



**The Association of Indian
Management Scholars International**

Twelfth AIMS International Conference on Management

**January 2-5, 2015
IIM, Kozhikode**

Theme:
Management Challenges in Uncertain Environment



PLENARY SESSIONS

Session 1: Friday, January 2, 2015, 2:00-2:40

Session Chair:

Speaker: R. C. Natarajan

TAPMI, Manipal

Pedagogical Experiments in Education of Potential Managers to Face Uncertain Environment

Management education in India is at a point of inflection. Thanks to the magnanimity of the regulator in allowing over 2500 business schools to be started in the last decade, and the recent announcement of more IIMs, the peril of commoditization of MBA has become a reality. Barring the top-half percent of the schools, the other schools do not seem to enjoy any points of differentiation among the recruiters, forcing leading business leaders commenting that 80% of the MBAs are unemployable. There is no option for us but to sit up, take notice of this startling opinion and ponder over what ought to be done to make our education relevant to business and other organizations. It is all the more important to take cognizance of the fast changing environment that warrants an equally fast adaptive attitude among the business schools. This paper shares some thoughts on this aspect and certain experiments carried out at TAPMI, Manipal in this regard.

Changes Considered For Experiments:

We have considered the changes that happen in the market through the demand volatility. We felt, a priori, that training students in managing volatility in the market, and thus their responses, will make them ready to face changes when they take up managerial career. To this effect, we carried out two experiments, one that has been done since five years and another that has been commenced recently.

1. The first experiment that we carried out was in supply chain area through the famous simulation, The Beer Game of J.W. Forrester of MIT Sloan. We used the students of final year PGDM electing to study the course Distribution Management, for whom The Beer Game is a compulsory component to go through. We divided the class into two groups, (a) the Control Group (CG) and (b) the Free Group (FG). We made both groups play the simulation in two phases in succession. The CG was made to face a relatively smooth customer order that changes only once in the first phase and were exposed to a stochastically varying customer order in the second round. The FG was made to go through a stochastically varying customer orders (with same mean and variance, but different in quantity) in both the phases. We found that the CG manifested less efficient performance in managing the turbulence compared to the FG across the years. We can draw a simple conclusion about the relevance of this finding to Management Education is that if the students are exposed to greater turbulence and uncertainties during the two years of MBA education, they develop the attitude and the aptitude to face turbulence in real life better than if they are offered a two year smooth sail.
2. The second experiment is an entire elective course titled Student Managed Investment Fund in finance. Each student is given a cash amount of Rs.25000. The students are formed into groups of five. They pool the money together and by using the Bloomberg Finance Lab, trade in listed Indian stocks. The course runs over two terms and the students are expected to (i) make profits and graded relatively on it, and (ii) write a daily diary that is the basis for a viva voce every week for continuous grading. The former carries 30% weightage and the latter 70%. In real time, the students learn to assess the complexity of the stock market, marry it with their internal capabilities and take decisions in real time. We expect that this hands-on experience will make them competent to manage market turbulence in their career with ease. The results of this experiment will be known in March 2015.

Dr. R. C Natarajan is the full-time Director of TAPMI, Manipal. The school is ranked among the top 1/2 % of the business schools in the country. He spearheaded the AACSB accreditation efforts of TAPMI for three years before taking charge as the Director.

He is on the panel of AACSB's Peer Review Team Members. He has been chosen to the Markstrat Advisory Board by Prof. Jean Claude Laareché, the author of Markstrat.

Dr. Natarajan handles courses such as Marketing Management, Marketing Strategy and Distribution Channel Management. He has expertise in handling the renowned simulations such as Markstrat and The Beer Game over a decade. He is the fifth author of the famous text book Marketing Channels by Coughlan, Anderson, Stern and El-Ansary. He has many publications to his credit, including research articles in peer-reviewed journals and case analyses in Vikalpa of IIMA. He has a strong conviction that management-research should focus more on relevance to practice than on glorified rigour of methodology.

A doctorate in Management, Dr. Natarajan has 30 years of work experience of which 15 years were in the industry in Sales, Distribution and Marketing, and 15 years in academics in TAPMI and IIM-Indore.

Dr. Natarajan holds PGDRM from IRMA and MA in Economics from JNU New Delhi. He has won many awards in Case writing, in Innovation in Curriculum and Business School Leadership.

While a true nationalist, Dr. Natarajan believes global citizenship to be the order of future. He advocates co-operation in the place of competition to maximize social wealth and collective good.

Session 2: Saturday, January 3, 2015, 2:00-2:40

Session Chair:

Speaker: Sanal Kumar Velayudhan

IIM, Kozhikode

**Accelerating Acceptance of Innovations and Inventing as Management Challenges in
Uncertain Environment**

The changes in an organization's environment impacts performance but some organizations have managed to not only be resilient to the changes in the external environment but managed to identify opportunities in the changing environment that enabled them to grow their business. Examining the approach used by some of these organizations reveal an effort to develop an understanding of the market needs and to creatively use technology or to invent solutions that meet the needs. These organizations have developed capabilities to not only sense needs but to reach out to potential consumers and educate them on innovative offerings tailored to meet their needs. The lessons from the approach used by these organizations suggest that the managers be proactive in developing methods relevant to their business context that would enable them to sense market opportunities, create innovative offerings to meet the needs and reach out and educate on their offerings than get overwhelmed by the uncertainty in the environment.

Sanal Kumar Velayudhan a Fellow of IIM (Ahmedabad) and Professor at IIMK started his career in 1977 as Faculty Member in the Department of Business Management, Osmania University. Worked in Industry for about eight years and then with XLRI, Jamshedpur, Centre for Management Development, Thiruvananthapuram, and ASCI before joining IIMK. He was also the Dean at IIMK.

He has handled consultancy assignments in marketing for Central and State level Public Sector Units, Public Sector Banks and also in the Cooperative Sector. Assignments were in the areas of product line decisions, product positioning, customer satisfaction and service quality studies, evaluation of new service-product, communication and diffusion of products and strategic marketing.

Published papers in the areas of rural marketing, brand management, small business marketing and strategy. Recent publications include those in Journal of Small Business Economics, Asian Case Research Journal, Energy Policy, International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management, and Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics. He has a book on Rural Marketing from Sage. Ivey publishing has hosted a couple of his case studies.