



Connecting Thinkers...

Editors' Message



Dear Thinkers,

Teachers hold a special place in our lives and memories. Looking back to school, we recall teachers to be very similar- most of them were strict in completing the syllabus, there was a lot of pressure on completing our work copies on time, of attaining marks above a certain level in the exams etc. Perhaps this was all a result of the strict timeline that the school structure was usually built on- a set content to deliver, a set methodology for delivery, to achieve a pre-defined learning outcome. The responsibility of achieving the outcome lay more on the teachers than students directly.

College and university life saw a leniency in terms of completing the syllabi, which perhaps gave way to a different style of teaching adopted by the teachers. The goal of passing exams and completing assignments and presentations was set here as well, but the pathways for achievement were not pre-defined. The teachers appeared less rigid in their teaching and more open to innovative ways to achieving the goals. However, the responsibility of achieving the outcome now seemed to shift to students, more than the teachers.

The teaching-learning paradigm undergoes a shift in research. The nomenclature of a teacher changes to a 'guide' or an 'advisor', and so does the nature and expectation of work. The student also is addressed as a scholar in the said field. While the guide is equipped with subject matter knowledge and research tools to help scholars in their research journey, she is as much a traveller in that journey as they are. They both learn together. Learning through the scholars' journeys make the guides richer in experience and helps them in re-packaging their expertise for the future scholars.

Indian philosophy places the 'Guru' as an idol who should be looked up to and emulated in all the ways of life. While we have come a long way from the Gurukul system and the teacher-student relations have undergone a lot of change, the responsibilities of teaching and providing knowledge still remain paramount. In research we realize that our guides may not be experts in the subject that we want to research on, but we always look to them for direction. We look to them for suggestions for taking things forward when we hit a roadblock; we look to them to ratify each decision we make during research; and though the ultimate degree earned is ours, it is with their supervision, guidance and assistance that we complete the process.

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## GUIDE'S COLUMN

### Expanding the Boundaries of Research in Management

Research by definition is a process of arriving at the hidden patterns and Management Research cannot be an exception for this. Management as a discipline is constrained by its necessity to operate in the sphere defined by human mind and human activities. Thus, the rapid changes happening across the world have been influencing the landscape of management research. Research in management is investigating a research problem or a research question is a function of frame of reference and the extent of time horizon which is being considered during the investigation. For the research to be meaningful, it needs to take into account the changes happening in different fronts. Therefore, the dimensions of management research are shaped by the changes happening in the environment. Some of the prominent shifts in management research are delineated below.

**Inter-dependency:** Management Discipline by its very nature is interdisciplinary wherein perspectives from different disciplines such as Economics and Psychology are combined together. The changing resource and population dynamics across the world are making situations more complex and increasingly interdependent. This calls for reframing the problem considering the influences of variables belonging to different disciplines. Thus, the approach of research is shifting from interdisciplinary to multidisciplinary. In several emerging complex situations such as prolonged recession, the research dimensions need to adopt “Transdisciplinary Approach” by going beyond all the discipline-specific approaches.

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**Conceptual Research:** Management Research is constantly affected by the environment around, and therefore, the earlier concepts which were basically borrowed from army vocabulary, such as the concept of the term “Strategic” is undergoing changes to be more inclusive. Thus, movement of conceptual research is towards “de-complicating” the concepts.

**Trends Research:** The research focus is shifting from narrow perspectives of single or limited phenomenological research such as Sales Forecasting to a long-term based perspective of Demand Forecasting, Demand Management by adopting the sophisticated tools and using technology. The focus here is to do meta-analysis to arrive at the “hidden certainty patterns” in a seemingly “uncertain patterns” such as voter turnouts during general elections.

**Linking with future:** As the shelf-life of solutions provided by management research is decreasing due to business uncertainties, there is a shift to consider and include more and more elements which are likely to emerge.

**Historical Research:** As the mortality rate of organizations is increasing over the years, there is need to learn from the history. This has necessitated the increasing application of concepts of historical research in arriving at solutions to managerial problems.

**Qualitative Research:** Due to rapid changes, the focus is to include more and more concepts of Qualitative Research such as First Person Research and Projective Techniques in order to predict the likely changes and/or likely impacts.

Thus the emerging dimensions in management research aim at capturing the hidden pattern in an increasingly uncertain and interdependent world. Further, these dimensions are expanding their horizon from being organization-specific to industry and society specific. In addition all these dimensions aim to ensure the sustainability of human race on the planet.

**Dr. Jitendra Kumar Mishra and Dr. Arun B. K.**

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## *Challenges of Primary Data Collection: Agony and Amusement of Research*

For years, research in India has been undermined beyond belief and some episodes helped me uncover this reality. I embarked upon my research journey for primary data collection in early 2016 and have encountered curious situations. While some left me amused, others shocked and some more made me laugh. After choosing academicians as my target audience, visiting colleges became the norm of the day. Mostly people greeted me warmly to understand the purpose of my visit and often listened with interest as I spoke about the topic. In some cases, people took the interest to enquire further about the topic and asked me how and why the said title is chosen.

*“If I have to fill up the questionnaire, buy me at least a cup of tea!”* After responding to my data collection tool and learning that I have touched a 100 completed responses, one person asked “So, will you double the data?” leaving me shocked! In another case, “I’m too busy, tell me where to sign, the rest you may fill up yourself” or “I’ll fill all the personal details, can you do the rest?” while one more said, “If I have to fill up the questionnaire, buy me at least a cup of tea!” I quietly left.

An elderly lady, upon learning that I’m a doctoral student said, “Ma’am, you are pursuing Ph.D.? Please be seated... Would you like a cup of tea?” After learning the title of my study and that she was requested to be the respondent, she gently brushed aside the papers in front of her and said “I’ll first complete responding to the questionnaire and resume my work after that”. I had a thankful smile and left with encouragement!

In another institution, the principal not only permitted the request, but called up the HOD and got a printout of the names of the faculty members for my reference and asked the HOD to help me with the same. All in all, the varied experiences left me with the hope that academic research is getting better if one chooses to keep it so and PhD, when taken sincerely is the grooming ground to uncover realities and witness the play of concepts.

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## *Role of Various Evolutionary Algorithms for VLSI Floorplanning*

Floor planning is a vital step for physical design of VLSI chip, because it adopts the magnitude, output, performance, and dependability of VLSI chip to produce a good layout. For a predefined set of circuit parts or modules and a net list indicating interconnections between the modules, the objective of a VLSI circuit floor planning is to realize a floorplan for the modules such that the space of the floorplan is diminished. Interconnections between units should likewise be least under the constraint that no modules should overlap. This is the major

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issue that exists in the geometrical relation between modules of floor planning. The nature of floor plan and the issue of putting them to their required directions are influenced by representation. The strategy for floor planning can be isolated into two classes.

**a.Slicing floorplans:** This can be found by individually cutting the floorplan flat or straight up..

**b.Non-Slicing floorplans:** Here we utilize an horizontal constraint graph (HCG) and vertical constraint graph (VCG) to display non-cutting issue.

In VLSI design flow floor planning is a NP-difficult issue. Heuristic Methods like simulated annealing (SA), genetic algorithms, and particle swarm optimization, differential evolution, human social behavior etc. are broadly utilized and proficient methodology since it investigates the arrangement in search space. By observing various physical designs for VLSI floor planning using several evolutionary algorithms and evaluating common traits of the superior contributions, we can solve floorplanning problems.

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## *A Transition in Pursuit of Excellence*

My one-and-a-half-decade long industry tenure as a Marketing and Communications professional provided me ample opportunities to be part of the campus selection process and mentoring program of recruits. Active involvement in selection and orientation process gave me a pseudo sense of “being in control”, since the quality of human resources is the *numerouno* factor influencing business outcomes in the advertising world. While recruits came across with euphoric energy to perform, the hard hitting reality was that they were uninitiated to the realities of the business world. Delving deeper into this disturbing phenomena pointed towards the burgeoning gap between business education curriculum and industry requirements. Given the context, four years ago, I made a conscious choice to be part of the solution rather than being overwhelmed by the problem, and embraced teaching.

I took up the research program at Jain University exactly coinciding with my transition into teaching. It’s been a wonderful 4 years of immersing myself into the realities of research and I look forward to shortly realise my ‘thesis submission’ dream. Dr. Shastri and his committed team have been a guiding beacon for aspiring researchers like me to stay committed to my research journey despite distractions.

*The rigour of the research program has inspired me to keep the churn-button on until I get the very best and never to settle for sub-optimal results*

At a personal level, the rigour of the research program has inspired me to keep the churn-button on until I get the very best and never to settle for sub-optimal results. At a professional level, I continue consulting with quite a few brands and my research orientation seems to make a palpable difference in the way I approach business problems. In short, the realisation that has dawned on me most is that a keen researcher is capable of bringing in so much relevance to business realities only if we cease to look at business and research in absolute silos, this indeed marks a milestone in my pursuit of excellence!

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## *Connecting Researchers and Publishing*

As a part of the research community we all look forward to getting articles published in good referred journals. I thought of sharing tips gathered on my research journey that helped in publishing my work.

Usually, established journals follow a peer review (either single/double blind or open) process. Peer review acts as a filter to help publishers ensure that only original, significant and good research works get published. While, for the author it helps in improvising the quality of the article submitted based the reviewers’ suggestions.

*Overview of the peer review:* Once receipt of the article is acknowledged by the Journal, the editor takes the initial decision to accept or reject it. If the editor decides to go ahead with the review then the paper is assigned to reviewers (generally experts in the related field). This process may take about 3-4 months depending upon how fast reviewers respond to the editor’s request. After reviewing the article they will convey their decision whether to reject or revise (minor/moderate/major revisions) or accept it. Accordingly, a notification is sent to the author. In case of revision, the author will need to resubmit the article after duly considering the suggested modifications. This process will continue till the article/paper is finally accepted by the editor.

*The author must ensure that the article meets the objective and scope of the journal, content is well organized and presented, free from grammatical errors and with adequate up-to-date referencing*

Prior to submission, the author must ensure that the article meets the objective and scope of the journal, content is well organized and presented, free from grammatical errors and with adequate up-to-date referencing. A big no-no is plagiarism, which includes buying, stealing, or borrowing a paper, hiring someone to write ones paper and copying large portions of text from any source without quotation marks or proper citation.

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## Synthesis and Characterisation of PANi Based Nanocomposites

Nanocomposites of conducting polyaniline with Silver, ZnS:Mn and ZnS:Ag have been synthesized. The weight percentage of silver varied from 3% to 25% whereas ZnS:Mn and ZnS:Ag weight percentage varied from 1 to 28%. The formation of composites was assessed by X-Ray Diffraction (XRD), Field Emission Scanning Electron Microscope (FESEM) and UV-Vis spectroscopy. Optical, thermal and electrical characteristic were assessed by Photoluminescence, DSC and DC conductivity studies.

*It was observed that crystallinity, thermal stability and electrical conductivity of PANi were improved*

It was observed that crystallinity, thermal stability and electrical conductivity of PANi were improved. The morphology of PANi has changed as the concentration of Ag, ZnS:Mn and ZnS:Ag is increased. It was also observed that the electrical conductivity was dependent on temperature.

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## Lessons from My Research Journey

A Ph.D. is akin to life's spiritual journey. At the outset, we think we know a little about something. As we proceed, we realize that we know almost nothing. Through the journey, we learn a number of little lessons. I would like to share some of my learnings as I tread on the path of research, in the hope that some other enthusiastic researchers might benefit.

- It is imperative that the topic chosen is something one is passionate about. The degree of difficulty does not matter, the passion propels us through!
- The Guide is pivotal to Ph.D. research. Engage in fruitful discussions with your guide. As they say, never hide anything from two people- the Doctor and the Lawyer. Add a third to that list- your guide.
- Put down your thoughts in writing. Our ideas might seem insignificant today, but we may find that they are worth revisiting and exploring at a later stage.
- Discuss your subject with experts from related fields. Before that, be advised by your guide about what may not be relevant during the discussion and what may be vital for it. Such discussions help generate viewpoints and counter-viewpoints, thereby broadening the horizon of the research.
- Attend conferences in your subject area. Talking to other students usually helps boost confidence.
- Writing articles is a quick way to enhance your knowledge about particular topics.
- A handy take-off tip from my guide- Always carry a notebook, pen, camera and voice recorder in your bag.

*Writing articles is a quick way to enhance your knowledge about particular topics*

Bon voyage!

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## In Conversation with the Experts



*In this section we bring you an interview with an eminent researcher. This month's expert is Prof. R.S. Deshpande. Prof. Deshpande is one of India's leading Agricultural Economists and was the former Director of Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore. His specialisations include, Agricultural Development Policy, Watershed Development, Political Economy of Agrarian Changes, WTO - Agriculture & Trade, Rural Policy and Poverty, Economics of Drought-prone Areas and Rain-fed Regions, Economics of Irrigation, Economics of Caste, Policy Analysis and Applied Econometrics. Prof. Deshpande is a recipient of PNASF Gold Medal for his contributions to Agricultural Policy and Sir M Visvesvaraya Global Leadership Award in Karnataka for Excellence in Education. He was the sole architect of Karnataka's Agricultural Policy 2006 and Chairperson of Mission Group on Agriculture and Rural Development of Govt of Karnataka. Presently, Dr. Deshpande is also a member of the Jain University Board of Management.*

### ***You are a well-known social scientist who began his academic career in the world of Pure Science. Why did you make that transition from Pure Science to Social Science?***

As a school student, I liked Science as a subject and secured distinction in Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics during matriculation. I had a lot of interest in experimentation and loved the logic of mathematics. At the same time, I was also socially very active and had many questions that remained unanswered due to the orthodox family I came from. As soon as I got into College, I started seeking answers to many of these intricate social questions that bothered me all through. These included emergence of Caste, discrimination, role of religion, *Jati* System, differences in levels of living and many more. Soon I became a strong student activist participating in activism and had a very strong influence of Marxian ideology through a few teachers. Being a voracious reader of books of all sorts, I was always ahead of my peers. During my first year of degree, I was selected in the Officers' Training Unit', (a process of getting into Indian Army through NCC). In this scheme, at the end of graduation, I was to be commissioned after completing the training at Indian Military Academy, Dehradun. But the pulls towards my social moorings, did not approve of that. I chose to drop out of the regular Army Commission. That was a major turning point in my life. This was not taken very lightly by my brother who did not take time to show me the door and I was on the roads, staying with a friend of mine. This guy was an auto rickshaw driver and a strong pillar of our 'Auto Rickshaw Union'. My instructor in the OTU, a Major of army, wrote a letter of recommendation to the Vice Chancellor to provide me late admission to any post-graduation course, even though all the admissions were totally closed by that time. I wanted to join Physics, but was given admission letters only for Mathematics, Statistics or Economics. The Vice Chancellor called me and said he leaves the choice to me. Clutching the letters in hand, I was walking towards the Department of Statistics, but on the way I met a friend, who insisted that I join Economics with him. He took me to attend the class on Theory of Value and I liked the subject. Economics had some scope to read further on Marxian thought and left more time for me to undertake other social activities. These included student movements, drama, social debates and other such involved activities. Economics also provided me the understanding of the society and provided a chance to discuss with the other social scientists. We had a discussion group, a drama troupe and activism was at the peak during those days. I stayed put in economics despite difficulties of staying at home and the other basic necessities. My liking of science and mathematics gave me a solid footing in economics and social sciences.

### ***Did your Pure Science background help you as an Economist?***

Yes, science provides a kind of logical platform for thinking. This logical platform can be a good help in understanding the nuances of the society, but sometimes a person with science background can be very dogmatic and non-negotiating. In fact most of the top-level economists in the world had science background and training in mathematics. Training in science without the dogmatism and stiffness of superiority gives a great chance of excelling in social sciences. Ours was the first batch of science students then admitted to economics and all six of us had done very well in our careers

### ***Please share with us a memorable research experience from the early years of your research career?***

I had chosen for my PhD a very technical area of "Measurement of Uncertainty in Agriculture", that was a tough ground to crack. I had taken to analyze the rainfall data of about 75 years for all the districts of Maharashtra, for all the months and each district had about 5-9 rain gauge stations. This was a huge data churning task even by today's standards. With the available computing facilities during early seventies it almost seemed impossible. Those days the best computing facility available was an electrical calculator or a manual 'Facit' machine. There were only two IBM computers in Bangalore, one at the Indian Institute of Science and other at the Bureau of Economics and Statistics. IISC computer was IBM 360/44 with the best capabilities and far short of memory compared to a good mobile phone today. The larger 360 models could have up to 8 MB of main memory. Memory was counted in KB or MB and the word GB was not there even in the vocabulary of even good scientists. The challenge was to get my huge data processed at IISC and help came from a friend of mine Dr. Akhtar Shaikh, who was in the Department of Physics in IISC and later rose to occupy DrRaja Ramanna Fellow at BARC, Mumbai. Dr Shaikh helped me to understand the programming language and also extended helping hand in processing. A lot of data churning and time series analysis was done to understand the changes in rainfall pattern and the cyclical behaviour, if any. At the end of all that rainfall series of all the districts of Maharashtra turned out as "White Noise". In the process I learnt programming languages and also started teaching Fortran IV and Fortran X. That was the critical phase in my research career.

***What has been your approach towards your research students, as a doctoral supervisor?***

My students are very dear to me, they are in all respects members of my family. Initially, they are very scared of me but soon understand how to deal with my moods and temper. I have had 11 of my own PhD students, who were registered under my supervision and completed their PhD. Besides, I mentored 17 PhD students to complete their PhD. My students form a huge extended family and we get together on some occasions. They give me totally unadulterated love, respect and at the same time do not hesitate to make severe comments on me. A few of my students got my help to settle as also conduct their marriages. They always seek protection from my wife, if I get angry with them for small things. My house is almost occupied by them on the day of some celebrations.

***As one of India's leading Agricultural Economists, what are your reflections on the current state of Indian Agriculture?***

Proverbially, agriculture sector is as usual stagnated at the cross-roads for more than six decades. The definitions of this cross-roads change but the sector has stayed put at that place. Mid-sixties it was food shortage, followed by the droughts of early seventies and the dense poverty. The cross-road changed to deceleration of growth in early eighties to lead to income stagnation in nineties. The opening of the World Market without adequate preparation in the sector brought in new challenges to negotiate. During all these decades, farmer as a group suffered a slow but sure discrimination in getting at appropriate policies from the State. Every time there was a problem in the farm sector the State responded with a few new schemes as patchworks that helped to reduce the severity of the problem but did not root it out. As a result the distress in the farm sector was escalating and farmers were confronted with acute economic stress. The livelihood system of the farmer was changing due to intensity of the cost of cultivation and shrinking net profits. During last two decades we lost 50 lakh cultivators who became agricultural or urban laborers. These disappearing cultivators were soon replaced by the white collared absentee landlords, who did not cultivate the land but owned it. The State policies were squarely responsible for the situation that is now prevailing in the country.

The decade of nineties saw a significant change in the field of agriculture. Market fundamentalism began slowly but steadily covering all the sectors of agriculture albeit without getting into the fundamental market reforms. The ill-equipped farmer was pulled in by these new encounters. The distress in the farm sector was witnessed and erupted for more than five times in the six decades (1966-68; 1972-74; 1979-80; 1987-88; 1999-2000; 2007-09). The policies framed were again ineffective. It is no secret that the subsidies going to the agricultural sector (both Direct and Indirect) are inefficient and a huge share of that goes directly to the non-agricultural sectors. With the increased number of schemes and the strong state interventions, a farmer today is more State dependent. We have done very little towards building a good and effective policy frame and that is the need today.

***The best preparation for tomorrow is doing your best today  
– H. Jackson Brown, Jr.***

***Team Thinklet***

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