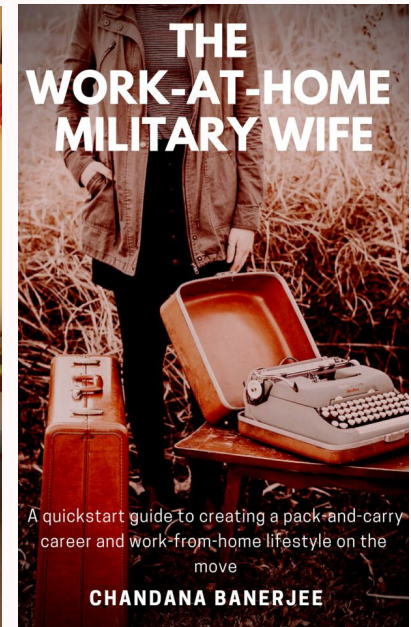
Ranvir: **What is your vision behind starting your micro businesses?**
Chandana: My motto in life is "Do what you can, with what you have, from where you are". And this helps me in always creating employment opportunities for myself, irrespective of the place, portfolio or situation we are in.

Though sometimes it is a struggle to reinvent and start all over again just because the new base we get posted to or the new portfolio has certain constraints that prevents an already-established micro business to thrive; I know that at the end of the day, I can put that particular project aside for a while and focus on something that can grow in the situation we are in. The idea is to always find something to do and create within the parameters of the place and situation.

Ranvir: What challenges have you faced?
Chandana: I went through a very rough phase right after I got married, when certain seniors gave me a hard time for continuing with my career and working-from-home as a journalist and writer in a time when most ladies around were either teachers who went out to work or homemakers, and this change seemed unacceptable and difficult to digest for some. Even though it would have been much easier to give up and quit, on the contrary, it fuelled my passion to carve out a career for myself and prove to myself and anyone who has ever been told or believed that "fauji wives cannot pursue their own goals/dreams/passions and need to make their husband's career their own" that that's not the truth.

Military wives are a bright lot, who have every right to make use of their education and talents to achieve their dreams. In fact, I have noticed that when military wives tend to their own passions and dreams, they are more balanced, practical and efficient while handling their service wife commitments too.

The lack of clarity and boundaries about what "working-from-home" entails (i.e. people don't really respect your work time as it is believed that work-from-home folks can work anytime or not work at all); juggling deadlines, service to-do's and homeschooling schedules; frequent and unforeseen changes like postings and TD's; logistical issues (spotty internet, delay in getting accommodation which slows down work etc.); balancing work and sole parenting responsibilities when the husband is deployed for unforeseen periods of time; and, trying to tweak one's goals and assignments while anticipating Fauji wife social requirements, are some of the unique challenges that are part and parcel of this milpreneur journey.

Ranvir: **How did you overcome these challenges?**
Chandana: The thing with challenges is that you have to "bash on regardless" (a quote I read in an Army cantonment) and be ready for anything that is thrown your way. There are far too many reasons to give up for any military spouse entrepreneur. So whenever I am faced with a situation that feels like an obstacle, I ask myself how I can work around it and focus on what I can do, instead of what I cannot do. Also, I always keep my focus on the reason for what I do - my purpose.

It helps that I have a very supportive and wise husband, who is always ready to listen to me rave and rant, has stood by me during the rough patches and helps me brainstorm solutions to the problems.

Ranvir: What are your future plans?
Chandana: I am very interested in helping other military wives and moms (especially, those with small kids and those who homeschool) create work-at-home micro businesses around their passions and skills. I would like to teach more workshops (online and in-person), create e-courses and take on one-on-one coaching to help ladies.

I want to write more. There are several ebooks in the pipeline, a novel that I'm trying

my hand at, and more freelance writing/blogging assignments that I would like to work on. I also have my YouTube channel at https://bit.ly/3aYeWY0

And I'd like to create awareness through teaching, coaching and writing about the importance of living in harmony with Mother Earth and how simple, eco-friendly steps can impact our wellness and the planet's.

In a nutshell, I'd like to continue being a multi-passionate "lady who launches", who never stops dreaming and creating!

Ranvir: **What advice do you have, especially spouses of defence officers, who desire or aspire to be similarly independent?**
Chandana: I would like to convey the following to them:
  - Take back your power and create employment opportunities for yourself from wherever you are on the map or in life. Even if we're posted to remote areas, we can still craft out passion projects and micro businesses around our talents, or use the time to upgrade our skills and create a launch plan, instead of waiting for an elusive employer to offer us a job.
  - Create an entrepreneur mindset, and look at the glass as half full i.e for what you can do in your situation. Don't let excuses, myths and prejudices hold you back.
  - Learn how to manage your time, own your professional identity, skill up, and take that first step. There are a multitude of resources and information online - blogs, courses, books and experts. Arm yourself with the skills or information you need, reach out to people if you need help and take the plunge.
  - Don't compare your professional journey with that of your friends' in the civvy street. Our journeys can be different and more eclectic and chequered, but that doesn't mean it's any less!
  - Be prepared to put in the hard work.

Ranvir: Thanks a lot, Chandana. It was really a pleasure interacting with you.
Chandana: Thank you, and it's been a pleasure for me too.

(Based on inputs during interaction with Lt Col Ranvir Singh)

Knowledge Bank
Data Science as a Career

BY VINAY GUPTA

This is the fifth part of the six series article on the subject, starting from the Jan 2020 issue of the eZine

DSC_5 - Roles Applicable at Different Age Groups

*Turning your passion into your job is easier than finding a
job that matches your passion - Seth Godin*

In my first article, I had mentioned about the Forces Network group, whose members are mainly veterans or would be veterans of Indian Armed Forces. This group enables smooth transition of Armed Forces officers from Military to Corporate world, by providing a platform for networking, sharing experiences and hand-holding during their initial stage of transition.

Being an old member of this group, amongst others, I am also entrusted with the responsibility of providing advice to the officers, who are interested in joining the Data Science community in their next innings. When we look at the profile and age groups of these officers, they vary from one end of the spectrum to other, with respect to experience & skills. The years of experience ranges from 5 years to 30 years, depending on the type of service conditions and time plan to quit the services. As regarding the skills and proficiency, it has a wide range viz Strategy, Leadership, Operations, Risk management, Handling of weapons systems, advanced computing and communication systems, Equipment Management, Logistics, Engineering Projects, General security, Administration and many others.

The educational profile, job experience, skills, aspirations, family commitments and passion are very different or unique in each case. There cannot be one-size-fit-all or cookie cutter plan for all aspirants, who wants to join the data science bandwagon.

In addition to guiding military veterans, I have been lucky/fortunate to meet, mentor and advise a lot of colleagues and juniors from Corporate in their job transition to Data science/IT field. I had a similar experience with professionals and students, who are not from military background and have expressed their keenness to join the bandwagon of data analytics, machine learning and Artificial Intelligence. Most of these aspirants, do not come from Statistics or Computer Science background, which is considered to be the breeding ground for Data science professionals. The age profile and industry experience also varies from one extreme to other, for each of these members.

I have compiled few of the frequently asked questions by the aspirants and are listed below:

- I have 5 years of job experience but no degree or experience in computer programming or statistics. Can I transition to data analytics field?

- Which data analytics course should I do to build my knowledge and skill set in machine learning?

- I am 40 years old, and wants to switch to career in machine learning or artificial intelligence? A friend of mine warns me that I will have problems in finding a job because of age. Are people in their 40s written off as too old?

- Is it possible to be a data scientist at 45 years of age? How will I compete with young geeks, who are in this field for so many years and have extensive experience in IT systems?

- I am an entrepreneur, 30+ years old, and keen to learn about data analytics. Will it be beneficial for my business and personal growth?

- I am a working professional with 10+ years of work experience. In last six months, I have started learning Data analytics from online courses and gained proficiency in R & Python language. What should be my next steps and how can I get a suitable job at correct level.

A common underlying fact/answer to all the above questions is that there is a scope for all age, industry type and educational background in the field of data analytics. I firmly believe that if a person is **passionate** to join the world of data analytics and has a **sense of purpose**, then certainly there a slice of data science pie for him/her. The only challenge is to find the right slice/piece.

It is also important to dispassionately understand two competing aspects to the ibid career transition requirements.
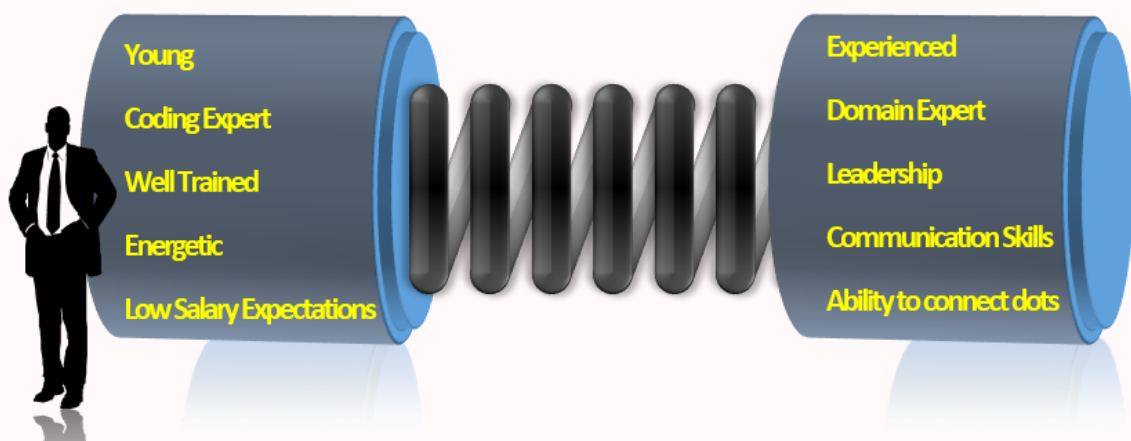
As we have seen in the previous article that Data science skill building takes few years, that's why companies hire young people. The younger lot are easy to craft into the work culture and business requirements of the company. So, if you are 40 plus and haven't got your hands dirty in data wrangling and analysis work then your work experience & education means little for the team or company, you intend to work with.

Think about it, as CIO/VP Technology/Head Data Analytics would you rather higher a 25-30 year old graduate with a Masters and a degree in Computer Science, who can be blended in an earlier time frame, thereby becoming a good asset to the company or a passionate professional, who has recently built up his data science skills by taking up self-help courses or weekend classes in data analytics. In addition, hiring managers need to make sure about the depth of interest and expertise in data science tools. Further, the salary expectations of 30 plus candidate are likely to be lower than that of 40 plus candidates for the desired position.

First choice, is less therefore risky and would be preferred, unless the individual is well known to the team leader.

On the other hand, Data Science involves the building of analytical models based on business understanding, in addition to the coding skills needed to develop and validate machine learning/deep learning models. The analyst team sits in between the engineering/technology and business decision makers, to conceptualize data strategy and enable real world enterprise decision making. It takes many years for Data scientist to be effective in connecting the dots and understand business intricacies. Age, experience and leadership capability enables reducing this time period. Thus, age and relevant experience becomes an asset (if an individual has been performing relevant roles at various leadership level), not a limitation. There are numerous examples where people have started really late as per their age but made successful careers/businesses in Data Analytics field. I strongly feel that the only thing matter is the passion, willingness to master new skill and desire to play with data to enable business decision making. So, if you want to do something from bottom of your heart then just go for it and power of universe will help you in that work (*I am sanguine that this is applicable to all profession types and roles*).

Not infrequently I'm approached by a recent or about-to-graduate Masters student asking about internships or job openings. My response is generally two-fold:
   - *Firstly, are you passionate about statistics & programming?*
   - *Secondly, which is the most favourite problem/business use case, you have worked upon?*

Tell me in detail about this problem, how you went about preparing the data, the specific algorithms you used for building model, tools or languages you used in this problem (R, Python, SAS, SPSS, other), what was the outcome and how it was inferred for application in the real life scenario, you started with.

They respond back with the details of model used, process of model building and statistical results. However, these details form only a small chunk of the complete process. Generally the analytics initiative need to be described in following eight steps:

- What was the business problem to be solved?
- What are data sources and type of data sets used?
- How did you ingest and prepare the data?
- How did you select parameters or do any feature engineering?
- Which all statistical algorithms did you apply and what were the differing outcomes?
- How did the results of various models compare and why there were differences?
- What did you infer from the results obtained?
- How was the discussion with Subject Matter Experts/end users on the results obtained?

In actual business scenario, the synergy between Subject Matter Experts and Data Analytics team is essential for successful problem definition, result interpretation and subsequent operationalisation. You may not have the luxury of time to keep trying various options, to improve the model accuracy. Aim is to implement within a reasonable time frame and create value to the process either by cost saving or new revenue.

If we would like to understand the job types at different age groups, we can divide the potential candidates in the following categories:

25-30 years   30-40 years   40-50 years   50 years plus
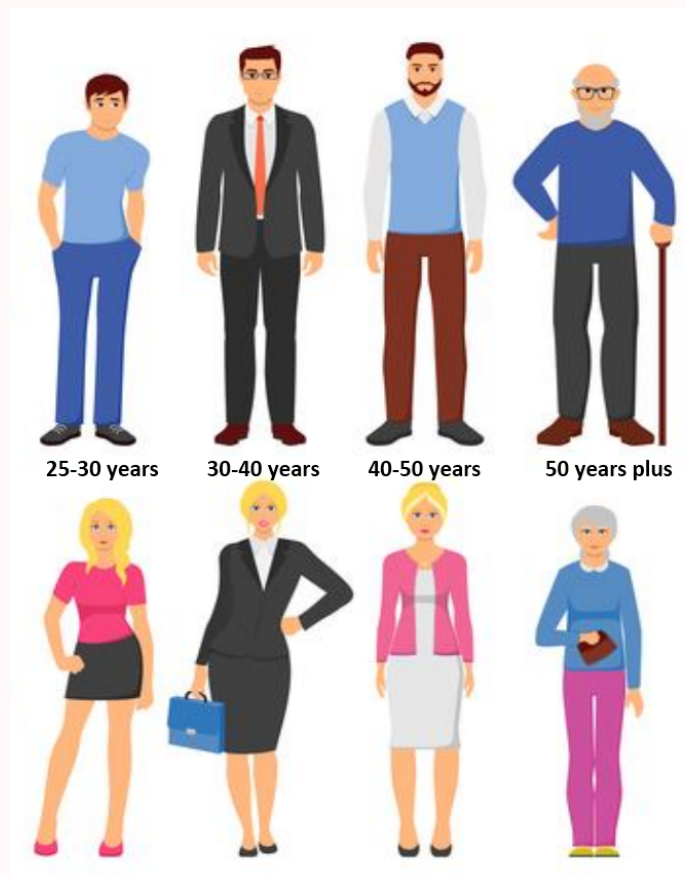
As educational qualifications is an important criteria to assess the background/skill of an individual, each category can be sub-divided into the following groups viz
- Bachelors in Computer Science or Statistics
- Masters or Doctorate in Comp Science & Statistics Background.
- Bachelor or Masters in discipline other than those mentioned above

As regarding the job profiles, the various shades of Data Science career are listed below:
- Data Engineer
- Data Analyst
- Data Scientist
- Business Analyst
- Database Administrator
- Manager/Lead/Senior Data Analyst or Scientist
- Director/CIO/CDO

Now, if we combine these three parameters (viz. age, education and work profile) and identify the job requirements. Observed trends are given below:

Master or Bachelors in other discipline	Data Engineer, Business Analyst	Data Scientist, Senior Business Analyst	Head Data Analytics, Senior Data Scientist, CDO, Head Analytics CoE
PhD (Doctorate) or Masters in Computer Science or Statistics	Data Scientist, Data Analyst, Data Base Administrator	Manager Analytics, Senior Data Scientist, Lead Analytics CoE	Head Data Analytics, Director Analytics & AI, CDO, CIO
Bachelors in Computer Science or Statistics	Data Engineer, Data Analyst, Database Administrator	Data Scientist, Senior Data Analyst, Analytics Manager	Manager Analytics, Senior Data Scientist, Lead Data Analyst
	25-30 years	30-40 years	40-50 years

(*Here, the colour is another dimension and suggests the number of opportunities available. Darker the colour, larger the opportunities available in the market.*)

25 - 30 Years

It is intuitive that large number of jobs exist at the bottom of pyramid, and their salary packages are also low, in comparison. The required candidates come primarily from the Engineering Colleges. Now-a-days every college has Computer Science as Engineering discipline and Data Analytics/AI as one of its specialisation course. The students graduating out of such colleges form the ideal candidate for the role of Data Engineer and Data Analyst. As they have little or no exposure to business domain, the role of Business Analyst gets limited or inadequate.

The few hard core or motivated students, plan to do Masters in Data Science subjects, thus providing them with greater knowledge and specialised skills in building the analytical models for very complex solutions. They become one of the ideal candidate for Data Scientist role. The companies in order to flaunt their capabilities in Data Science, like to label the team with fancy titles.

capabilities in Data Science, like to label the team with fancy titles. It is very important to highlight that there are a large number of young engineers, who attempts to cross-skill or up-skill themselves. A lot of interns, who had approached me are from disciplines other Computer Science or Statistics background. They range from Electronics & Telecommunications, Electrical, Mechanical, Metallurgical, Civil engineering to Social Sciences. I have observed that these budding engineers have a great deal of enthusiasm and zeal to learn Python and R language, build analytical models, learn new statistical concepts and apply to the business problems related to their fields. All those, who have a good flair for programming and understanding of maths, become successful in their path to become the data scientist and career in Data Science.

A study carried out by Indeed.com recruitment website, on the resumes of large number of candidates with Data Scientist role is given below

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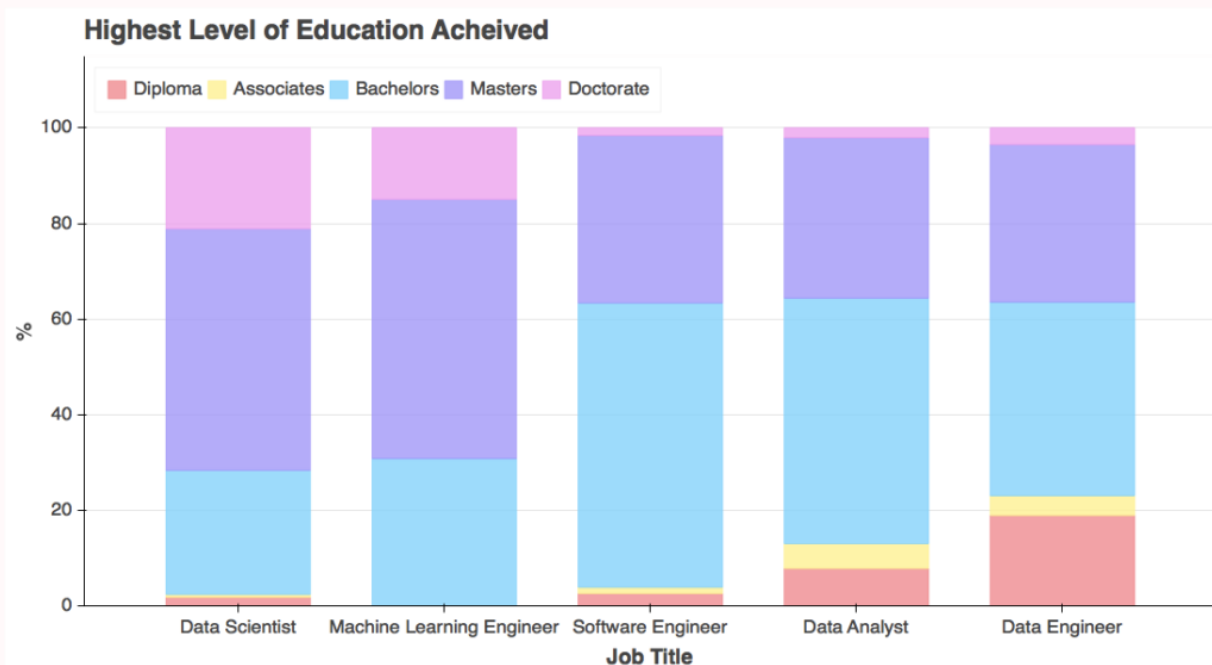
It clearly indicates that Bachelor degree holder are employed for Data analyst/Data Engineer role and Master's degree help them to elevate to Data Scientist/Machine Learning engineer. In addition, a large number of researchers with Doctorate degree also form part of Data Scientist community.

As a matter of fact, I have found them a better combination in certain aspects, especially in dealing with machines and engineering related problem solving. Owing to their better understanding of engineering concepts and domain knowledge, they have good capabilities to do feature engineering, understand the nuances of business problem and interpret the analytical results.

30 - 40 Years

This age group constitutes the mix of following category of professionals, viz.
    - hard core analytical programming geeks with 10 plus years of experience,

- IT engineers, who have migrated from Software application development to Data science field,
- Training team or Faculty members of various educational institutes in the field of Data Science,
- self-learning enthusiast- who have been able to get an opportunity in data analyst role, and have hands-on experience for 4-5 years in analytical programming and big data technologies,
- wave-riders, this constitutes the group of people, who has identified the opportunity in Data Science and Artificial Intelligence and would like to encash the same, by joining short (upto 3 months) or long courses (6 months to 1 year) offered by leading training institutions.
- fence-sitters, who are business analyst, mainly doing excel based analysis in the respective business domain and have little knowledge of R & Python programming but looks forward to enhancing their analytical capabilities.

Category 1 and 2, generally rise in the ranks to become Senior Data Scientist or Manager Analytics/Big Data or Senior Business Analyst. They form the backbone of various Digital & AI initiatives being undertaken by the Captive Centres (Centre of Excellence in Companies) or IT & KPO Service providers. They are also one of the highest paid professionals in the team.

Category 3 and 4, forms the group of motivated professionals, mainly form part of entrepreneur venture, self-learning enthusiast or Companies providing Analytics as a Service. They also become an important part of Center of Excellence (CoE) team, which is responsible for Digital Transformation. Owing to their motivation, self-learning habit and good domain knowledge they contribute effectively in development and deployment of complex analytical model with least resources and overhead costs.

Category 5 and 6, are new breed of professionals, who are making efforts in learning data science concepts and up-skilling themselves by joining various courses or making use of the opportunities in their present work environment. Now-a-days, in every role or assignment, the individual has the opportunity to work with data, which is generally based on excel/spreadsheets. It can be used by these category of enthusiast to identify a suitable use case and do the statistical analysis, in order to either identify the problem areas or discover patterns for decision making.

Recently, one of my colleague from Legal background called me and said that he wanted to learn R language and utilise in his daily work. I enquired from him about the dataset he has and what problem he would like to solve. He told me that he is serving in overseas mission and handling various legal cases. There is a huge amount of legal case related data, and he wants to identify the trends of various cases coming to his office and how he can proactively take action for early resolution and reducing the same.

Similarly, last week I was interviewing one candidate for my Data Science team. He

was an Electronics and Telecommunication graduate and working in a MNC telecom company as part of Network operations team. He told me that he has learnt Python language by doing a six month class-room course. Subsequently, he has applied the knowledge gained in analysing the reason for call drops. He analyzed the CDR data generated by customers, correlated with the corresponding time interval of network device logs and classified the reasons for call drops. Thereafter, he has made the graphs and dashboards, which present a region-wise analysis on rate of call drops and reason for call drops, using R-Shiny and ggplot2/plotly libraries. This was greatly appreciated by his seniors and team members.

Thus such up-skilling helps in creating value in the present role, provide options to switch to data analytics related work assignments within or outside companies, as an when opportunity comes up.

40 - 50 Years

This age group are seasoned professionals, who have 20-25 years of rich work experience in various domains, industries and worked up the ladder with leadership skills. At this stage of career, this group constitutes of the following categories:
- Hard-core experts in the field of Computer science, IT systems, data analytics and digital transformation
- Deep knowledge and experience in leading team for Analytical Product building, Statistical Modelling, Analytics CoE, Big Data Technologies but with limited knowledge of IT systems
- Rich experience in imparting knowledge/training on Big Data technologies, AI systems and Analytics ecosystem, in training institutions.
- Extensive business domain knowledge and expertise in implementing the data analytics solution and provides interface with the Core team
- Data science enthusiasts, who would like to up-skill themselves in their present role and create value for self, team and organisation

Category 1 and 2 generally comes with the title of Chief Executive Officer/Chief Information Officer/Chief Data or Digital Officer/Chief Analytical Officer. With their rich experience, they lead the digital transformation initiatives in the company. It also consists of various entrepreneurs, who have built Digital/Analytics product/services company. Owing to the requirement of faster time to market solutions required by most of the customers, they provide a great value to small and mid-sized companies. Due to small team and agile methodology of working, they are able to provide quick implementation of pilot project (or Proof of Concept). They are also the custodian of implementing various business use cases, realise the value and lead by example.

Category 3 performs an important role in building the eco-system by training the budding data science aspirants. Latest technologies and concepts are being taught by them. A large number of training institutes have mushroomed all over the cities and they have combination of offline-online, weekend-weekdays, paid-free and certified-non certified courses. A few of my friends have left their desk jobs at IT and joined this

group as faculty members. With the ever growing craze in the younger and middle aged generation to learn data analytics skills, they are having their hands full. However, the challenge is to keep upgrading the course syllabi, skills and use cases, in order to stay relevant with the emerging technologies, techniques and ideas.

Category 4 sits on the boundary between the Data Science team and core technical/business/engineering team. They may not have hands-on experience and detailed knowledge of either domain but have significant knowledge of both the domain. This enables them to engage either internal or external team to implement the Digital transformation and analytics initiative. This category also gives opportunity to leaders who wants to be part of this domain but are either new or have limited experience. However, due to their deep business domain experience and love for statistics/programming, they become an ideal candidate for this category. The professionals, who are looking for second innings, generally form part of this group.

Category 5 are the unique group of people, who are contemplating whether it would be right for them to switch into data science domain. They try to nibble the knowledge and skills by joining few courses but are not able to commit completely. They are look forward to implement the analytical solutions within their sphere of influence and gradually build it up/expand the horizon. However, their challenge is to stay relevant in this fast paced developing and changing domain. One of my colleague, who have been in top 10, during his B.Tech course and thereafter in his professional career, left armed forces after 22 years and built his entrepreneurial setup in wholesale garment industry. After successfully setting-up and growing his business for nearly 10 years, he earned a lot of money and experience. Thereafter, one fine day he decided to migrate to US and enrolled himself in Artificial Intelligence course of one year in leading university. At the age of 50 plus, his passion and hunger to learn and excel in new and emerging fields, is simply marvellous. So, for all those fence sitters, it is recommended that if have the passion go for it and you will surely make an indelible mark.

50 Years Plus

Presently, we should feel lucky to be part of the data revolution happening around us. Because of the widespread craze and focus on Machine Learning/ Data Analytics/ Big Data, there are quite a few people even at the age of 50 years plus are considering a late career switch. However, the moot question is, how many Managers/Team Leaders are willing to take the 50 years old professional as part of Data Science team.

It is important to understand that the key asset possessed by 50 plus professionals is the business domain experience. Given a choice between a person, who is fairly new to the practice of data science and 20 years' experience in the respective domain, and a person with sharp data science skills but fairly new to domain, and all other things being equal, the former may be favoured as Team Leader or Interface between Business and Analyst Team. It is generally seen that such group of individuals are not only experienced but also smart, intellectually curious, with better communication

skills and brings domain expertise to the table and/or demonstrated exceptional problem solving skills. As one gets older, you necessarily have critical eye and experience in identifying the scientific mistakes/anomalies.


So, this stage is characterised by transition from Data Scientist to Data Science leader. Owing to this, you spend less time on hands on coding and more time on mentoring and guiding team members and data science community. Your job primarily becomes to evangelize data science and share with others. Within the company as Data Science leader, you need to build the vision, create strategy and plan to execute, grow the team, empower them by providing right tools, create a continual learning atmosphere and tell them not how to do it but why it is important to do.

The only time being over 50 would hurt a data science team is when they become inflexible in their thinking or they stop learning. But these attitudinal issues are kiss of death for a data science member of any age.

Another option for such age group is to assume the role of Consultant to the Data Science team. They can provide valuable inputs in formulating the problem, identifying the relevant factors/parameters and interpreting the results for better business outcome. Their inputs can be a great force multiplier in Data analytics use case implementation and continual improvement.

The above inputs indicate that age is just a number. New role models are emerging, which are defying the set patterns and beliefs. It is possible to choose data science career at any stage in the life, and companies need to be prepared for this change by providing their employees with skills for the future, whilst finding new ways for career progression — not only restricting the age based stereotyped decisions. Attitudes will

need to shift somewhat in order to ensure that ageism in the workplace does not prevent career changes later in life. Companies and employees alike must embrace the opportunity to hire older people into more junior positions. Diversity in the workforce is of greater importance than ever before and this includes diversity of age and experience. At the end, PASSION, COMMITMENT & CONTINUAL LEARNING is the key at all age groups.
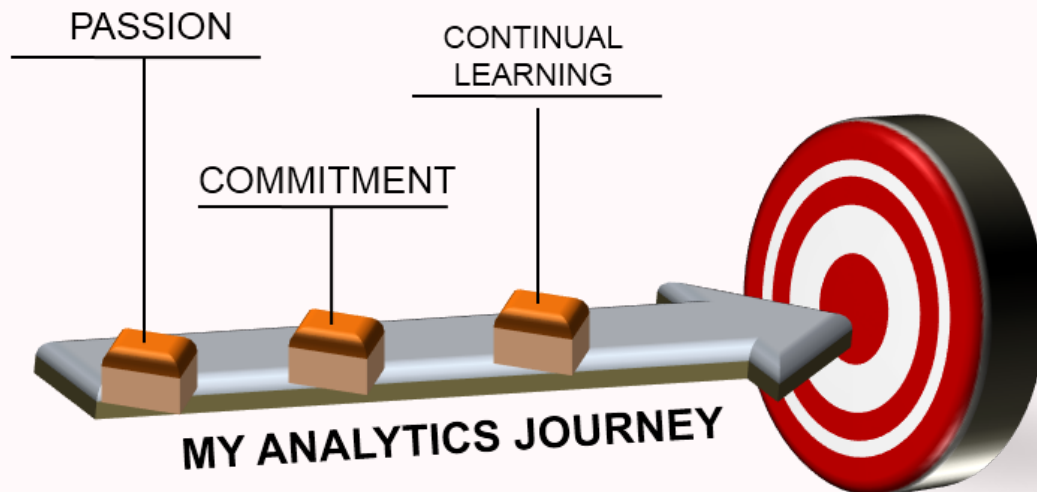
Vinay Gupta served in the Army for 22 years where he established the Centre for Data Analytics in MCEME Secunderabad and thereafter developing analytics driven Military Equipment Management system. He has participated as speaker/panelist in various international/ national seminars/conferences on Big Data Analytics, Industrial IoT and Renewable Energy. Presently, as Head Data Analytics & Business Excellence of Suzlon Global Services Limited, he is leading the Digitalisation & Analytics Program of wind and solar farm operations. He is a thought leader with 28 years of experience in the field of Predictive Analytics, Big Data Applications, IIoT systems, Telecommunications and Military Equipment.

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Humanity & Care

Armor of Care: Mission Tribal

'Armour of Care" (AoC) is a group of selfless volunteers comprising of Ex-Defence officers, doctors and young civilians of the country. The vision and mission of AoC is "To rise by lifting others" and to serve the Nation and its citizens on priority always and every time. The mission started its service to mankind from 2015 Chennai floods. Since then it has been tirelessly providing relief in every major calamity, be it hurricane Vardha or the floods in Kerala, Kodagu and now Covid19 . It deploys people, resources funds, relief, rehabitation material and medicines along with smiles and hope to people in distress.

The western Ghats near Tamilnadu –Kerala borders has lot of tribal settlements. Here Irullas, Thodas and Badugas live, much in harmony with nature. The entire range of forest is under the control of the forest department. The government has provided 2 acres of land for their living. These people are generally isolated from general public. They cultivate the crops and earn their livelihood. Even transportation is sparse, with just three trips of bus being operated in that route. The minimum walking distance to reach the bus stop is approx 5 km.

AoC decided to cover the villages inclined west of Velliangadu which finds it way side with thriving vegetation, entirely covering the hill range. The roads are narrower and a lot riskier than what you could probably imagine. Upon the hills, there are several smaller roads that could take you to the tribal hamlets that reside over the Kerala-Tamil Nadu border. Koppanari is a tribal village that houses around ten to fifteen houses to where you can travel from Velliangadu or a small diversion that comes from Palamalai. Its quite an unsafe road to drive or trek further. These tribal villages are the saviours of the beautiful western Ghats. The nearest town for collecting the basic ration items for the first settlement is 10 Km away from the settlements.

AoC Coimbatore had come across news about the tribal settlements struggling to get food for basic survival. A total of 400 families below poverty line in 25 settlements had not received any help till date due to the lockdown, associated logistics and communication issues.

AoC is currently working towards providing ration kits worth Rs 500/- for each family, for the 11 villages (200 families) around Pillur dam, Mettupalayam. The total cost involved in this will be 456 x 200 , i.e INR 90,800/- . The "peace and happiness" NGO has contributed Rs 80,000/- , balance amount has been received from various donors of AoC. Mohammed Hakkeem, SH vegetables from Mettupalayam has donated 1 ton of vegetables. AoC decide to reach the people through forest department of Coimbatore circle. After overcoming the major restriction from the political parties in that area, AoC reached the 200 families though following personnel:
- Prof Dr.M.Jaikumar, Company Commander, CBE District Home Guards
- Mr.Anandraj, Managing Director,Paul Engineering, MTP, for transportation.
- K.Tamilagam Sait, Reporter
- Mr.D.Venkatesh IFS ,Cbe District Forest Officer.
- Mr Saravanan, Forest Ranger, Karamadai Range
- Gopinath,Forester, Karmadai Range

The day started at 0400 hrs , with in loading all the items and transported to the location by 0900 hrs . The entire route coordination was done by forest officials. The DFO took special interest in travelling with us as due his respect for the armed forces. The following villages are covered by diving 200 KMs in 14 hours to kill the hunger of 200 families for one week.

Settlements	Families	Settlements	Families
Guntoor	41	Chundapatti	16
Chirukinaru	18	Kadamaankombai	25
Thondai	18	Mel pillur	15
Poochamarathur	18	Chithukuni	8
Veppamarathur	8	Neeraadi	18
Veerakkal	15		
Total 200			

AoC thanks all its donors and AoC team for making this mission successful. The second mission of reaching 400 families with relief material for Rs 1000/- has been planned on 26 Apr 2020 to reach other settlements near western Ghats. We are looking for philanthropists and kind hearted donors to make this mission possible.

This complete mission was single handedly coordinated and executed by Lt Cdr Sathya Narayanan, who is an active member of the Forces Network, assisted by many other members of the Network. Their selfless devotion and dedication, coupled with empathetic zeal, brought succor and smiles on the faces of the families in isolation in remote inaccessible areas. Their efforts, without a concern for their personal well being and safety are really praise worthy. Kudos and cheers to the selfless and unflinching spirit of Team AoC!!!

Compiled and based on inputs from Maj Madhan Kumar and from mails received in the Forces Network Group - Editor

Nothing is more important than empathy for another human being's suffering. Nothing. Not a career, not wealth, not intelligence, certainly not status. We have to feel for one another if we're going to survive with dignity.

Audrey Hepburn

We need to have empathy. When we lose empathy, we lose our humanity.

Goldie Hawn

Book Reviews

The Tyranny of Metrics: by Jerry Zucker Muller

BY SURESH CHANDRA

Measurement of human performance at work, has since times immemorial, been a crucial process to ensure that organisational goals and objectives are attained at optimal costs. Metrics have always played an important role towards this aim. With availability of high-power compute at the office desk, managers, executives, bureaucrats, and politicians have gone overboard with measuring leading to 'metric fixation'. This book by Jerry Z Muller focusses on the issue of 'metric fixation'. It is a well-researched, evidence-based book on the overuse / incorrect use of metrics in all spheres of life clearly demonstrating the limitations of quantification.

The book is logically organised in multiple parts where in the first few chapters he lays out his 'argument in a nutshell' followed by the origins of metrics and its fixation. A substantial part of the book comprises case studies that brings out various metrics, their successes, and shortcomings in the fields of K-12 education, higher education, medicine, policing, military, business philanthropy and foreign aid. In the last section, the author lists out the various unintended negative consequences of metric fixation and suggests some guidelines to use metrics sensibly. The book uses most examples from the US ecosystem and may not relate directly in all aspects and measures to our Indian context, however at the conceptual level it is relevant to us too.

Most organisations today believe that the road to success is governed by quantification of various attributes. The idea that there exists a relationship between "measurement" and "improvement". "If you cannot measure it, you cannot improve it." or Tom Peters, motto, "What gets measured gets done, which became the cornerstone belief of metrics. Believers in metrics advocate "accountability" through measurement and assume that only by measuring can institutions be truly responsible. Performance is therefore equated with what can be reduced to standardized measurements. The result as per the author is the demand for ever more documentation, ever more mission statements, ever more "goal-setting. Muller lists out three key components of metric fixation – **(a)** the belief that it is possible and desirable to replace judgment, acquired by personal
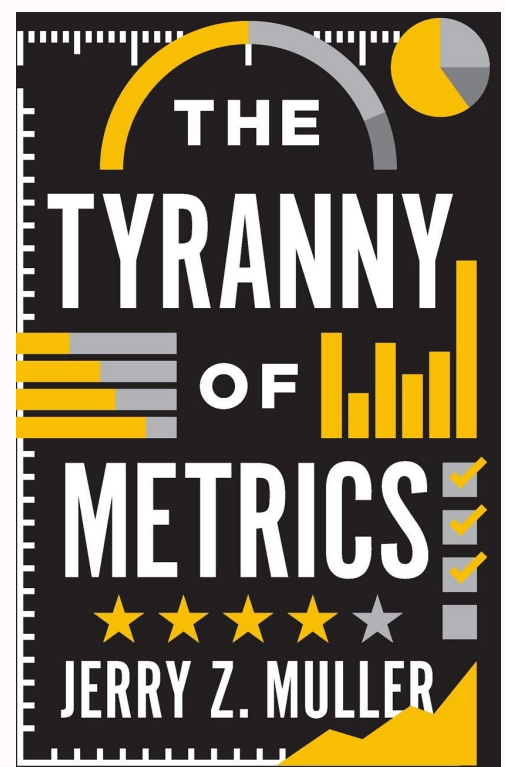
experience and talent, with numerical indicators of comparative performance based upon standardized data (metrics); **(b)** - the belief that making such metrics public (transparent) assures that institutions are actually carrying out their purposes (accountability); **(c)** - the belief that the best way to motivate people within these organizations is by attaching rewards and penalties to their measured performance, rewards that are either monetary (pay-for-performance) or reputational (rankings). This according to him has resulted in the "tyranny of metrics" that threatens most institutions. The authors main argument is "Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted."

He goes on to support his thesis using various examples and cites works by American social psychologist Donald T. Campbell who held that "***the more any quantitative social indicator is used for social decision-making, the more subject it will be to corruption pressures and the more apt it will be to distort and corrupt the social processes it is intended to monitor***". He also cites the Goodhart's Law, which states, "***Any measure used for control is unreliable.***" To put it another way, ***anything that can be measured and rewarded will be gamed***.

Recurring Flaws is a chapter in the book devoted to the most frequent types of flaws in the use of performance metrics. Metric dysfunction leads to distortion of information and some problems that arise from it are: (a) ***Measuring the most easily measurable*** - results in rarely measuring what is the most important and sometimes not important at all. (b) ***Measuring inputs rather than outcomes***; *(c)* ***Gaming through creaming*** - simpler targets or prefer clients with less challenging circumstances, making it easier to reach the metric goal, but excluding cases where success is more difficult to achieve. Later in the book he cites various examples to support this issue where doctors who tweak/maintain high ratings by not taking on complex cases or hospitals who tweak survival rate of patients. (d) ***Improving numbers by lowering standards*** - improving metric scores by lowering the criteria for scoring. Thus, for example, graduation rates of high schools and colleges can be increased by lowering the standards for passing. (e) ***Improving numbers through omission or distortion of data*** - this strategy involves leaving out inconvenient instances or classifying cases in a way that makes them disappear from the metrics. Police forces can "reduce" crime rates by booking felonies as misdemeanours, or by deciding not to book reported crimes at all. (f) ***Cheating*** – Muller cites how the No Child Left Behind Act raised the stakes for schools of the test scores of their pupils where teachers and principals in many cities responded by altering students' answers on the test.

Measurement demands judgment: judgment about whether to measure, what to measure, how to evaluate the significance of what is been measured, whether rewards and penalties will be attached to the results, and to whom to make the measurements available. One can agree that many metrics are misconceived, obsolete, counter-productive, and to some extent stupid also. Issues mentioned in "Recurring Flaws' are valid, and people do find their way around any method to

control their performance. The examples cited in the book are real and do merit careful consideration of the metric as well as the workaround people have invented to bypass them. The author has a chapter devoted to "When and How to Use Metrics" and gives out a **Checklist** – a list of questions people involved in policy making should ask and factors one should keep in mind in considering whether to use measured performance, and if so, how to use it.

The author believes that there is no silver bullet, no substitute for actually knowing one's subject and one's organization, which is a matter of both **experience and of unquantifiable skill**. Many matters of importance are subject to judgment and interpretation and cannot be solved by standardized metrics alone. Muller feels that the issue is not of metrics versus judgment, **but knowing how much weight to give to metrics, recognizing their characteristic distortions, and appreciating what cannot be measured**. This as per him has been lost sight of by politicians, business leaders, policymakers, and academic officials.

The book is an insightful read for corporate and social policy makers who deal with metrics / the obsession with metrics within their organisations. This book is not about the "evils of measuring," he writes. "It is about the unintended consequences of trying to substitute standardized measures of performance for personal judgment based on experience. The problem is not measurement, but excessive measurement and inappropriate measurement—not metrics but metric fixation.". The research he cites, and the examples he chooses, are compelling.

Muller sums up the problem nicely. "**There are things that can be measured. There are things that are worth measuring. But what can be measured is not always what is worth measuring; what gets measured may have no relationship to what we really want to know. The costs of measuring may be greater than the benefits. The things that get measured may draw effort away from the things we really care about. And measurement may provide us with distorted knowledge — knowledge that seems solid but is actually deceptive.**"

Col Suresh Chandra *was commissioned on 11 Jun 1988 in the 94 Field Regiment. He commanded 121 Light Regiment and superannuated from service on 30 Nov 2017. An MTech (CSE - IITD), he has been instrumental in the design and development of the ACCCS / Project Shakti. He was an instructor in School of Artillery and DS, JC Wing, Army War College. He has also served with the Wargaming Centre, SWC and was Col GS (Systems) Western Command. Post retirement he divides his time between mentoring underprivileged kids in Mathematics, Physics and Computer Science of Class XII level, and freelancing as a cyber security and data analytics expert. He is available at* sureshchandra@protonmail.com

Occupational Mobility in an Exile Community: by Madhu Rajput

(A Socio-Economic Study of Tibetan Women in Dharamshala and Dehradun)

BY TOOLIKA RANI

At some or other point in our life, we have all been awed by the ubiquitous presence of women vendors in Tibetan markets in the hill stations of India. Selling sweaters, artifacts, traditional jewellery, or momos, these frail-looking women are hard bargainers. But look beyond the surface and you discover that each one of them is a warrior, a link in the struggle for survival of their race, ethnicity and culture. Their stories are different than yours and mine; they are people in exile. This status brings a whole plethora of complexities in its wake, not faced by those who live rightfully in their own motherland. After annexation of Tibet by China in 1959, they were forced to flee to India along with the revered leader the Dalai Lama. India, despite her limited resources provided all support. However, the transition from an independent people to refugees was traumatic and surviving in a land different in terms of climate, language, culture and socio-economic set up was daunting.

The resilient Tibetan women rose to the challenge. They not only reestablished their families in a new setting but also contributed economically. The book by Prof. Madhu Rajput depicts the Tibetan women's struggle and emergence as a winner. The strength of this book lies in in its representation of life in exile from women's perspective. Along with socio-economic struggle, it touches a cord by bringing to fore the subtler psychological and emotional aspects. The book traces their transition in totality by presenting the contrast between their lives in independent Tibet and the one in exile. It narrates their journey of perseverance from initial road construction to sweater selling, food stalls, establishment of Tibetan markets, handicraft making to the present push towards entrepreneurship. Their role as a carrier of their culture and identity is highlighted. The contribution of Women organizations and the Royal ladies is insightful to read.
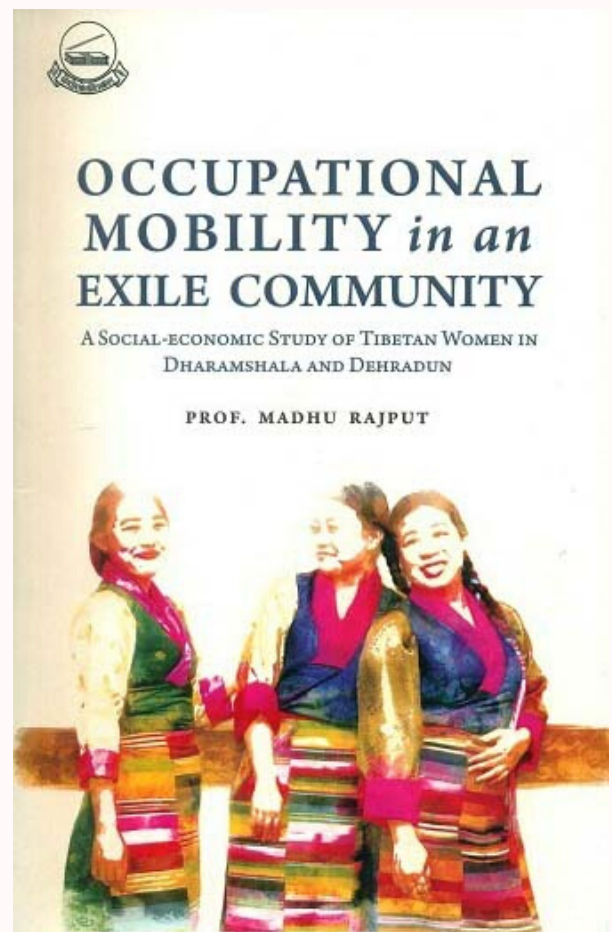
Analysis of the nuns' status in Tibetan society adds depth to this book. The Dalai Lama's seminal role in their transformation from the erstwhile restricted role of reciting religious prayers to the present Ph.D. degree holders and direct engagement as educators, presents an example in leadership. The most riveting feature however, is

the survey and interviews conducted by the author in Dharamshala and Dehradun. The survey findings lend the work an empirical status along with bringing out new data. The interviews bring the first hand information and perspective of Tibetans from all walks of life. The Dalai Lama's interview presents his vision for his people, especially women. Photographic presentation brings a personal touch to the narration.

This book is a useful resource for scholars, academicians and policy makers, and a reading delight to anybody interested in knowing more deeply about these beautiful women who have taken the challenges of exile in their stride and have retained their guileless smiles with a hope to return to their high plateau someday.

The book was published by Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh in September 2019 and is based on a Major Project granted by Indian Council of Social Science research (ICSSR), New Delhi.

Squadron Leader Toolika Rani has served in the Indian Air Force as an ATC Officer, and as Outdoor Training Instructor at the Air Force Academy, Hyderabad. She is a mountaineer, motivational speaker, writer and is presently doing Ph.D. on Sherpas of Nepal. She can be reached on tulich83@gmail.com

Amit Dalvi

ForceNet Connect

Searching For An Officer

The sister of a friend of Alok Singh was travelling in a car with her family and was going the Delhi Airport. Unfortunately, the car suffered some mechanical problem and stopped in the middle of the road on the National Highway. The family was really at loss to plan their further move to the Airport.

At that time, a car stopped there and the person in that car came to their help. Understanding their plight, he offered to drop them immediately to the Airport lest they miss their flight.

After having reached the airport in time, they felt relieved and expressed their utmost gratitude to that person. Also, upon learning that he was an Army Officer, they spoke high about the disciplined organisation and the ethos it carried. They took his contact number, but failed to register his name.

After finally reaching their destination, and once settled, they desired to contact the officer and convey their heartfelt thanks. However, since they had failed to register his name, they were confused with the other numbers in their call records. Nevertheless, they finally managed to obtain his photograph from the officer's WhatsApp account, but still unable to recall the name.

So, they contacted Alok Singh to check if he could recognise the officer from the photograph. He however did not know him. So, Alok decided to share the photograph with the Forces Network Group, and requested for the details in case any maember was acquainted with him.

Within no time, he received a call from Maj Majumdar, who provided Alok Singh with all necessary details of the officer in question, as he was known to him.

The concerned family then finally managed to contact that officer, who had helped them at the hour of their need. The family also marveled at the reach and the camaraderie of the organisation, something which is not to seen in any other organisation of the Country.

Such is the undying spirit of Forces Network. The Network.....that works!!

Compiled from mails received in the Forces Network Group - Editor

Stories

Dialogue With An Enemy

BY SHANTANU CHAKRAVORTY

I was yet to come to terms of being boarded out of the Indian Army on medical grounds, after being part of the Kargil campaign. Could never overcome the setback, as the Army was the only way of life for me and my wife.

Immediately thereafter landing with a job in Dubai with a Global MNC with a good salary and at an International location seemed to assuage some of those misgivings to start with.

The trappings of the job entitled me to a brand new Toyota Camry, however I was yet to get a Driving License which meant, I was to depend on a local driver to enjoy the ride while still taking the lessons and getting oriented to the civilian and Middle Eastern Culture.

My office deputed a driver for me in the interim who was to play that part. I still remember that Sunday morning, when I walked out of my apartment to this tall lanky man, neatly attired in a spotless white shirt and blue trousers, "Sir, good morning. My name is Sageer Hussain, and I have been deputed to drive and orient you across the UAE site offices." Initial pleasantries done, he as a matter of fact asked me, from which place in Hindustan did I belong to. I told him, Calcutta, to which he responded with, "Mother Teresa!"

He told me he was from Lahore. I simply froze and was speechless. I was co-driving with someone with whom we were eye balling a few months back, and I was nonchalant all through the rest of the ride.

I was now determined to walk up to my Manager and explain that it was blasphemous to align a Pakistani with an ex Indian Army Officer. The Young Army Capt in me was fuming with utter lack of understanding of how Teams work, by these Corporate honchos. However the Army had taught me to respect the decision of such Supervisors, so I let it go!!

Sageer, probably knew this but never expressed it. He always addressed me as Capt Sahab. He knew that I was a Hindu and made sure and only stopped at non beef eating joints whenever we had to dine, during our rides to the various country sites. Though that was never an issue for me, but that was Sageer.

We never discussed religion/politics, but over time I saw the commonalities between us. The realization started slowly dawning on me and opening up my mind to The basic nuances of every day life that all of us go through.

His English was pathetic. He constantly pleaded me to to refine his spoken English. He felt embarrassed when Pakistani cricketers conversed in English during awards ceremonies, and wanted me to teach him speak the language.

My Family was equally suspect with biases and I had no choice, During the initial days, she was adamant that I accompany her in case she had the use the car for running errands. However over time, it was not possible, and Sageer started ferrying her and our infant child to the Pediatrician when I was on tours.

Durga Pujo to us Bengalis is a major festival. Over time Sageer had become so much like one of us, that I tried explaining to him what it meant being away from family and the community aspect of Pujo. In fact, I demonstrated the similarities between our Shubho Bijoya Drill of hugging each other and his Eid Mubarak practice of greetings. These were my feeble attempts for Hindu-Muslim solidarity. He could probably sense our despondency.

With a child like enthusiasm, he came and told my wife one day, about a Hindu Temple in Dubai and some Indians celebrating a festival (Dussera). He drove us there on a Friday (his off day). Incidentally bhog (community meals) was served there by the local diaspora. I invited Sageer for joining us, but he politely refused. probably cognizant of the fact of his religion and the biases that some of the community members harbored. I didn't want to offend them even.

During Ramzan, an Islamic nation is a different fabric. During the day, the streets are deserted and it sometimes feels eerie. The offices those days used to work half days. On one such uneventful day, our son was suffering from very high temp, and we had to medicate him with warm milk and bread. We had run out of milk and in spite of all my efforts, and seeing his gasps and his deteriorating condition, I had no choice, but Sageer was my 'Go to Man'. I was aware that he was fasting and would be preparing to go for his Namaaz. I still contacted him. I don't know whether he violated his religious practices, but I do know that he tried to convince the local grocer first, and when that failed, he got a packet of a fresh pack from his own home. He also told me to let my wife know, that he doesn't consume beef at home, so that she is sure of the source. I just had tears welling up. Later I was told they are not supposed to touch food during the fasting hours, I am not sure about it, but Humanity won over Religion!!

I was once cornered by some foreign workers for a Labor Camp related issue, and Sageer arbitrated and single handedly navigated the situation with a menacing look. The message was clear, that anyone found meddling with his Capt Sahab, had to deal with him first. The protestors in the crowd also included some Pakistanis.

On the evening of 9/11, the devastating Twin Tower attacks took place and Dubai with so many Westerners there, started wearing a different look. People scurried home and Malls emptied out. We were given discreet instructions by our senior Leadership, that All Pakistani nationals posted in sensitive embassies should be taken off duties immediately . The boisterous activist leader in me ,immediately wanted to protest

against this racial profiling. Sageer, came up to me and advised me to stay calm and go with the flow, as the situation was very tense at that moment. Today in retrospect, I don't know whether it was wrong or right, but I am reminded by the intrinsic dialogue between Mangal Pandey and his British Officer depicted in the movie, on the use of the pellets, where at one point, the pellets were no longer the issue, the purpose was much larger than the trigger.

As time went by, I earned my Driving License, but my intent was always to see him grow in his career and life. I had become so dependent on him , including my family as he knew all the places and my friends too were so fond of him by now , but I had to let go off him of my duties if he had to grow. I bought him a Rapidex Book on English, and put him on some basic English lessons while aligning him with European and American clients, so that he is forced to speak the language as with Indians and Pakistanis he could get away with Urdu/Hindi. I then enabled him on a Cadre Development path and made him an understudy attending to L-1 Customer Escalations, and over time with coupled with his hard work, had been successful in having him posted to the American Consulate .

Finally after more than a year gone by, it was our time to bid adieu to Dubai and come back to India. At the Airport, sporting a Ray Ban, out of no where donning the embassy number plate vehicle, Sageer emerged. Hiding his tears, he hugged me and said, "Sahab, I know, probably I can never get a Visa to visit India and with your background, you visiting mine, but may be some day we would meet at this foreign land. I have brought this Pathan Suit from my land for you and do hope that you would take a piece of Sageer, this humble Pakistani brother of yours with you."

20 years gone by I have still preserved it and proudly wear the Sageer I know. Today Sageer is a Seniorr Manager of an American Company in Dubai and heads their Recruitment function. We are connected, and yes he still addresses me as Capt Sahab.

No this is not an essay about a Pakistani per se, but about mindsets/prejudices we harbour. At the end it's about the culture of empathy/humanity, the genesis of Human relationship, which has taught me so much on Leadership, no book could teach!!

Capt Shantanu Chakravorty, *commissioned in 1993, joined G4S and handled their operations in Kenya and Dubai after six and half years of service. Having continually upskilled himself thereafter, he is now an independent Digital Learning Design and Leadership Consultant. He is a Certified Leadership Game Designer from NASAGA (North American Simulation and Gaming Association – USA) and a Master Coach and Facilitator from Eagles Flight – Canada, Performance Management Company-USA, Certified Professional in Behavioral Assessments (CPBA) & in a battery of Psychometric Tools.*

The Skilled Bark

BY HARSH WAHI

I was born in a family of tall, green pine trees. My mom was a beautiful young Fir tree with flowing branches. My dad, a rich and famous Pine Tree whose legacy dated back to the famous Aparwat Ranges. They fell in love when they first touched each other during the windy storm of 1966.

I was blessed with a warm-walnut texture and thus was the cynosure of all eyes. Among the local lads, if anyone was to be dispatched or recommended for any task, it was obviously me. No wonder that, when the cruel timber thieves invaded Gulmarg, I was amongst the handpicked baby-barks. I was separated from my family, my cousins, friends and thus started my solo life, or so I thought.

Timber cutting, shaping, polishing is a big bad world. I saw millions of baby-barks like me plonked on massive heaps, waiting for their racist selection based on colour and texture. All of us manicured and pedicured into smart young lads being exported to some wonderful places on the world map. I have always loved to travel and saw this as a silver lining despite the family separation, but soon I realized that some people are born with a little luck and some with none at all. By mistake, the timber loader dumped me onto the 'Gulmarg' truck instead of the one that read 'Europe'. Life can be cruel.

Maulana's Hut. My first assignment. Can never forget it. Maulana was an extremely courteous man. Obviously rich. Perched on the hill top, he had commanding views of the Gulmarg bowl. Being new to my work, I was given the attic but I had a peep hole from where I had visual access to the
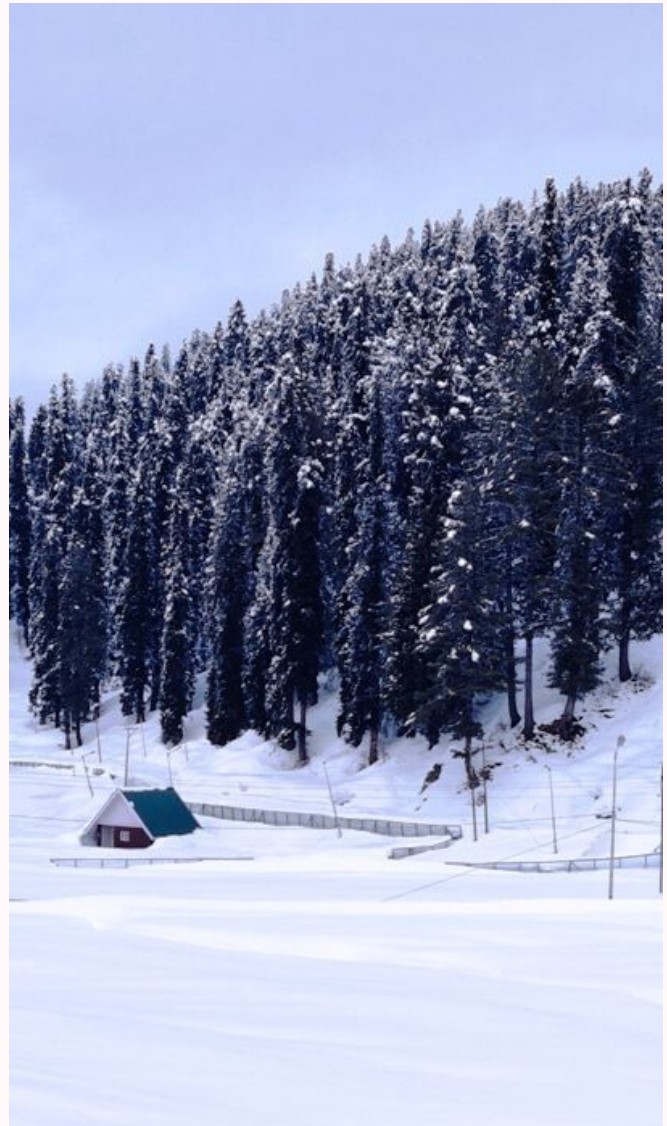
entire house. Maulana was a royal man. He had mutton twice a day. Wife no more, with children settled abroad, and a Doberman to give company. Three servants for errands. Life couldn't be great. But hey, is this life ??

Nusrat Biwi. Attic job was fine but I hated the dust around me. Maulana's servants didn't take the effort to climb all the way up to clean us all. Being allergic to dust, I opted for a change, Nusrat Biwi's hut. It was behind the main market road. One needed to cross a nalla to reach her place. Anyways I am always chauffer-lifted (pun intended).

Nusrat was a women of steel. Her husband and son were taken away by God at the peak of terrorism. They were grazing their cattle on the high mountain slopes when tragedy struck. She was 32 at that time. To give meaning to her life, she brought her brother's two kids from the village to give them a better life. The kids meant the world to her and were her only objective now. Early morning after bath, the three would bow in front of the photos of her late husband and son, seeking their blessings before starting a new day. This stint taught me so much about family values, and sacrifices.

Gulmarg Church. The Gulmarg church is an iconic structure in the middle of the bowl. You guys must come and see it sometime. A fierce wind blew away a part of the roof and an emergency was declared within the timber lobby. Kashmiris in Gulmarg are very passionate about their church. People with attic-experience were being dispatched to the church for urgent repairs. Before I realized, I was on a pick-up truck dashing up the church slope. It was resurrection time. No questions asked.

None allowed anyway. Along with a few dozen of attic guys, we were plonked on the roof top and a billion nails ran through our veins. As I said, it was resurrection time for Gulmarg and its famous church. We held onto each other as the nails came one after the other. They came with fury and alarming accuracy. Each one of us had been pierced badly but it was all for a cause. At the end of the day, we were one solid sheet of wood which was designed to withstand even the severest of storms. After the job was over, our sweet timber manager looked up at the roof and kind of apologized to all of us. But we all knew it was all for the larger good. With a few tears trickling down our cheeks, we bade him goodbye with an assuring look that the Gulmarg Church was now in extremely safe hands. What a day it was for Team Building!

Hut near IISM. The Indian Institute of Skiing and mountaineering is the heart of Gulmarg. Its where the country comes to hone their adventure skills. I have more than a thousand brothers inside IISM. The IISM roof is one of the most scintillating structures in the whole of Kashmir. I was attached to the principal's office. An extremely humble man with a lot of vision. He runs an extremely happy team under him, which therefor translates into efficient and smooth running of the institute. At any point I time, there are at least 65-70 kids in IISM and the numbers swell during the winters. The staff keeps them engaged in a lot of ways and there's always a lively atmosphere there. At IISM I always feel that I am re-living my childhood, albeit without my sisters and cousins. But that's okay. You make the best of what you have….Right ?

The Army Man. One of my sweetest memories. Perched in a tiny army post with a few others around me. Hardly any space. You could really call us a close-knit community (pun intended). He was from Rajasthan. Extremely pious man. The hut had one two door glass windows and a small hole for his weapon. He had a dozen photos of Gods, one of his parents and family. Next to it were all his weapons etc. I hardly saw him sleep. Obviously, he had to keep all of us safe, all of Kashmir and the nation too. At night, he used to put us to sleep, switch off the lights and then go back to his window to keep a vigil. He looked like a strict man. Very tall. Big moustaches. Stern voice. But trust me such men are like clay from within. We used to trouble him by hiding his stuff under us, behind us or below his trunk. But we never ever played with his weapon or the photos. Sundays used to be fun days for us. He used to make a video call back

home with all of us in the background. Bhabhi ji was always in a 'Ghunghat' so we never saw her face. His father was also an Army man, wounded in war in 1971. Both his sons were teenagers and adorable. For a few moments after the video call, there used to be silence in the hut, because he would get emotional seeing his family and no one knew when he would go back home on leave. Or will he ever go back? Speak of sacrifices!

HUT near The Khyber. If you ever went to moon and looked down upon Gulmarg, Khyber is what is going to catch your eye big time. One of the most iconic resorts in the country. Also the most hospitable of staff and the most luxurious of environs. I went there as replacement for a fellow brother who had taken ill. Initially I was allocated a guest room but at the last moment I was dispatched to the swimming pool. Oh! My God!! Who would call it a pool? It was like being transported back to the land of fairy tales. The pool complex had glass walls on three sides giving an unreal view of the forest outside, covered in a blanket of pristine white snow. Needless to say the water was temperature controlled although I never got to get a feel of it. Ha ha. I had a small stint with their super-uber restaurant. The aroma from their live counters would send me in a tizzy day after day. Speaking of tizzy, lemme share a secret, the best aroma comes from its bar where few of my seniors are plonked. Lucky guys. Aren't they ?

Young Wasim. Wasim. Young at 17. Sole bread winner. Sole family member. Earns for a living. Lives to earn. Ski instructor already at this age. His hut is an ancestral hut wit bare basic amenities, or may be lesser. During winter months he trains tourists for a fee and spends that money on his school fees, uniform etc. Most of his friends have a smart phone but guess he is attempting a Guinness record with his Nokia 3310. There is no question of saving money because there is hardly any.

Cleaning his tiny hut therefore is a chapter closed long back, but we timber brothers are a tad different, trust me. When Wasim isn't at home, we open the attic door and let all the wind blow us clean. Obviously its freezing but a small sacrifice for our little boss who makes both ends meet with a truck load of effort.

I see my mom, dad, sisters and cousins swaying with the winds and look so beautiful during the snow months. I long to be with them, but as the timber uncle says, "We aren't them anymore." In retrospect, I am grateful to all these huts for having enriched my life in ways more than I could ever contemplate. And if you guys visit Gulmarg next, do drop by and we could certainly share a few more of my stories.

Hey, I didn't tell you my name right? So my name is 'Maahir' which means skilled! Am I not one?

Commander Harsh Wahi, *commissioned on 01 Jan 2000 is a Marine Engineer in the Indian Navy. An alumnus of 12 NEC, he has held portfolios in Operations, Maintenance, Training and Design aspects, but it' is the outdoors that entices him the most. An avid sportsman and a certified paragliding pilot, he has extensively hiked, skied and snowboarded in the European Alps. However Gulmarg holds an extremely special place in his heart, where he learned to ski in as an eight year old whilst his father, a Gunner, was posted at HAWS.*

Let us resolve to be masters, not the victims, of our history, controlling our own destiny without giving way to blind suspicions and emotions.

— John F. Kennedy —

Resolve to be a master of change rather than a victim of change.

— Brian Tracy —

The Aftermath

BY ANITA SHARMA

So much has been shared on the social networking circuit about this social tragedy and its aftermath that one would feel that everything that could possibly be said or written has already been penned, and that too several times over. But, like everyone else I too would like to believe that my perspective is refreshingly different so here goes.

When I was a child I read a story. I haven't the faintest clue what it was all about but one line stands out clearly in my mind 'it is a ill wind that blows no one any good'. And I do believe that although this gross pandemic with its disastrous fallout of lives lost and countries thrown into a tizzy is a nerve racking experience; at a very microscopic level ,it has its own share of a silver lining.

I have started waking to the chirping of birds, a sound that had been lost in the pandemonium of mechanical, fast- paced living. These little winged creatures are subtly asserting their stake on the earth.

Like all metropolitizens, I have had my share of holiday getaways but nothing compared to the serene silence and long hours which are miraculously not time-bound. As a matter of fact, this long stretch of house arrest has given me a lot of time to contemplate and introspect. It is more like an unpaid module of the' Art of Living'— something I had wanted to subscribe to for a long time but never got down to actualizing.

The most beautiful thing that happened was perhaps that this social distancing paradoxically made people come out of their self-imposed isolation zones and connect with neighbours. In our colony, two young people offered their services to the elderly and the frail, at all times of the day. When I made my daily call to my parents, inquiring about their wellbeing, my mother happily informed me that the daughters of their newly acquired next- door neighbour looked in on them daily and the gentleman who had been their neighbour for more than a couple of decades kept replenishing their store of vegetables and milk. Whoever said that in the 21st century had lost out on humanity was barking up the wrong tree. Humanity was present all right, just waiting to be rediscovered. In the larger picture, people came out to voluntarily cook and provide meals to the poor and the deprived. Organizations donated generously to the cause and almost everyone pitched in, no matter how big or small the effort.

Then again, it has made me do a rethink on many counts. For one, my impression of the police Force had been shaped largely on the basis of what Bollywood presented it as and to some extent by the media accounts of corruption and extortion. Besides, my army background has coloured my vision to equating ' men in uniform' with 'men in olives'. However, the past few days have made me realize that the Indian Police Force

deserves applause and appreciation not only for its selfless response to the call of duty but also for service beyond the call of duty. If such a gargantuan population has been restrained indoors, it's thanks to our leadership and 'the men in khaki.' And so I sincerely salute these soldiers.

Another heartening observation was the behavioral change in people. Till recent times, our attitude in queues has been deplorable. We get fidgety and restless, try to jump the line, glare at the person in front of us as though it is all his fault that the line is crawling at a snail's pace and at airports or malls we need   stanchions to discipline us. Not any longer. When the authority sponsored vegetable lorry stops at the gate or at the milk booth, I see people waiting patiently, as though they had indefinite time on their hands, making no attempt to step on each other's toes. On the contrary they do their best to maintain as much distance as possible and no one, repeat no one, ever tries to squeeze into the visibly luring voids. Wow!!

The situation has also played a role in making my erstwhile learning more relevant. The lessons I studied in my history classes were simply that. Classes. Information about events revisited academically and mechanically. But today, the scenes of partition, with chaotic, mass scale migration of people, have taken on a whole new meaning in the light of the real time images of a human sea trying desperately to cross borders. I realized it is not simply a migratory movement, it is a turmoil laced with a billion intricacies. Of lack of food and water. Of little toddlers who needed to be carried. Of pregnant women. Of abandonment. Of old and ailing elders. Of insecurity. And yet not half as terrifying as partition because it is thankfully devoid of the fear of being persecuted and brutalized.

The years of the great plague took on a whole new meaning as quarantine-stamped hands reminded me of houses, whose inhabitants had died of plague, being marked with a black cross. Frantic stalking up of rations and restricted availability was like a tiny window into the times of war. Judicious use and minimum wastage have become the mantra in most homes, Just as it must have been in the times of emergency and rationing.

And the fear of losing someone, near or distant has made me realize the importance of so many people in my life. Every now and then I make a deliberate effort to connect to my extended family, friends and colleagues to enquire about their well-being. Believe me, it feels good! And by the way the circuit which deserves my concern is inclusive of my domestic help and her family as well. I never realized before how dependent I was on her! And on the guy who clears the trash bags every morning and on the guard at the colony gate. Not to mention all the health workers. In my self-absorption, I honestly never realized that those nameless guys at the path labs were actually risking their own lives every time they took on a fresh assignment. And let's not assuage ourselves with the flimsy platitude that they are paid for the work they do.

On the flip side, I have started experimenting and creating new recipes and when the pall lifts, I am sure I can come up with a recipe book of sorts which will give Tarla Dalal

and Sanjeev Kapoor a run for their money; more so because my ingredients are neither exotic nor expensive. I could name my book 'cooking from your kitchen shelf'.
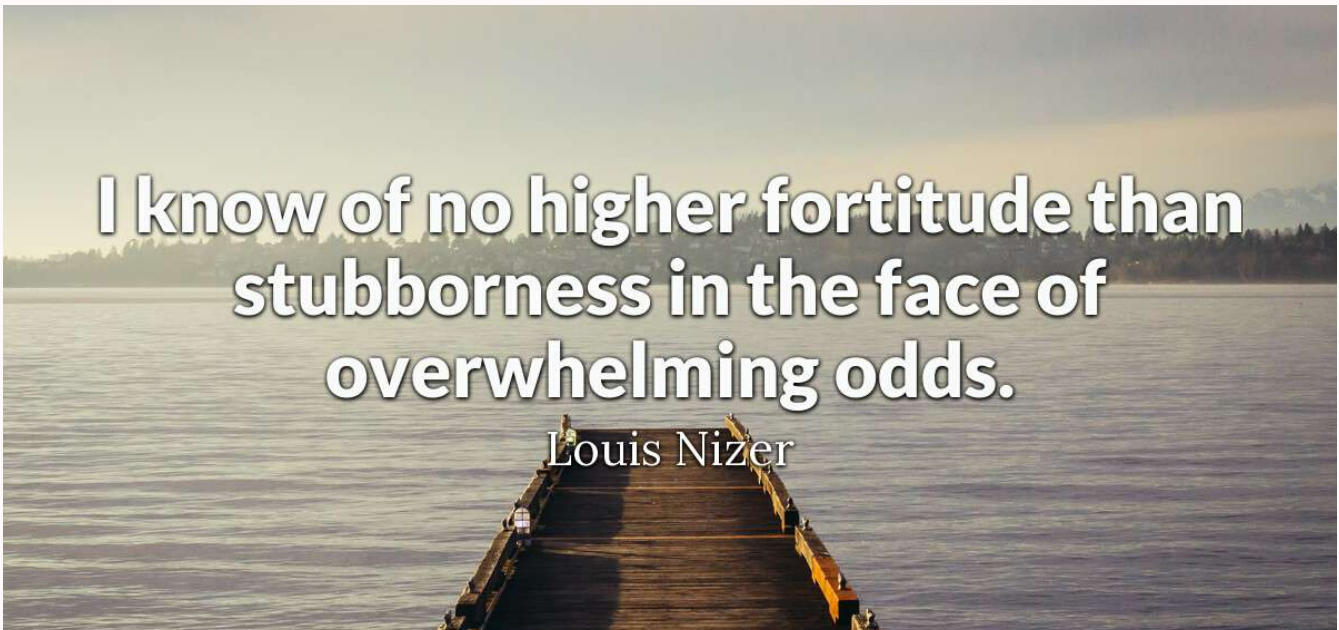
I have just two niggling fears. One is that when the time comes for us to restart where we left, we will forget the lessons of this lock down and commit the same follies all over again. We will revert to the same reckless lifestyle. Once again, we will push the birds into obscurity.

The second is that with the World heading for one disaster after the other at breakneck speed, this social distancing and work- from- home scenario could well become the norm rather than the exception. And I sincerely hope it will not because I am already missing the craziness of my workplace, I am missing the company of critical friends and I am sorely missing the freedom of stepping out of the house as and when I choose. This peaceful, sedentary existence is too insipid and unpalatable for a typical Indian like me who thrives on spice and risks.

So let's keep our fingers crossed and hope that this too shall pass!!

Anita Sharma *is a science graduate with masters in English Literature and works as an educator. With about 28 years of teaching experience, Science remains her first love. She has done her first level as a Reiki healer and indulges in tarot reading as an aside. She is married to Col Dinesh Dutt Sharma.*

I know of no higher fortitude than stubborness in the face of overwhelming odds.
Louis Nizer

FORCES NETWORK
THE NETWORK THAT WORKS

Matrimonials

Brides Desired

Suitable match is sought by Col Vivek Verma for his son. The son was born on 9 May 1989 and is 5' 9" tall. He is B Tech (IT), and is presently working as Head of Engg in Digital Banking in Melbourne, Australia. Father is a retired officer and located at Bhopal at present, and mother is a home maker. He is their single child. A girl aged less than 29 years, who is financially independent, career oriented, and with a positive outlook towards work and life is desired.

Col Vivek Verma can be reached at +91-7770984582, and vivch138@yahoo.co.in for additional details.

Suitable match is sought by Lt Col Rakesh Kumar Yadav for his son. The son was born on 27 Mar 1991, and is 174 cms tall. He is a Landscape Architect and has Masters Degree in Landscape Architecture from SPA Bhopal. Father is a retired officer, and mother is a homemaker after having retired as an educationist. The family resides at Gurgaon. Younger brother is undergoing Masters in Fashion Management from NIFT Bangalore. Preference is for a well educated girl, desirably an Architect, from a well settled family with good values. Defence background will be preferred.

Lt Col Rakesh Kumar Yadav can be reached at +91-9717016161 and raajkumar_yadav@yahoo.co.in, for additional details.

Suitable match is sought by Shri PK Shukla for his son, Lt (IN) Bhaskar Shukla. The son was born on 29 Jan 1984 and is 5' 10" tall. He is an MBA qualified and has 13 years of experience in Defence and Corporate. The father is a retired Government Officer, and mother is a home maker. The family resides at NOIDA. His three elder brothers are married and well settled in NCR. A career oriented, preferably from Armed Forces, girl who may be a divorcee/widowed/never married is desired. Only consideration being a woman without children, in case of divorcee/widow.

Shri PK Shukla can be reached at +91-9891566364, +91-7082113209, and bhaskarshukla@gmail.com for additional details.

Suitable match is sought by Gp Capt Tajinder Singh Khurana for his son. The son was born on 26 Aug 1993 and is 175 cm tall. He is BA (Hons) LLB qualified and is now practising law in Delhi High Court. Father is a retired officer, and mother is a home maker. The family is settled at NOIDA. The younger brother is studying Management in Canada. A well educated and good natured girl is desired. It is a Gursikh family and alliance is accordingly sought.

Gp Capt Tajinder Singh Khurana can be reached at +91-8447731969 and tskhurana@rediffmail.com for additional details.

Grooms Desired

Suitable match is sought by Brig Harinder Singh Walia for his daughter. The daughter was born on 23 Jul 1993 and is 5' 7" tall. She has done her Masters from DU and is presently a Journalist and News Anchor with a reputed English News channel. Father is a serving officer, and mother is an Educationist. Her younger brother is pursuing his Masters in Computers Science in the US. A compatible professionally qualified and well settled boy, who can strike a good work-life balance is desired. Preference is for a good family settled in Delhi NCR.

Brig Harinder Singh Walia can be reached at +91-9797593501, and waliaharinder67@yahoo.co.in for additional details.

Suitable match is sought by Lt Col Ramesh Kumar for his daughter. The daughter was born on 24 Jan 1995 and is 165 cm tall. After completing her MCom, she has done Masters in Professional Accountancy from United Kingdom. Father is a retired officer, and mother is a home maker. Her elder brother is married. The family is presently settled at Gurgaon. A son of a defence officer settled in India/UK/USA is desired. Preference is for a boy who is in Government service, or is ex IIM/IIT or has had education abroad.

Lt Col Ramesh Kumar can be reached at +91-9461039847 and dhigtana72@gmail.com for additional details.

Suitable match is sought by Col Vikram Singh for his daughter. The daughter was born on 4 Feb 2000 and is 5' 8" tall. She is a Bachelor of Journalism and Mass Communication. Father is presently settled at Ludhiana. She has a brother. An Army Officer from Rajput family of Rajasthan is desired. Dowry seekers are avoided.

Col Vikram Singh can be reached at +91-7023110099 and vikramsa.singh@gmail.com for additional details.

Suitable match is sought by Col Rameshwar Gupta for his daughter. The daughter was born on 29 Nov 1994 and is 5' 7" tall. She has done has Masters in Journalism & Mass Communication, and preparing for MBA. Father is a retired officer, and mother is the Principal of an International School. The family is settled at Hyderabad. Her younger sister has cleared her Class XII. A compatible and simple boy from the Defence Forces is desired.

Col Rameshwar Gupta can be reached at +91-7032861807, +91-7033861807 and ngrgsh@yahoo.in for additional details.

Suitable match is sought by Lt Col Sanjay Borse for his daughter. The daughter was born on 23 Jun 1992 and is 5' 4" tall. After her MCom and CMA, she is now working as Lead Financial Analyst in a US based MNC. Father is a retired officer who is having his own business, and mother is a home maker. The family is settled at Pune. Her younger brother is ex-Merchant navy and having own agro business. An Army Officer or a son of an Army Officer, preferably a Maharashtrian, is desired.

Lt Col Sanjay Borse can be reached at +91-9561493561, and borse64@yahoo.co.in for additional details.

Suitable match is sought by Cdr Ram Mohan Sharma for his daughter. The daughter was born on 19 Feb 1994 and is 5' 6" tall. After completing her BTech (IT), she is now working as Business Development Manager at Bangalore. Father is a serving officer, and mother is a home maker. Her brother is having his own business. The family is presently at Mumbai. A well educated and decent person with good job or business is desired. It is a Hindu-Brahmin family and alliance from similar caste is preferred.

Cdr Ram Mohan Sharma can be reached at +91-9130731030 (WhatsApp) and rmstaj@gmail.com for additional details.

Suitable match is sought for the daughter of late Col JS Rajpal. The daughter was born on 14 Nov 1983 and is 5' 4" tall. She is a Chartered Accountant and presently working as a Manager in a MNC. Mother is a home maker, and the family is settled at Hyderabad. Her sister is married. Alliance from a Sikh/Punjabi boy who is a non-smoker and non-drinker is desired.

Contact can be established at +91-8897154610 and rajpaljasbir@yahoo.com for additional details.

Suitable match is sought by Col Sanjeev Vij for his daughter. The daughter was born on 24 Apr 1991 and is 180 cm tall. After completing her MArch from Edinburgh University, she is now working as Conservation Architect with INTACH. Father is a retired officer, and mother is an educationist. She is the only child and the family is settled at NOIDA. A boy who is good natured, cheerful, from any profession, and who is fond of travelling is desired..

Col Sanjeev Vij can be reached at +91-9602260019, and sanjivij@gmail.com for additional details.
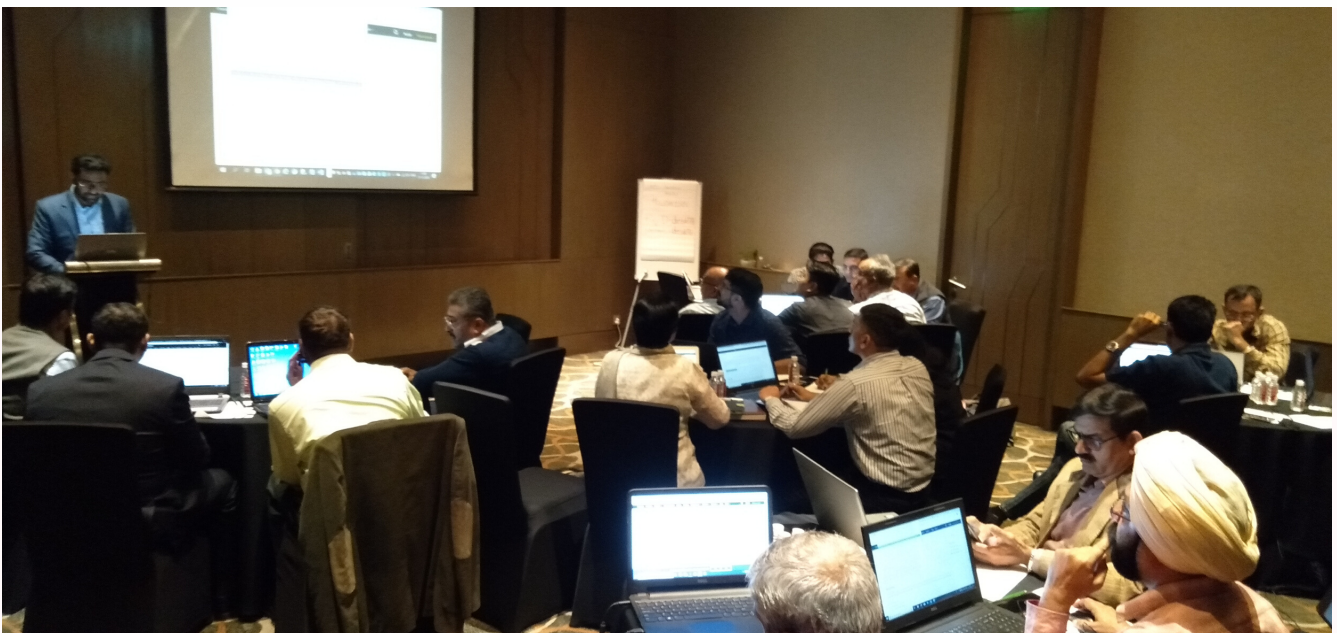
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