

Review: Jalebi Management

From his early childhood in a divided Bengal refugee colony until today - as a relatively successful international management strategy consultant Shombit Sengupta has passed through great upheavals in his lifetime. He left India in 1973 for Paris with meager in his pockets when he was just 19 years of age. Today he is a French Citizen. His education was left incomplete due to paucity of funds - in simple a 'Dropout'. Our Management students might just neglect this work, but that would just be a catastrophe. If there has to be made a record of persons who can be a living testimony to what they say "Life is the greatest teacher and one can learn from it only if he is interested in," Shombit will easily make it to the list, although a non-graduate.

Shombit's work Jalebi Management is one that is not just extremely informative but educative as well as enjoyable beyond doubt. His theory of relating Jalebi, the sweet par excellence, to management is amazingly interesting. Says Sengupta "Every organization's individual character is distinct. No organization like individual, or no Jalebi is like another. Nor are organizational layers temperamentally alike."

A Management is an art and also a science that works on several dynamics including social demands, lifestyle transformation and political upheavals including economics. Shombit's work shall, if at all, stay distinct for a simple reason because he has presented them in a highly impeccable manner with great reverence to Jalebis.

Many of us know of Japanese Products. In 1960's they were perceived of being low in quality, however, eventually by 1970s when they improved they were termed 'Copy Masters'. Rightly points the author, "The Japanese innovated by establishing a marketing approach to product design. They minutely studied western innovation, sociology and psychology, concentrating on how consumers approached and used products. Then zeroed in on the concept of miniaturization..."

This miniaturization evolved from the Japanese tradition of 'Minimalism', the religious Buddhist way of life, the symbolic form of bonsai art.

This case study presents the perfect union of cultural tradition with innovation. However when this, union of culture and innovation, comes to Indian context it "fails miserably".

Besides management, which he talks and writes, is not one that is solely confined to corporate houses - though it is also for them. He presents several cases that can educate politicians, bureaucrats, musicians, and artists including many others

It also reflects as to how extreme economic pressures has made love and affection very artificial in today's Western society. In countries like India where earning a livelihood is the priority, a conjugal relationship may become mechanical after sometime. To prevent that, "it's necessary to always create discomfort to re-vibrate a couple's world of fantasy and love. Such discomfort will create curiosity and break any monotony of married life." Adding "In rush to meet economic growth, India's heritage of certain mental peace should not be crumbled away. It is the social responsibility of Indians to integrate the rich philosophical insights of the country in the future development of business."

He is not always value oriented. This perception is true when he appreciates Serge Gainsbourg and defines him as "...the most creative and unique poet of the 20th century France..." This may not be agreeable to those who knew him as the person who made his tall and lean second wife to wear a tight jeans and dance half nude, showing her beautiful upper portion to the public and the person who had even produced a film lying side by side in bed with his young daughter as they both sang.

According to Jalebi Management: as population is decreasing in the west, as also passion for hard work, which is spaying way for Outsourcing. Considering this and for its persistence growth he asks India to stop representing itself to the world as low-cost in every domain, whether in labor, intellect or infrastructure. Though low standard of living and low labor cost may give high profitability percentage to Indians or Chinese companies, but the concept of low cost is not sustainable as operational efficiency for the future.

Whoever you may be, if you love Jalebi you may just end loving this book. It's worth you time and attention.

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Author: Shombit Sengupta

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