XTRAVAGATE
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A fortnightly newsletter from the
Department of Management Studies,
National Institute of Technology Trichy

“Spread love everywhere you go. Let no one ever come to you without leaving happier...”
- Mother Teresa

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Avance 2016—HR Conclave of DoMS NIT Trichy

Managing machine is taught, managing people is learnt.

Bearing this in mind, Department of Management Studies brought in eminent personalities from distinguished backgrounds to enlighten and rephrase the idea of Human Resource Management.

The two-day conclave on 10th and 11th of September, 2016 had the visionaries from IBM, HDFC, Caterpillar, Capegemini, Freshdesk, Nagarjuna Oil Corporation Limited and ZOHO, sharing their perspective on people and their efficient utilization.

DAY 1

The first day started off with Mr. K. Y. Ravikumar, General Manager-HR of Nagarjuna Oil Corporation Limited, addressing on ‘Performance Management of Employees’. Beginning with the basic definition of productivity, the interaction moved on to the well-known Jung’s theory, human dynamics, the realization of human potential and the possibilities of performance measurement which in turn resulting in performance rating. Importance of rating and feedback was highlighted to be the most significant part of performance management. Adding up to it, he emphasized the students to set clear goals so as to have a distinct vision on their career path.

The programme moved on to the next session with Mr. Rajendran Dandapani, Director of Engineering of ZOHO Corporation on ‘HR perspective of ZOHO Corp’. The primary segment of HR, recruitment, was the topic of discussion initially. Comparative discussion over the past and present way of recruitment with change in demand over the skillset of employees was pursued then. Bringing innovation into reality being the primary motto of ZOHO Corp., the organization has opened up ZOHO University empowering students with the required skills and turning them out to be employable graduates in the future. The distinct work culture and employee centred organizational structure drove student’s interest towards the company, was evident from the interactive session.

The session was followed by Mr. Anupam Bharteeya, Vice President of Insights and Data in Capegemini. Mr. Bharteeya elucidated on ‘Analytics and its influence in HR domain’. He skilfully demonstrated how analytics could actually help in people management with various qualitative and quantitative entities of employees that can be put into limelight with numerical data. He insisted on recording of every single data that could actually help in instances of requirement.

Moving on to the final session of day 1 with Ms. Lavanya, Strategic HR Manager at Caterpillar Inc., spoke on ‘Inclusion and Diversity’. With crisp and clear thoughts on the mandatories of diversification, she put forth the advantage of diversified people over production and innovation. Strong condemnation on biasing was displayed with backing facts to not practise it. Controversial topics such as ‘Women leaders’ and ‘Discrimination in recruitment of employees based on gender’ were put into healthy discussion and that helped the students reveal and realize the truth behind

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that....“

- Martin Luther King Jr
DAY 2

Having got a strong hold of the same enthusiasm, 2nd day of the conclave began with Mr. Venkatesh Kanna, Program Director of IBM discussing on ‘Future of work and Workplace’. Students popped up with forecast on the nature of work, type of employees and the alteration of systems taking the discussion to a whole new level of imagination. Probability of dominance of robots over human workforce and its threatening effects were put into analysis. Mr. Kanna is a 1993 alumnus of DoMS NIT Trichy.

Taking the crust of the agenda of conclave, Mr. Sriram Mohan, Ex - Vice-President, HDFC Standard life Insurance, gave his insights on ‘People Management’. Value of each and every employee and their contribution for the company, was dealt in the discussion on a very close approach. Motivational factors, needs of the employee, obtaining and assigning of work, delegation of work in the banking sector was spoken far across the dais.

The finale of the conclave came with a session from Mr. Senthil K, Leadership Head, Freshdesk. Replacement of performance meetings with feedback meetings, weekly feedback system, employee friendly environment, goal oriented organizational systems were noted to be the key features of rapid success of the start-up. He prescribed valid points on hurdles faced in forming a startup, financing it and successful operation of it.

We, the students of DoMS found the perceptions of every speaker to be strongly appealing and breaking the paradigm of orientation of the Human Resource Management ideology. Hoping for much more healthy discussions with the inputs from corporates.

We take privilege in thanking the HOD, staff, co-ordinators and the corporate icons who readily accepted our invitation and made the event a grand success.
HumaNITTy—A Daan Utsav Initiative of NIT Trichy

“Nothing can be bigger than the Joy of Giving. Let us participate in the Joy of Giving Week and help the needy”

- Prime Minister

With HumaNITTy’16, NIT Trichy has embarked on its fifth edition of Daan Utsav – India’s festival of philanthropy. Since 2009, in India, this weeklong festival from 2nd - 8th of Oct is celebrated as ‘the Joy of Giving Week’. Giving it an Indian touch, it was renamed as ‘Daan Utsav’ in 2013. HumaNITTy is NIT Trichy’s initiative to celebrate the same.

Every year HumaNITTy carries out various events, many of which are done in association with Livia Polymers, Trichy, which incidentally is an NIT alumni owned venture. The list of events includes some flagship events which are carried out every year. The flagship events would include Sarathy Divas, Gala for Kids, Wish Tree.

Sarathy Diwas: The event is aimed at acknowledging the service done throughout the year by the bus drivers and conductors. A kit containing biscuit packet, water bottle, juice/soda, towel, soap, a chocolate, a pen and notepad is distributed to the drivers/conductors who ply buses through NIT Trichy. Every year, over 200 kits are distributed to more than 100 bus drivers and 100 bus conductors. Surprised by the display of gratitude, they drive off with a broad smile on their faces.

“If you’re walking down the right path and you’re willing to keep walking, eventually you’ll make progress...”

- Barack Obama
**Gala for Kids:** The MOST AWAITED event wherein we get kids from various Ashrams in and around Trichy and conduct games and other events for them. Kids with bunch of talents make the day happen. The kids are brought to NIT Trichy’s campus and spend their entire day at the campus. Breakfast, lunch and snacks and transportation for these kids are arranged by the volunteers. We make a crazy mix, from Pre-KG to Faculty. Various activities/competitions are organized for the kids. Magic show, Elocution, Rangoli, Music, Dance and Face Painting are few to be named among various others. The day concludes with the prize distribution for all the winners and participants.

**Wish Tree:** The wish tree is the most iconic attraction of HumaNITTy every year. Hand made from chart paper, each leaf of this tree carries a small wish from an orphan kid. It is whelming to see wishes asking for a bangle, a pen, a crayon box, a compass and many such things which we take for granted. The wish trees are put on display in public places, and people come forward to fulfil them. The givers are also asked to write a small inspirational note to the kid to encourage him in his life. This initiative is aimed at encouraging the budding dreams of the kids and also at the same time to let the public relish the joy of fulfilling a kid’s wish.

**Sharing, Caring:** The volunteers visit various old-age homes, orphanages, home for the blind, home for the mentally challenged and also home for physically challenged. These orphanages/homes have some requirements like groceries, clothes, sanitation, etc., which are addressed by the volunteers during their visit to these places. The significant aspect of this initiative is the personal time that each volunteer gets to spend with these inmates. Factors such as age, language or religion hold no bars when it comes to the amount of love, care and affection that is shared between the volunteers and inmates. Both the groups entertain each other with singing, dancing and emotionally inspiring talks. Most of the times, it’s not the materialistic things which matter. At the end of the day, the inmates just want to spend some time with someone who would give them some individual time, attention and would hold their hands to share a few words, and that’s all that matters.
Other initiatives like augmenting of learning aids at various schools, sprucing up the infrastructure in schools and orphanages are also undertaken as a part of HumaNITTy. These include providing benches to the classrooms, painting the blackboards/benches, setting up libraries, construction of washrooms, setting up water tanks, repair and maintenance of electrical and plumbing facilities which are usually not addressed at micro/macro levels. As an initiative to promote interest in science and technology among students, a **Planetarium Visit** has been arranged for 300 students.

**Flash Mob:** As a move directed towards creating awareness about the Joy of Giving and for increasing the number of givers, this year, the HumaNITTy Volunteers adopted a novel method of doing a flash mob in collaboration with two major malls in the city viz. Femina Shopping Mall, near Junction and Femina Hyper Mall near Chatram. The volunteers gave surprise dance performances to the cheering crowd. The flash mob was received well by the public.

This year, HumaNITTy is looking to raise the bar even further, with **22 events** touching more than **3000 students**, **400 kids of orphanages**, **40 mentally challenged kids**, **300+ visually challenged people** and a lot more special people who play a significant role in our everyday life.

- Jai Hind
Aim for the Apple of Discord

‘The age of start-ups’ as we may call it, the past few years has seen the rise of several start-ups. Considering the fact that Indian start-ups in Q1 2016 alone, has raised a staggering amount of 1.4 billion across 307 deals, logically, it should give us a picture that we are about to witness a drastic change ameliorating the world population’s living standards. But is that how we see the future? With issues like Global warming, Poverty, corruption, terrorism and a lot more devouring every bit of the world peace that’s left, the more we think about the future, the more we do not want to see it. ‘The age of start-ups’ still hasn’t given us the amount hope that is necessary, simply because we’re not solving the right problems. If we list out the problems to be solved in an Eisenhower matrix and look at what is being solved by current start-ups, we will see that they are concentrating more on the ‘Not Urgent, Not Important’ category. This is because they often start by pondering over questions like ‘How do I get my company to be the next Uber of X?’ or ‘How do I begin with yet another delivery venture?’ and so on.

Instead, if the entrepreneurs pause and think ‘What is going to happen if I don’t solve this problem’, we can set the upcoming businesses in the right track.

But is it really feasible to set up a business that would solve problems as huge as Poverty or Global Warming? Yes. Slowly, but surely! It is not necessary that one needs an NGO to solve a societal issue. Great minds with great business models do exist, filling a tiny portion of the ‘Important, Urgent’ category of Eisenhower matrix. Take for example, ‘Infinite Engineers’, a start-up solving a national level issue i.e., the issue of India not being able to produce skilled graduates.

When Mr Jaikanth, one of the co-founders of the start-up, was asked about the business model, he said ‘We visited more than 150 schools in India and to understand the problems and challenges faced by schools and teachers in implementing experiential learning. After 12 months of research and development, we launch The Hands-on Classroom Activity Box – A portable and Affordable activity based science learning kit mapped to the school curriculum. We made a mini laboratory kit for each class student which consists of DIY materials to build and learn more than 30 concepts practically. Currently, the kit is designed for class 6 to 10 (Age 10 to 15) aligned with CBSE & State Board Curriculum.

In Schools, we provide Dexter Boxes for individual students and teachers. We provide support for teachers in building the projects and they teach science concepts practically to students in their regular school hours. And students learn by building the same.

In just 11 months of the launch we sold more than 6000 Kits and we have collaborated with 320 schools in Tamil Nadu.

At present, we have initiated “The Hands-on Classroom” in 320 schools across Tamil Nadu. We are planning to launch the kit into a retail market as well. So parents can easily buy class wise boxes for their kids. We have plans to collaborate with CSR initiatives by corporate companies to reach underprivileged students.

They are solving the problem with the education system by digging deep into the roots of it in an attempt to set things right at the source itself. There are start-ups with similar motives of solving issues that really need attention, such as Protoprint which is reducing the level of plastic waste by recycling them to be put to use for making a 3D printing filament, Cyclicla which improves efficiency in the development of better and safer drugs, nutraceuticals ingredients and personal care products through a data integration platform that simulates the interaction of compounds and so on.

Now the concern is that, though these kinds of start-ups do exist, they’re not enough in number. So this leads to another subject of discussion which is, ‘What sort of business models do we have to think of to solve the problem of motivating such ventures?’

‘Do what you can, with what you have, where you are...’

- Theodore Roosevelt
**XTRAVAGATE**

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**Importance of Monsoon Prediction for Indian Economy**

India, principally an agriculture based economy, is largely reliant on the monsoon. The agriculture sector is the mainstay of the Indian economy, thus monsoon should be considered as the prop of the agriculture. The livelihood of over 50 percent of the India’s population depends on monsoons. Accurate prediction of the monsoons, at least a season advance, is crucial for the countries like India.

Agriculture is a dominant sector of Indian economy both in the terms of gross domestic product (GDP) and also as a source of employment for millions of people across the country. Agriculture comprises 16% of GDP and 10% of export earnings. 70% of rural ménages depend on agriculture for principal means of living.

In the last 40 years India suffered from five severe droughts. 1972 was the worst with India seeing a rainfall shortage of 24%. 1979, 1987 and 2002 experienced a rainfall deficit of 19% each. And 2009 was one of the worst years in recent reminiscence of drought with a rainfall deficiency of 22-23%. All together these five severe droughts of India have pulled back GDP growth by 2.10%. These droughts also reduced agriculture and food production by 5% and 10.3% successively.

Rainfall deficit affects Indian economy because most of the crops grown in India depend on the monsoon rainfall for water. When the monsoon is less than regular, farmers grow less crops. In return they earn less, and it also means there is less food. When the demand of food is more than the supply, it becomes costly. Price of rice, wheat and other items go up. So monsoon rains are critical for agricultural productivity, which in turn impact overall economic growth. So forecasting the monsoon very initially helps in taking the preventive measures and for stable economic growth.

Government of India is investing crores of money for better prediction of monsoons. Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) works for prediction of Monsoons and provides meteorological statistics for agriculture. Along with Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) other organizations like Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) Pune, Skymet a private agency also works in prediction of monsoons. IITM in collaboration with International centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) Italy organises training activity every year for young scientists from developing countries in Asia for development of prediction of Asian monsoons. Monsoon is not only important for India but many Asian countries essentially depend on it. Indian economy asymmetrically impacts the economic growth of many countries as India is the third largest economy in Asia.

Forecasting is considered very important for the purposes of the planning and making preparations for contingency and also to create better conditions for farmers and the families depend on agriculture as their livelihood and thus it helps in growth of Indian economy. Hence, investment in sophisticated technologies to predict monsoons is the best way to counter these rainfall deficit side effects on Indian economy.

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*“We are lack never in lack of money. We lack of people with dreams, who can die for the dreams....”*  
- Jack Ma
Railway Budget Merging—Boon or Bane for Indian Future

The 92-year-old legacy of presenting a separate railway budget ahead of General budget has come to an end, as the Modi led government has merged it and would be presenting it in general budget from the financial year 2017-18. Indian Railways, the backbone of Indian transport system, which carries almost 95% of the total population who are travelling in the country in a year.

Looking into the reasons for this merging process, the main reason stated was to bring in the private investments which in turn brings modernization and improvement of the standards of the service. This is because allocating a separate budget openly declares that its operation ratio will be more than 1 i.e. its expenses are more than its earnings, which is not a good advertisement for an organisation who is looking for foreign investments for the introduction of bullet trains and high speed rails. Another reason being the misuse of budget which was being used for political purposes and Indian railways have failed in controlling the fare of the tickets and also in delivering the productivity. Also, the merger will free the organisation from paying dividends annually.

As every decision will have two sides, there are few disadvantages due to this merger. Some of them are, Indian railways has been running successfully with constant growth although the growth is not that significant. It has a revenue of $23 Billion and a net profit of $1.2 Billion. These are quite good numbers, as many companies in the Fortune 500 list don’t have these figures i.e. if Indian railways is privatised, it will be the 8th Indian company to be in the Fortune 500 list which notably has only 4 other railways. So, why such a hurry to bury its budget? As this is the only ministry which spends and earns while others only earn. The other reason for merging was budget facing populism and political pressures but this was done around the 1980s, after which it wasn’t that effective. More over the country has seen many railway ministers who were successful in contributing for tremendous growth in railways. The recent example being Suresh Prabhu, who is currently serving as Railway minister was able to generate a profit of 10% of the net revenue. Overall the effects of merging the railway budget into general budget will be seen as this process becomes at least 2-3 years old.

“Everyone has a purpose in life … a unique gift or special talent to give to others. And where we blend this unique talent with service to others, we experience the ecstasy and exultation of our own spirit, which is the ultimate goal of goals …”

- Deepak Chopra
Random Thoughts About Life

As I contemplate on a topic to write about, what first comes to my mind is the one thing which always fascinates me – Life.

So please fasten your seat belts and enjoy the wild ride.

‘A little knowledge is always dangerous’ - That’s a saying. But I have a different take on that. I believe that some knowledge/thing is always better than no knowledge/nothing. I will explain this with two real-life experiences.

Story 1: During my under graduate years, we once had a session conducted by Suresh, an HR from Infosys. He shared with us his experience of his visit to North India. Being a Tamil guy, he had a limited arsenal of Hindi Vocabulary. One day he went on a team outing with his north Indian colleagues. One of his sportive North Indian friend dared him to order chicken in Hindi. Suresh was stumped. But he remembered the Hindi word for egg – Unde (Courtesy our ONGC hindi advertisement – ‘Sunday ho ya Monday roj kavo unde’). So he got an idea and said this to waiter – ‘Bhaiya dho unde ka mathaji lao (Brother bring two mothers of egg)’.

Story 2: When I was in my seventh grade, I had the opportunity to attend swimming classes on the summer and I was doing okay. I never entered the swimming pool again after that, until very recently I happened to visit Tiruchendur and entered the pool again, the only difference being, it was not a pool exactly – it was the sea. A beautiful sea temple is situated at the seashore of Tiruchendur. It was in the morning and I was tempted to enter the sea. On the insistence of an acquaintance, I entered the water and it was all fun until I entered the deepest part of it. I started gasping and struggling to hold my ground. I tried a lot but could only scratch the seabed with my toe. Hence as a final resort, I started swimming towards the seashore. I had to swim hard for around 25 seconds and at last reached the shore. This was one of the most amazing experiences of my lifetime. From that day on each passing day has been a bonus of sorts. I have to emphasize here that Tiruchendur sea shore temple had a view to kill, literally too!

To conclude, whatever little knowledge you have, improvise on it, and build on it. We may never know when we will need it.

“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment to improve the world....”

- Anne Frank
End of another day at NIT Trichy. But, our heads are still high. It was an enthralling experience to be a part of Start Up Weekend (run by Techstars, a mentor-ship driven start up accelerator). A platform was set for all the aspiring entrepreneurs to showcase their ideas and how do they plan to attain it in a 54-hour event. Lot of innovative ideas were projected. Participants showed great zeal and enthusiasm, and worked together as a team on different levels. Business experts, web and app developers, designers were all clubbed together into separate teams so that each one of them could give their inputs and the projected ideas could be formulated and presented in an elegant manner. Being an electronics graduate, I had a little idea on how Start Ups work as I had no experience in this field. But as the motto says “Idea is not the one which is big, but the team with whom you are going to work along”. On the first day, while entering into the Lecture Hall Complex, I was not sure whether I should participate in the event. Although, I had a promising idea, I did not know what are the future prospects related to it. I presented it, nobody voted, and it got rejected. But, at the same time an interesting announcement was made.

All the participants who did not suggest any idea or their idea was rejected can join the other teams and work with them on different business and strategic models. So, I went out in search of my dream team. Finally, I found one. Their idea was simple, targeted towards engineering graduates only and showed a lot of promise in future. I requested the lead if she would give me a chance to be a part of her team. She recruited me, without any concerns. For the next two days, our entire team (group of 7 persons) worked rigorously on organizing the idea, scrutinizing the details, sorting out a business plan, defining the marketing strategies, performing SWOT analysis, structuring the business and finance model, conducting online and offline surveys, and finally creation of the presentations. There were times when we felt really exhausted while working but the organizing committee took care of it. They kept on entertaining us with music, small games at regular intervals, fun-do speeches and many more. We were also offered an unlimited supply of Coke and coffee so that no body feel tired and we can work on and finish everything on time.

We were also given the guidance of some renowned mentors who have their own Start Ups. They shared their experience along with challenges they faced while looking for investments for their Start Ups. They also encouraged us to use this platform as an opportunity and build an effective business model which would attract the venture capitalists, as the same was not available for them when they started.

On the D-day, everyone was feeling confident with a slight hint of nervousness. Finally, the countdown began. Stage was set. Judges took their positions. One by one, presentations were delivered. Judges shot down each of the teams with fire balls. We were also grilled nicely. At the end, all the teams were appreciated for their tiring efforts and wilful performances.

Results were announced and we could not make it. Feeling a little disheartened, as we had put a lot of fuel into the idea, we tried to catch hold of the judges and asked them for the mistakes we had made. They were generous enough to guide each one of us though our faults and also suggested the scope for the improvements. Realizing our weak points, we accepted that our idea might need a little formulation. But, we still believe that it would have served the purpose and generated enough revenue. So, on a positive note we moved out.

Dinner was ready. Something to cheer for, after such a long session. Ice-cream was really delicious. Photo sessions were organized with the judges and mentors. A short after party was also conducted on the event’s success after the dinner.

World is changing around us. What people think would not have been possible 20 years back, it is available in reality now. This is only possible because of the continuous change in the viewpoint on the people who are gifted with innovative minds. Innovation is not technical but ideological. What we believe is possible to achieve, could be made possible in reality if we have the right mindset to think in that direction coupled with the resource potential available. As Start Up founders, it is our sole duty to realize this potential within us, reshape the world and lead it to a path of prosperity.

“**The best way to predict future is to create it...**”

- Abraham Lincoln
DoMS Snippets

18th of September – HumaNITTy organized movie screenings at the EEE auditorium. Movies like “Ye Jawani Hai Deewani”, “Bahubali”, “Conjuring 2” etc. were screened. The collections from the ticket sales were submitted to the HumaNITTy funds.

18th of September – DoMS NITT students performed flash mob dance at Femina Mall, Trichy. The funds collected were submitted to the HumaNITTy funds.

18th of September - DoMS Students performed flash mob at Femina mall, Trichy as a part of HumaNITTy initiative

21st of September - Dr V.J.Sivakumar the HOD of DoMS felicitated team falcons for winning the FIRM Games 2016 at the fresher’s party.

22nd & 23rd of September – Enterprise Architecture workshop was organized for DoMS students. Mr. Nabil Saleem from Sparx IT solutions conducted the workshop. Enterprise Architecture assists Business Analysts to sequence business activities.

24th & 25th of September – Business Analytics & IT consulting boot camp organized by Dr. G Kannabiran for BA-ITC students. The workshop aimed at imparting real time knowledge about the scope of work for a Business Analyst in the industry. The speakers for the event were Mr. Varun Keshri (CTS), Mr. Sivakumar S (BNP Paribas), Mr. Sivashankar A (Navitas) and Mr. Patrick Godwin (TCS).

28th of September – Guest Lecture session by Dr. K Ganesh, Knowledge Expert – McKinsey on Supply Chain Management.

29th & 30th of September – Guest lecture sessions by Dr. Venkataraman on Strategic Management. Dr. Venkataraman is the former top management executive for Strait Group of Companies (Singapore) and Indian Airlines, currently he is a visiting faculty for many renowned B Schools.
Fresher’s 2016 @ DoMS NIT Trichy 21st Sept
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