



ATHENAEUM 2020

A Brief Report



A Brief Report on the Summary and Highlights of the Conference

ATHENAEUM is an international research conference organized by the Centre for Contemporary Management Research (CECMAR), the research wing of Bharathidasan Institute of Management (BIM) with a view to promote academic value in the management practice. This conference is distinct from other typical academic conferences, as ATHENAEUM aims to take contemporary research into management practice and vice-versa. This edition, ATHENAEUM 2020 has also seen significant change in its form, concept, and mode. While senior academic experts presented the practically relevant contemporary research developments and insights, the industry experts have thrown light on management issues that offer scope for future research through a series of panel discussions. ATHENAEUM 2020 was held online as “Virtual Conference” in view of the COVID-19. The event comprised four different panel discussions on selected contemporary management themes. Every panel comprising senior academic and industry practitioners were moderated by an eminent professional from the domain, aligned with the theme. While academic experts illustrated the practical relevance of contemporary research outcomes, the industry experts enumerated the management challenges/problems having scope for future research.

Central Theme and Sub-Themes

Global trends such as protectionist policies, geo-political risks, pandemics, etc., have raised new concerns for managing the global trade and economy. While transformation to data-driven, smart, and digital business has turned out to be a new world order, decoding the ever-dynamic environment in which the businesses operate has become the new science of management research and practice. Striking a balance between Globalisation and Glocalisation and handling related dynamics in the world of disruptions, mainly in the areas of — innovation, transformation, data science, human capital management and entrepreneurship, are major concerns ahead. Managing in the unstable World, therefore, requires disruptive design principles, innovative models and agile practices for the business managers, start-up entrepreneurs, and practice leaders. Exhaustive research must be carried out to explore how theory and research can be integrated into business academics and management practice suitable for the new global business environment. Theme for the ATHENAEUM 2020 edition, therefore was **‘Globalisation V/S Glocalisation in the Age of Disruption.’** In view of this central theme, the following sub-themes were the contemporary management areas for panel discussions.

i) **Disruptive Innovation and Transformation**

Competing in the marketplace through disruptive innovation is the globally acclaimed management practice today and will extend all over the business world. Serving the needs of different markets globally in a substantially superior way adapting to local preferences, standards, and culture, is therefore an intimidating challenge. Added to this, the emerging global trade risks and constraints makes the disruptive innovation challenge even more complex. Though the culture

of transforming to disruptive innovation by aspiring global businesses is prevalent, accommodating globalisation under emerging trade constraints is the new dimension of business transformation.

ii) Data and Decisions

Trade constraints and risks posed due to new trends in global business environment necessitates taking managerial decisions with global rationality. The emerging role of data analytics as the catalyst to make mistake-proof decisions at any management level, therefore, become critical specifically when both globalisation and glocalisation matters.

iii) Managing Human Capital

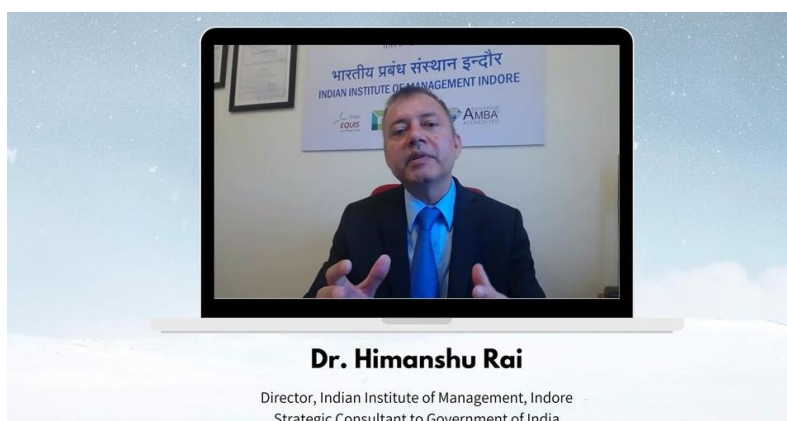
The most critical resource that is shipped or exchanged across borders in the process of globalisation is human talent. As human capital is scarce and geographically concentrated in few countries, it has been very hard to effectively localise business operations with the imported human resource. Protectionist measures of countries like US and UK makes the situation even more challenging to effectively leverage the scarce talent.

iv) Entrepreneurship and Start-ups Ecosystem

Fostering entrepreneurship and start-ups has become a global phenomenon. The connected ecosystem comprising venture capitalists, evangelists, research parks, incubation centres, etc., have been evolving with different paces and standards across the world. Aspiring global entrepreneurs face glocalisation challenges to efficiently serve in divergent global markets, besides emerging risks due to geo-political factors or trade restrictions. Start-up companies also suffer to scale beyond national or cultural boundaries as their local-need triggered business ideas and models may be irrelevant in the global context. Consequently, how to develop globally replicable niche business ideas/models remains as an inadequately unaddressed question.

Conference Highlights

ATHENAEUM 2020, the IX international management research conference with the theme “Globalisation V/s Glocalisation in the Age of Disruption” was held on 21st November 2020 in virtual mode via Cisco WEBEX Platform, and witnessed the gathering of over 400 eminent scholars, academicians, industry practitioners and students. Dr A. John Peter, the Interim Director of Bharathidasan Institute of Management (BIM), Trichy welcomed the chief guests, speakers, scholars, and delegates and highlighted the importance of research conference. Dr. S. Jaya Krishna, Convenor-ATHENAEUM and Head-CECMAR has presented the dynamics of the conference and highlighted how ATHENAEUM is distinct from other typical academic conferences and takes contemporary research into management practice and vice-versa.



The conference was inaugurated by Dr. Himanshu Rai, Director of IIM, Indore, and the strategic advisor to the Govt., of India. He delivered a keynote address to the academicians, practitioners, researchers, and Young Scholars who were present. Dr. Rai shared his views on the post-pandemic world and that the leaders of tomorrow need to be compassionate. He further shared his view on how the passion should be the identity of an individual.

With a mix of high-profile practitioners and thought leaders in their respective fields, Athenaeum 2020 provided impulses to the emerging global dialogue on mastering this key challenge of managing in the disruptive age. The conference has dived into exemplary research insights that point at a new direction and participants have gained new perspectives from concrete facts that they might include in their research, strategies and their own practices as they prepare for the future. The event saw participation of 400+ attendees ranging from industry experts and academic researchers to faculties and students of management who were addressed by eminent speakers from across the globe in 4 panel discussions.

After the inauguration, first panel discussion on “Disruptive Innovation and Transformation” was conducted. The panel comprised the following senior academicians and industry practitioners:



Prof. Elizabeth L Rose, chaired the panel discussion and threw light on the lifecycle model for navigating through the digital disruption and the actions that businesses can take at different stages. Later, Prof. Rose raised the issues of the *drivers and barriers of disruptive innovation* to the panelists. According to Mr. Srinivas Dhagam, Consulting Senior Practice Director, Oracle Financial Services, the culture of an organisation has been the key driving force when considering entrepreneurship and disruptive innovation. Citing the examples of Toyota (*Innova disrupting its own model Qualis*) and Nokia (*being comfortable with what they have*), Mr. Dhagam brought out the point that the attitude of the organisations can either disrupt or loose to the disruption. Mr. Sumanta Ray, Chief Marketing Officer, Narayana Health, viewed that disruptions brought by external environments are more tectonic in nature. Though the technology for tele-medicine was available before two decades, until the emergence of pandemic COVID-19 the disruption in healthcare industry was held by the inertia in the Govt., regulatory, customer apathy, etc. The panel also viewed that the national and organisation culture to promote entrepreneurial spirit can result in disruptive innovations. Further, the panel also delved into the barriers for disruptive innovation and transformation. To learn more from this panel discussion click the link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IA0lkofqzUE>

Second panel comprising the following panelists discussed the theme “Data and Decisions”:



Dr. Bikramajit Chaudhuri has chaired this panel discussion. Mr. Munish Gupta viewed that using Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML), companies have succeeded in developing products that can effectively capture sophisticated data and improve their outcomes. He further shared that crunching of data with all the variables both known and unknown, is more important than

data itself, while the elements of culture are the key to drive data-based decisions. According to Ms. Mathangi Sri, data is a huge entry barrier for new web-based or app-based businesses, as the giants own data resources that enable them better personalise their marketing efforts. She also pointed that data has evolved phenomenally and is driving the transition from automated processes to automated thinking. Dr. Bikramjit felt that the data is transforming the field of management from being an “Art” to becoming a “Science” and quotes that Marketing without data is like driving the car eyes closed. To learn more from this panel discussion click the link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xv_7mKBGSdU

Third panel comprising the following panelists discussed the theme “Managing Human Capital:”



Ms. Supriya accentuated that people are behind the technology and innovations while the world of HR has been disrupted a lot and, therefore corporate should keep the well-being of the people first. Panelists felt that when the pandemic disrupted the supply chains, people have played a major role in resuming the operations and ensured business continuity. Ms Ramya who moderated the session narrated how the mindset of the organisations and leaders including the Government has changed as pandemic disrupted the workplace environment towards an *open talent economy*. Mr. Tanvir predicted that the *hybrid model* (employees both, on-premise and off-premise) will continue in the digitized world, and he felt that the next generation is lot more expressive which will help them bring out their best and that's where organisations will use technology in terms of knowing how their employees are motivated. He also felt that the increasing ratio of women in the workforce is being facilitated by the technology and not just confining them to work from home, but to *work from anywhere*. Ms. Supriya felt optimistic about how the organisations disrupted by the technology started facilitating the creation of an *equal world*. She also raised the issue of women exiting and felt that HR should evolve a culture of empathy, flexibility, diversity, and inclusivity so that women can stay longer in organisations and stop the *leaking pipeline*. This has raised the challenge before HR to prove that the diversity works better which may be researched. To learn more from this discussion click the link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sWEDgL29BJE>

Fourth panel comprising following panelists discussed the theme “Entrepreneurship and Start-up Ecosystem”:



Prof. Majumdar who chaired the session, started the discussion by raising the question, “Whether the roles of markets and technology are reversed, and their axes have changed from X to Y and vice-

versa?” Mr. Vaitheeswaran viewed that business models have disrupted the businesses (citing the example of UBER) and not the technology. Mr. Govind viewed that the fundamental driver to new businesses is the customer or market need and quoted the examples of how Microsoft, Big Basket, etc., have either pushed or identified new businesses which were offered due to customer needs driven by COVID-19. The panel also discussed various aspects like, how the context is assessed for entrepreneurial creation and how should the entrepreneur assess the favourableness or challenges of the context when he or she thinks about creating business. Mr. Vaitheeswaran characterised the entrepreneurs as problem-solvers and the significance of it leads to enterprise creation. He offered a five-steps model for enterprise creation: (1) being passionate to identify and solve the problem, (2) finding solution to the problem, (3) determine whether the problem or solution are totally new, (4) perform competitive analysis to make the solution better than competitors’ products, and (5) assess whether there will be enough customers for the new solution. The process of sensing, identifying, and engaging with the entrepreneurial opportunity was also explored in the discussion, besides examining how the ecosystem can be decoded by the start-ups. The panel also suggested a model comprising both linear and non-linear components for designing entrepreneurial education in B-Schools. To learn more from this discussion click the link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fhd4YxEC_Tc



Mr. Rohit Pathak, CEO of Aditya Birla Insulators and Aditya Birla Power Composites was the Chief Guest for the valedictory function and addressed the participants in the flagship research conference. Mr. Pathak shared his views on the effect of the pandemic on globalization due to which the government and the companies were forced to rethink their policies. He further emphasised on the need to create partnerships in the *phygital* world to pave the way for growth and be Vocal for Local. To access the valedictory address, click <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aP4xEy1c348>

Presented by



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