Wishing you Happy New Year 2016.
Happy winters to all the readers from Team Avant Garde!!!

We welcome the batch back from the winter break. Here comes the December 2015 edition! We hope that you enjoy reading this magazine and gain some knowledge from it.

The first article “Motivation and Job Satisfaction: Changing Trends” by Saikat Chatterjee beautifully emphasizes on the importance of motivation of employees in a working environment. Deepti Sekhri focuses on the manufacturing sector and highlights some issues in her article “Need to revamp manufacturing”.

Abhas Vyas makes sure to analyze the ecommerce sector in his writing “Is ecommerce industry at an inflection point?”. K Prakash Raju highlights the happenings in 2015 in a specific area in his article “2015-a year of science and technology”.

Coming to academics, Kinsuk Ghatak writes “Advantages of case based learning methods, the 21st century MBA” in which he discusses how the students get benefitted from case studies by learning about the real world problems and suggests ways to solve them. Manpreet Singh throws some light on his winter internship experience in his article “Winter Internship at Promorph Solutions Pvt. Ltd.”.

Ishaan Singh writes a very thoughtful article about the potential of a person in “If I were me”. Shakti Chaturvedi focuses on defence sector in his article “Defence manufacturing-the next frontier?”. And Utkarsh Maurya writes about new hope to entrepreneurs in “A happy new year to startups?”

So the December edition is a combination of articles from various domains. We have a pleasure presenting this edition to you.

Happy reading!!!

Thank you

Team Avant Garde
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Let me start with a story.

“It was a hot sunny day, and a girl was sitting by the side of a dusty road, eating her sandwiches and watching the world go by. Presently, a man walked past, looking tired and bedraggled, and carrying a heavy stone on his back. The girl asked the man: “Why are you carrying that stone?” The man replied: “I am a slave. I have to carry this stone because I have been ordered to.” The man slowly disappeared into the distance, and a few minutes elapsed before another man passed by where the girl was sitting. He was sweating profusely but he too, was determinedly carrying a heavy stone on his back. The girl asked the man: “Why are you carrying that stone?” The man replied: “This is my job – I am paid to carry these stones. It is hard work, but there are many worse jobs than this.” The man soon disappeared into the distance, and the girl was preparing to go home when another man passed by. He too had a heavy stone on his back, but was walking briskly and looked tired but content. The girl asked the man: “Why are you carrying that stone?” The man replied: ‘I am building a church.’”

When we look at the modern office space and its “passionate” citizen the first question comes to mind - what is the driving force behind? What is it that inspires and motivates thousands of people working in corporate and factory environment, of private or public nature, working for 5 hours a day to 15 hours a day, with a lazy or busy schedule? Is the answer pretty obvious or there are somethings other than that? Money is clearly a basic point of consideration but when you look closely the question remains unanswered- what is it that distinguishes a satisfied employee from an unsatisfied one when both are receiving the same pay-cheque at the month end? Many scholars attribute it to the ratio of Actual achievement to expected level of achievement and smaller the value, higher is the tendency to get demotivated. It is true that people with ambitious outlook search for a more challenging workspace and often feel the current job description too simple or boring to carry on. But at the same time we find people demotivated and unsatisfied in a certain organization/under a certain supervisor/in a certain project team certainly starts enjoying his/her work when put in a different situation (changed organization/supervisor/team). Even employees with a high disregard for his/her work gets “institutionalized” and serve overtime without any tangible benefits/rewards.

Performance appraisal takes a snapshot of the efforts put in by the employees on a yearly basis- a high rating here means moving forward for getting a promotion or a salary increment immediately. Now, another question comes here- if you really hate your job profile does the promotion sounds so exciting at all? Is it some Pandora’s Box to reveal in front of you a path completely different from the previous one? Unfortunately, in most cases a promotion brings in more responsibility and involvement into the very work you were hating till yesterday. Now with all these arguments and counter arguments it all sounds confusing –isn’t it? Yes. It is. Because whatever points and cross points we are arranging here are all about human resources who are rightly called “rationally irrational”. It is impossible to state one or two most essential motivating factors because there are none. Nothing motivates people if he does not find one for himself. Speaking this I literally sound like a person who lost faith in theoretical framework and want to believe in some mysterious organizational chemistry. Even if I believe so, that’s not the end of it. There is, thank God, some rationality in the way employees think and react –especially in an organizational structure.
I have observed a somewhat fuzzy pattern in the organizations I worked with—there is a striking similarity within the people from same background and age group working in the same project. If one is dissatisfied and leaving the organization, it’s a high chance that others are in line. Can it be called influenced rationality? As the people of same age group tend to form a team within the team-a cluster inside the divisional structure, they start sharing their ambition, inspiration and most importantly frustration about workspace. This observation also captures how an odd man out inside a project team quickly tend to become highly demotivated and leave the job or escalate the grievances to a higher level—lacking a proper vent. So the motivation factors as diverse as the characteristics of human have some common components. Our opening story gives the message how people think of his/her assignment and find motivation/satisfaction depending on his/her mindset. While some see the work as a necessary burden, others in the same team may find some inspirational factor to take pride in his/her work. As one of the employee staying at office for three consecutive days revealed: “You know the work I have done for last couple of days is the crucial one—employees across the country would have been impacted if I finished this late”. Now whether his work was really of such crucial nature is matter of debate, but what is certain that this guy has got his own theory to get motivated at his workspace. Every industry be it service or production, depends heavily on these pool of employees who find his/her inspiration in something other than money and appraisal.

Coercive forces only make the situation worst if we are talking about employee motivation—whosoever working in whatsoever workplace with any job description hates one thing most—getting exploited. Exploitation itself is a matter of discussion as I believe it’s not only about forcing someone to work under worst environment or using some unethical means to get work done, the very word should be considered and discussed in a wide context—taking into account the daily harassment at psychological level, playing unfair politics against someone within a corporate project team and improper load balancing. All these attributes to lack of motivation and dissatisfaction. It is not always that satisfaction and motivation go hand in hand. Motivation is often the cause of satisfaction but many get satisfied in their job even without any motivational factors especially if he has no clue about what motivates him. Many of the elderly people take work as their daily routine activity like eat and sleep and if you argue hunger and tiredness motivates people to include these in their daily routine, then the same applies to workspace motivation for them. Now even in that we sometimes look for better food, comfortable bedding and blankets and look for a better one. This continuous striving for the betterment of our basic needs motivates us through the progress of humankind, and work is also an integral part of it.

As we have advanced through the ages we have come up with different and delicious dishes and more and more comfortable shelters—clearly, nature of workspace motivation is also bound to change and it has changed indeed—beyond monetary benefits. This is the trend and it will continue, the sooner management takes care of the individual motivation factors, even before that stop classifying the human resources inside an organization as mechanical instruments with common feature and programmed outlook, the better it is for improving the employee satisfaction index of the organization. With the widespread globalization, diversity in workspace is both a challenge and a chance—challenge to motivate and chance for improvement. If we are really looking forward to build up better organizational capability to get some competitive advantage, this is the time we look closely at the people in organizations—look at their ambitions, inspirations and motivating factors. Human resources is of more importance now than ever it was—only a highly motivated and satisfied talent pool will write the future of the organization—and will decide whether it is fit to survive or not.

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The need to revamp manufacturing

Over more than a year after rolling out “make in India” campaign the state of manufacturing sector of India stays dismal. Manufacturing sector contribution of 16% to GDP is ridiculously low when compared with other developing countries especially china where the sector contributes 36%. The failure to develop proper infrastructure and dearth of skilled workforce are two major reasons for this underdeveloped sector.

Japan, China and the US are investing good deal in infrastructure but the onus to skill its workforce lies on India and it is high time India feels the need to address this critical and cardinal issue. India is no doubt one of the largest and cheapest hubs for providing labour but over 90% of it still remains unorganized and even a greater percentage unskilled. Focus should be on skilling the human assets we have. This can be done by motivating youngsters to enrol in vocational training courses; diplomas etc where practical training could be given. Instead of opening engineering colleges in every nook and corner of country and preferring traditional education, stress should be laid on providing vocational training to the youth and equipping them with the skills actually required by the industry hence bridging the gap between skills possessed and skills demanded. Also, if India wants to capitalize on the stalling economy and increasing wage prices in other countries especially China, this is the best foot forward. Multinational companies such as Foxconn, Sony, Motorola, General Motors, Chinese smart phone manufacturers such as Xiaomi, OnePlus, Coolpad have begun to look at India for setting up their manufacturing units. Hence, this step becomes all the more important.

Other issue which demands attention is the time and effort required to start a new business and shutting one. Much has already been talked about ease of doing business and no doubt India has successfully improved its ranking from 142 to 130 but obsolete laws, dysfunctional courts, manipulative and biased policymakers, corrupt bureaucracy and ill informed citizens still haunt the very progress of the nation. It requires over 29 days and 12 procedures to begin a venture. Efforts have been made to spur investment and reduce bureaucratic hurdles but much needs to be done specifically in the area of ease of closing business. People still have to go through a long time consuming labyrinth process of shutting down their businesses due to obsolete insolvency laws which ends up demotivating them and forcing them to look for other lucrative countries to operate. Thus hurt Indian economy in every respect.

Government should also help assisting the start up boom and attract fledgling entrepreneurs to enter manufacturing sector by providing them a conducive ecosystem to start, run and shut down their businesses. With assistance and proper funding they could help generate employment to both skilled and unskilled labour, reduce dependency on imports and push exports. The government has made some positive moves in the foreign investment sector by easing rules, simplifying procedures, raising sectoral caps in various sectors such as defence, banking and broadcasting and allowing FDI in others. But the government and the people will not be able to reap the benefits of these amendments if infrastructure and connectivity remain in desolate state and laws remain regressive. Infrastructure can be improved by attracting investment in construction sector and for improving connectivity, privatization of railways and funding them through foreign investment can help revamp this sector. Along with this there is a dire need to raze red tapism, organize labourers, reform labour laws and provide political stability to the foreign investors. Changing government brings forth changing rules which are tailor made according to their needs but the MNCs face tough time adapting to them. Hence, political stability becomes an important factor for foreign companies considering India as their investment destination.
Organizing subsidies can also help finance “make in India” campaign. There is an urgent need to cut subsidies in certain sectors and arrest leakages. Contribution of major subsidies is down to 1.6 per cent of GDP in 2015-16 from 2.5 per cent of GDP in 2012-13 but still a lot needs to be done in transferring subsidies directly to beneficiaries. India took a different path towards development jumping from agriculture based economy to services based bypassing manufacturing. With agriculture sector experiencing a shift from manual to automated and services sector on the verge of saturating, India needs to concentrate on this languishing sector.

Is E-commerce industry at an inflection point?

While the amount of funds raised by Indian e-commerce companies is huge, its market is barely 1 percent of the Chinese counterpart. Chinese e-commerce industry was in fact in the same position as India with respect to market, internet penetration, and acceptance of online marketplaces if we look 10 years back. Now, the Chinese e-commerce has surpassed $300 billion compared to the $4 billion of India, online travel booking forms a major chunk of it, roughly 70% and e-tailing is a minor portion. $9 billion of goods were sold by Alibaba on a single day. This should certainly put things in a perspective.

There are about 250 million internet users in India. However, only 3-4% of such users engage in online shopping, (around 8-10 million). To rephrase, the e-commerce industry does hold market share and they still have a long way to go in terms of “mind-share”. A Flipkart or an Amazon may have raised billions in terms of dollars but they are still at the nascent stage as far as their reach is concerned.

However, in terms of CAGR, Indian e-commerce is racing ahead with 30% growth rate which is three times than that of many developed economies. Every development in technology/business goes through the process of business cycle where we see a crest and a trough appearing from time to time. Moreover, as the technology progresses there is an advent of destructive innovation which replaces the existing technology (e.g. audio cassettes by CD, landline by mobile phones etc.) Extrapolating the same line of thought to e-commerce sector we can safely assume that until a new destructive innovation/technology takes over we will see a rise in the e-commerce sector.

Changes in the economy will continue to happen, market size will change, government policies will change, middle income group will continue to show growth in their spending power and it is up to the investors, entrepreneurs and companies to capitalize on the trend and hit the right notes to sustain as Amazon and Ebay did otherwise it might turn out to be a US dot com bubble burst for some.

2015- An year in science and technology!

“Science is a beautiful gift to humanity; we should not distort it” - A.P.J Kalam

Scientific breakthroughs of any timeline often amaze us and show us the possibilities not seen or heard before. Scientific endeavor, though basically motivated by curiosity to know nature, also often paves way for new technologies which ease our daily lives. Emerging technologies such as new ways of surgery, new fuel compositions, better TVs, better production methods etc are creating a place of ‘comfort’ and ‘high satisfaction’ for humans. Thus, science and technology is an important part of our development and is also linked to our...
businesses. A technological innovation can change the course of an industry. So, it is worthwhile to know the current trends in “Science and technology”. As 2015 has come to an end; some of year’s exciting “inventions and discoveries” can be relooked.

#1 It may have been invented earlier, but in 2015, ‘Hoverboard scooter’ became a viral product in US market. Many celebrities bought it and it is now reaching out to common public. The product has an amazing self balancing feature enabled by sensors and the motion is controlled by leg. Hoverboard can perhaps become the vehicle of choice for kids and youth. However, hoverboard is facing many obstacles such as safety compliance, traffic rule compliance etc. Yet, hoverboard can grow to a large customer base.

#2 Diamonds could now be made at room temperature. Researchers at University of North Carolina have discovered a phase of carbon called “Q-carbon”. Q-Carbon can create diamond at room temperature with ambient atmospheric pressure. Surprising!!

#3 Moving to next discovery; in Chernobyl, scientists have found that many animals have been thriving since 30 years (nuclear power plant accident). It is interesting how animals adapted to the radiations.

#4 Next one; a great feat in medicine has been achieved. A team of Australian researchers used ultrasonic waves to break down the molecules responsible for alzheimers syndrome in mice. This was a breakthrough since the method was non-invasive and it showed curative effect. However, human testing is yet to be done.

#5 “Bionic ears” by Doppler labs is an earphone with a revolutionary feature. User can mute or decrease the outside volume. User can also do selective frequency listening. Amazing! So, no more noise pollution?

#6 KIC8462852, a distant star, was found with amazing harbor structures on its surface. Astronomers think there might be an intelligent life behind this architecture. Further observations are to be made. But, the discovery of structures itself has been a crucial one.

#7 3-D printers are no more a theoretical study. A cancer patient was given 3-D printed sternum and ribs, this year.

#8 Artificial implants of pancreas have been created. These could sense insulin levels in the body and produce insulin whenever required.

#9 Coming to an audacious project by Google, “Google AI”. It is in learning stage; but it was surprising that AI can learn new language or model a language; can carry out complex conversations and can talk on morality and philosophy.

#10 Researchers at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute have created a self-aware robot. In an experiment, 3 robots were given a puzzle which required them to know the ‘self’ to find a solution. A robot was successfully programmed to identify itself.
#11 Lastly, a headset which creates virtual reality! People could play virtually real games; scientists can train astronauts on virtual mars or a student could train on a virtual dead body.

Amazing has been 2015 in the field of science and technology! Technology is great and can create beautiful solutions to everyday problems. However, technology has a dark face. It lies on humanity how good technology is used.

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## Advantages of Case based learning methods, the 21st century MBA:

Case based methods of teaching in MBA programs are kind of unique and most suitable approach to follow for thorough understanding and development of crystal clear concepts of business practices. With the passing days this method is even approaching a far more matured shape and style. Cases from different domains enable the students to get a real good feel of what they are studying theoretically in classrooms.

Solving cases and approaching the problems from different points of views give students a hand on experience on real life management issues.

“There are those who advocate, and those who do. I'm not trying to slight my peers, but there is a difference between using a soapbox and actually getting your hands dirty.”

-Bon Jovi

Likewise, if you are not making your hands dirty by facing some real challenges through case based problems, you are definitely not going to feel the real pulse of an MBA Program.

Standing at this juncture of fast changing 21st century world, IIT Kanpur MBA program, with a vision to create world class business leaders of tomorrow is also no exception. The eminent faculties here believe entirely in class discussion and case based approach of study, rather than throwing management jargons and theoretical mug ups. The students also participate in class like a corporate house discusses its problems to reach solutions. The unique ways of discussing the cases and analyzing them from various points of views have made the teaching methodology of IME MBA a unique one.

With resources and case materials directly available from Harvard Business Review, IMD, Ivey Business School, Kellogg School of Management, the classes become a lively experience to visualize the real time business problems. With every passing day, the students also look forward eagerly about the next case and the expected learning, obtainable from that. Even at times, we at IIT Kanpur face case based exams in end and mid semester evaluations. The very lucidly written and informative cases also help us to understand in a more deep way about the industry, the company, the people, the business strategies, and marketing strategies and so on. In an essence, a case gives a complete overview of a business scenario, which is no inferior to a real life problem. In fact the cases are actually prepared from the real industry problems, with an aim to solve the situations by different approaches.

So, to conclude, every time when we face a case challenge, we have to put on the shoes of the manager of the firm and have to try out different ways. The case based teaching / problem based approach is the most contemporary and appropriate way to develop and nurture tomorrow’s business leaders. After all, business is done with clear understanding and experience and not by some theoretically gained knowledge. Yes knowledge should be gained definitely, but at the end it’s only the wisdom and ones sense of surroundings and experience that get counted.
Although many believe that winter internship is a nice opportunity for the people with less exposure in corporate world to live and feel the culture, but I had different plans, I opted for a Start Up and luckily got a chance to work in a SIDBI incubated Company at IIT Kanpur itself.

I was rejoiced to have a chance to enjoy my stay (during Vacations) at IIT, the place full of opportunities, but at the same time, was feeling envy of my friends who decided to do their internships at their home towns. But as they say, to achieve something you have to leave something, everything has its own pros and cons but believe me it was no bad deal at all.

I was given a profile of business development, and to mention that “profile” is too short a term to describe the horizon of responsibilities you are expected to fulfill in a Start Up. Although luckily I had one of my batch mates as my team member (Team of two). So coordination required to achieve the desired goals in such a short time was not an issue.

Now without pouring in more words I will directly come to first day of the internship.

Oh…. I am sorry there is something before the first day as well - “Day Zero”, Yes we received a call a day before our joining, got a briefing mail about the product and were asked to make a sales presentation by using our MBA Insights. We reached the office next day after working on the task whole night and somehow managed to stand up to the expectations.

At the closing of day one’ when we were thinking about the week long training session beginning from next day (supposedly), came another surprise: next task, “I want you to know the right approach for working in a Start Up, for this you are required to read a book and report after 24 hours” said our mentor and trainer (I will speak more about the person towards my closing lines) 300 pages in one day was not exactly what I was used to, still gave my best and reported back with 1/3 part still remaining. But thankfully our mentor did not expect us to complete it either, and with a loud remark “This internship is not going to be easy” our training session started. We were told we could enjoy the work from home facility on which I started dreaming of the extra activities available because of the time flexibility available (again supposedly).
Happiness to have the freedom of working according to my time disappeared at the pace it came. Soon the task made us forget about the normal concept of 8 hours working schedule and we started working on double shifts to complete our basic training, so that we could start with our final goals. With the tasks flowing rapidly and data being collected in abundance I found how important can a simple tool like “Trello” or “Evernote” become if you know how to use the resources efficiently.

After the completion of our training sessions at Kanpur it was time to know the market sentiments as well as analyze the difficulties and expectations of our expected customers. For this we decided to observe the market space personally and planned to visit parts of Uttar Pradesh, National Capital Region (NCR), Punjab and Haryana and further divided the demographics into various market segments to have a holistic view and decide upon the strategies to make our product more valuable for our customers.

Very excited to meet the Directors and Chancellors of various educational institutions, (as the product is developed to improve the education sector of the nation) we prepared the agenda and planned the route map in which we were to cover the prospects of our study.

But we forgot to visualize and involve the most important person in the whole process

Although thankfully the company, being incubated at SIDBI, IIT Kanpur and also being awarded by MHRD, along with our personal skills helped to execute our visits smoothly. After completing the first phase at Uttar Pradesh the next stop was NCR region and with most of my friends staying at Delhi, I thought it would be a great week and opportunity to enjoy few joyous evenings along with the work. But on the first day itself when; while returning from work, I promised my friends to meet them after a 20 min nap and woke up straight in the next morning with about 15 missed calls on my cell phone, it was clear “This internship is really not easy”. But thankfully I had some great time with my friends on Sunday.
And also, we got a chance to visit our homes, as the last phase included the market study at our hometowns.

With the completion of our visits, we learnt how geographical demographics and other market segmentation can bring in changes to the way your product is perceived and also how expectations of customers may vary in spite of belonging to the same segment of industry. We also learnt how to implement theoretical knowledge to get useful results and at the same times how different the theories can be from the practical situations.

In the summarizing lines, I would like to thank the company for giving us the chance to work with them and providing a great learning platform. I would also like to thank our Guide and Mentor who not only trained us but helped us to overcome the problems we faced and kept us motivated by adroitly using reprimands and appraisals.

If I Were Me

Have you heard the story of the eagle and the crow?

In the streets of greater town there lived an eagle and a crow, they were best friends and used to spend most of the time together. One day the eagle fell ill and requested the crow to take care of the baby eagle. Crow being the best friend promised the eagle that she will take care of the baby eagle. So the time passed by, the eagle died and the baby eagle grew in the same nest with crows. An eagle for your knowledge flies very high and very fast while a crow flies low and slow. By nature, eagle is fearless while crow lives its entire life in fear. As the baby eagle grew big, it learned to fly like a crow, it feared flying high and never took a big leap, and it lived its entire life like a crow and died one day.

The moral is simple, we live the life we learn to live and not the one we are capable of living. Ask a child what he wants to do in his life and you will be amazed by his imagination and then meet him 25 years hence and he will be living a life entirely different from what he thought he would in his childhood. Napoleon Hill, the father of motivation and author of the best seller ‘Think and Grow Rich’ says that all limitations are set in mind, if we can free our mind from the limitations we can free ourselves to live a life we are capable of living.

The big question though is how? Let us try to explore.

The decisions we make determines the life we live, the decisions are based on our thoughts, so now the question is who controls these thoughts? May be this is a wrong question, the question to ask is where do these thoughts come from and the answer is that they come from our learnings, by learnings I mean they come from some external source, the source can be a positive source or a negative source,
it can be a visible source like our parents, teachers, siblings, friends or it can a be a hidden source like a movie, a novel or someone else. Before going any further, let us try to see the importance of thoughts in our life.

Once upon a time, in the city of hoppers, there lived thousands of frogs. One day few of them were playing hide and seek when two of them fell in a deep pit, soon the frogs gathered around the pit and cried at the misery of their mates who couldn’t come up, they shouted “you can do it guys, just jump higher”, “come on-come on” the voices became louder but alas the frogs couldn’t jump their way out. As few hours passed by everyone bowed to the fact that the two frogs will soon die, “Don’t give yourself more pain, and accept the death”, “it’s ok, Die peacefully” shouted the group now but the two frogs kept trying, after all no one wants to die, hours went by and the frogs got tired, one of them lost hope and accepted his fate and died but the other one kept trying even though his mates kept begging him to give up and get rid of the pain and then after 3 more hours of constant trying he made a leap and jumped out. The frogs were amazed, they started rejoicing and congratulated each other, “How did you do this?” asked the eldest frog. The frog didn’t reply, soon they learned that the frog was dumb. All this while, when the frogs kept shouting to accept the fate and die he kept thinking that they were cheering him to keep trying and that made him persist for so long even when his companion gave up.

Moral is simple, the thoughts that surround us determine how we will react under various circumstances and thus makes us who we are. Our potential is not what we think it is, in fact it is limitless. The limit to which one can believe that is the limit one can achieve, so now the question is how do we start to shift the limits of our belief on our self? The answer though is simple to know but tough to execute. If one wants to go beyond limits, one needs to be dumb to all those things that constantly remind him of his false limits, for example a score in the exam, a promotion, a rejection, a success, a failure etc all are false indicators of one’s limit. The only way to be dumb and blind to these limits is to be self involved, to have self belief based on knowing yourself rather than judging yourself.

Let me conclude by going to the title, What if ‘I’ were ‘Me’? I may be able to live a life like an eagle – Fearless, I may be able to persist like a dumb frog and achieve the unthinkable, I might be able to live to my potential, the potential that is unbound, and the potential that is limitless. I here is not me, it is You, It is every one of us, If we can be ourselves wonders can happen. I will end with an observation that always fascinates me.

When I see the 100 meter sprint on TV, As all the participants take guard and the whistle blows everyone starts with almost the same speed and within a matter of seconds the speed of few drops, I always wonder that can’t they run for 10 seconds with the same energy with which they take guard and start and then I get my answer in the thoughts that must cross their mind within 2-3 seconds of the sprint, some of them might feel that they can win as their opponents are about to be left behind while some of them might feel they can’t match their opponents and they slow down and loses the race just when it begins, the point is that it is the thoughts that make them behave the way they do, what if there is a tiger 500 meter behind them will they still slow down after 2-3 seconds, of course not, till the time tiger is in striking distance no one will give up and will in fact become fast with every second.

‘I’ can be ‘Me’ and ‘you’ can be real ‘you’ only if you let the limits set in your mind free.

As Brian puts it “The potential of the average person is like a huge ocean unsailed, a new continent unexplored, a world of possibilities waiting to be released and channelled toward some great good”
Defence Manufacturing the next “FRONTIER”?

“Y ou can’t change your neighbours” is an old widely accepted statement. So you are dependent to some extent on how your neighbours are. A good neighbourhood ensures progress for all while a bad neighbour hampers progress. India’s neighbourhood relations are complicated to say the least. Bounded by Pakistan, China, Bangladesh etc, India has had a history of conflicts with almost all its neighbours.

This article is not about conflicts and the geopolitics involved in them; this is about defence manufacturing. Till 2001, Defence Manufacturing in India was completely a government owned enterprise, the results of which were mixed. India has not exactly been on the forefront of research in defence technology. Fortunately, we had close ties with the Soviet Union and often got defence equipment manufactured under license agreements with them or some other nation. But after collapse of the Soviet Union and the volatility which followed in Russia, India realised that we need to get a serious move on and decided to finally open up the defence to the private sector. Some legislations later, when one has a look at the Make in India webpage for the Indian Defence Sector, one sees some impressive sounding stats. India has an opportunity of about 250 Billion INR in the next 7-8 years. Moreover, India has the third largest army and the 7th largest defence budget in the world as per Stockholm International Peace Research Institute in 2015. There are also promotional schemes for defence manufacturers, like: incentives, tax deductions on R&D, duty remissions on exports. All sounds very good, but it’s a bit more complicated than that as per Indian law. Any procured equipment which is above 3 Billion INR in value has to have a minimum of 30% of its parts sourced locally, that would make up a sizeable number of defence deals. We all understand the importance of a civil military industrial complex; which, in a History Channel documentary, was rated #1 in the category – “top 10 weapons”.

Many military grade equipment ultimately finds civilian utility. The trouble is that our policy makers haven’t always felt this way. Drones can be utilized in agriculture, night vision for observing wildlife and other observations. In the US, enough focus is to put to adapt defence technology for civil use. In India, we have ignored this path for quite a while. Fortunately, the government’s attitude is changing. Albeit with the intent to acquire more technology and generate more jobs, the spill over effects will come. Truth is that there is no denying that India has tremendous potential. Indian defence PSU’s exported about 768 crores worth of equipment in 13-14. Chinese exports are more than 10 times this figure. To compete with China, we need to sort out many things. Acquisition of land is one important area so the land acquisition bill is crucial. Another often overlooked area is that of skilled labour. India needs to first build infrastructure to create a skilled work force which is needed not just for making us a defence exporter but also to make the “Make In India” campaign a success.

A Happy New Year to Start Ups?

Indian government has shown signs of trust in startups to bolster growth in the economy. Government hopes that creating a startup-friendly environment will lead to creation of more jobs. With this plan, Government is set to announce “Start-Up India, Stand Up India” on January 16, 2016. Currently, the red tape of compliances required to set up businesses, delayed approvals, tax pressures, etc act as deterrent to budding entrepreneurs to some extent. The initiative will consist of a high-level, inter-ministerial panel that will decide whether a startup qualifies for incentives according to its proposal. Secretaries of Information Technology, Biotechnology and others will comprise the panel. This initiative will be linked to leading educational institutes of India. Let’s hope that the “Start-Up India, Stand Up India” will stand up to the expectations of entrepreneurs. It will be one of the first interesting news to look for in 2016.
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