

# Towards an Educated India: Gender Sensitivity and Role of Business Education

Higher Education Forum

Tarun Tejpal is the latest to join the hall of fame (?) which includes Justice A K Ganguly, Phaneesh Murthy, David Davidar and Gopal Kanda and face accusations of sexual harassment. Tejpal has been booked for rape (IPC Section 376), rape by a person in a position of control or dominance (IPC Section 376(2) (k), and outraging the modesty of a woman (IPC Section 354). A recent survey undertaken, by International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) states, around two in five men in India - nearly 40.7% held rigid and discriminatory gender views. This segment believes women to be inferior. However, an individual of any gender can sexually harass and be sexually harassed by an individual of any gender (ie male to female, female to male, male to male, female to female). Another workplace sexual harassment survey by the Centre for Transforming India, a non-profit organization concludes awareness levels of sexual harassment among female employees is poor and a majority of them continue with their ordeal for fear of professional victimization. Often, but not always, there is a power differential between the individual engaging in sexual harassment (harasser) and the individual being harassed. Often the harasser holds some level of authority (real or perceived) over the individual being harassed. Organizations lose women employees disproportionately because definitions of what is right and good in the workplace, at least in the Indian contexts are almost always based on a masculine model.

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles and responsibilities of women and men in a given culture or location. These roles are influenced by perceptions and expectations arising from cultural, political, environmental, economic, social and religious factors as well as customs, law, class, ethnicity and individual and institutional bias. Gender



sensitivity encompasses the ability to acknowledge and highlight existing gender differences, issues and inequalities and incorporate these into strategic actions. Men and women are not created equal. They are different, and the corporate world is now forced to embrace this reality, rather than continue to operate on the fallacy that men and women should be treated the same. A gender sensitive workplace creates the right condition for optimal utilization of human potential. Managers, both men and women, must stay constantly attuned to these gender differences if they are to effectively manage across the gender divide, for e.g., respecting personal spaces, not crossing the line while giving a compliment, being aware and conscious of one's language and sense of humor etc. Globally winning companies are the ones who acknowledge the unique gender differences, embrace the idiosyncrasies, and create harmony in their workforce. In fact, we as a society

need to learn how to create this balance. A study conducted by Caliper, a Princeton-based management consulting firm concludes, "Women leaders are more assertive, possess stronger interpersonal skills (empathy, flexibility and sociability), are persuasive, have a stronger need to get things done and are more willing to take risks than male leaders. An article in Harvard Business Review by Zenger and Folkman states, "Two of the traits where women out-scored men to the highest degree - taking initiative and driving for results - have long been thought of as particularly male strengths". Conclusions; ignoring the well being of women in the workforce can be a bad business decision for India Inc., disoriented women employees affect the balance sheet. Sexual harassment and gender discrimination in the workplace has serious, detrimental effects on both the employees who experience it and the organizations in which it takes place. It is disruptive, stressful to all involved, and

often requires expensive legal and administrative solutions. Gender sensitivity and equal opportunities is not a new fad but a necessity for organizations aspiring sustainable growth.

Business schools aim to contribute business leaders to society. Business studies programmes are intended to prepare students to apply their education to real world challenges, experiences and opportunities. Research findings suggest gender attitudes and behaviors are learned and can be changed. Self assessment inventories, psychometric tests help students explore their personal values, perceptions and biases towards the opposite gender. Case studies, videos, live organizational examples, group discussions, role plays, workshops can help enhance gender sensitivity as well as highlight the implications of behaviors that are not acceptable in organizations. Our students should be taught to focus their energy, resources and raise awareness towards gender competence, work in synergy, and respect each other to enhance the quality of their personal and professional lives. The answer lies in acknowledging, understanding, respecting, and encouraging both men and women based on the proclivities of their genders. The business schools should not only try to harness the concept of gender sensitivity by conducting specific workshops; the concept of gender should be brought out by integrating it with the curriculum of different subjects. One of the big challenges before the business schools today is how to create gender sensitive managers for the corporate.

Authored by Dr Farida Virani, Head-of OB & HRM, MET College of Management, Mumbai and a senior member of Higher Education Forum (HEF)

## \* News bites

### HSSC affiliated Allied Health Sciences Course

The Allied Health Science Courses offered by P D Hinduja Hospital has now received an affiliation from the Health Sector Skills Council (HSSC), a not-for-profit organization. It is an initiative of Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC) and health-care service providers.

The hospital will conduct courses in four primary departments namely Radiology, Dialysis, Medical Laboratory and Operation Theatre. These courses will be beneficial to the students by giving them the opportunity to get certified under a government scheme.

The courses are being conducted in two formats:

**PART-TIME:** The part-time course begins from January and caters to practicing professionals who have passed HSC pass and have experience in the field. Duration: Seven months, with lectures held once a week.

**FULL-TIME:** The same courses are also available as full-time with duration of one year, catering to fresh graduates, for which the batches will start in August 2014.

**DURATION:** Other full-time courses (non-affiliated) from the Allied Health Sciences stable are MRD Technician, CSSD Technician and Physician office assistant courses. To know more about the courses, call Bhavisha Kharnare, Sr Manager - Special Projects and Academics on 9969644599 between 10 am to 5pm, Monday to Saturday.

### PGCP in Crafting Creative Communications

Mudra Institute of Communications, Ahmedabad (MICA) has declared open the admission application process for its one-year PGCP in Crafting Creative Communications. The admission procedure for this one-year certificate programme includes an online email test and personal interview.

The certificate course offers a specialisation in Crafting Copywriting or Art Direction, depending on the module chosen by the student.

**ELIGIBILITY:** While this course does not require participants to clear the CAT (Common Admission Test), a bachelor's degree or an equivalent qualification in any discipline recognized by the Association of Indian Universities is requisite. For participants in the Crafting Creative Communications - Art Direction (Module B), an equivalent diploma/degree in Fine Arts or Applied Arts is mandatory.

**DEADLINE:** The last date for submission of forms is March 15, 2014. For further details, log on to [www.mica.ac.in](http://www.mica.ac.in)

### Programme in Business Analytics

NIIT announced the launch of a 'Programme in Business Analytics'. The six-month programme has been developed by industry experts with inputs from several leading analytics companies and offers a balance between concepts and hands-on practice.

The programme is based on intensive assignments, case-studies, projects and uses a case-based approach to learning. Learners and professionals with a background in business management, engineering, mathematics, statistics, or economics can undertake this programme.

For further details,

### Timespro launches training programme for graduates

Timespro has launched a training course for graduates, in partnership with HDFC Bank to co-develop the content of the training course.

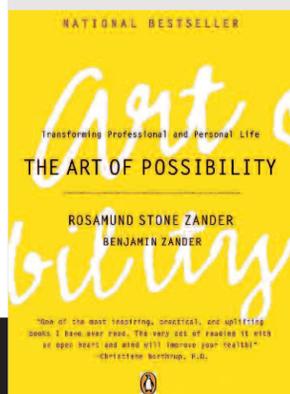
Extending to a little over two months, 'The Modern Banker Programme' is aimed at graduates under 25 years of age. As a part of the selection process, prospective candidates will have to first compete through a written test. Qualifying candidates will be interviewed by TimesPro in the first round, followed by a final interview with HDFC Bank. So, in effect, students who enroll for the course have the prospects of a job with HDFC Bank at the commencement of the training programme.

The programme will be held in cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Pune, Chennai, Hyderabad, Chandigarh, Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Jaipur and Bhubaneswar. Further details on the programme are available on [www.timespro.com/hdfcbank](http://www.timespro.com/hdfcbank), or on the toll free number 1800-102-2323.

The placement offered by HDFC Bank will typically be in towns across in the region / state where training is held.

## Being the change

Reading room



**The Art of Possibility: Transforming Professional and Personal Life**  
Author: Rosamund Stone Zander, Benjamin Zander  
Publisher: Penguin  
Cost: ₹ 550

**T**he Art of Possibility: Transforming Professional and Personal Life is written in the form of compelling stories, in which authors Rosamund Stone Zander and Benjamin Zander share principles and examples from real life. Even if the reading is easy, the action is not. The authors share perspectives that intend to change the readers' understanding of potential, what it is, and where it lies.

The authors say that human beings miss out most of what is going on around them. To be more observant, you need to shift the focus, which will enable you to see the opportunities for the first time. For that, the book has a lot of material and direction, if you are willing to follow. The authors contend that new ways of being, perceiving and thinking are required to thrive in our ever-changing world - a world in which we frequently can find ourselves "out of the boat." Developing these new ways requires the ability to draw a different frame around a given set of circumstances.

The book also says that when we measure things, our outlook gets narrow, and we think more about things being scarce than them being enough or abundant. It makes you focus on the fact that the glass is half empty. The authors encourage readers to read about the glass half full, offering perspectives on

optimism and how it can be empowering. Adopting this thought might make you aware of a host of new possibilities.

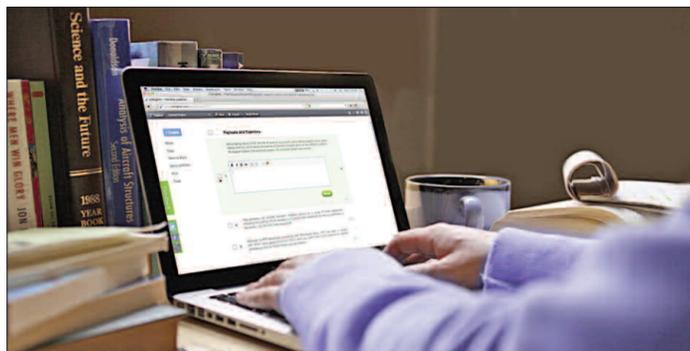
Next, they move on to more difficult concepts, which lie outside of us. The Zanders say that if you think that people around you will do well, and you motivate them to do so, they will! For instance, Benjamin gives every student in his class an A. He simply asks the student to write a paper to let him know what they will do along the semester to deserve the A. He says that the students start focussing on excellence, and lose the tension that impedes their good performance.

Since the authors are talking about life in general, they talk about a lot of stuff that lie within the person as well as outside. They ask the reader to think of him or her being a contributor to others and other things. They want the reader to constantly think "How could that change what I do?"

An important aspect of the book is that the authors ask the readers to "lighten up"! That is required for most people who are always racing and running in this fast-paced world. They also ask the readers to be aware of reality, rather than being disconnected to it. They mention that nothing in the world could change if there was no passion. They ask readers to make some space for passion, give way to feelings, and let these strong feelings guide you to being yourself.

Upfront, if you read the book at one go, after a point it looks like a lot of 'fluff'. With so many self help books flooding the market today, not to mention the material on the internet, one would think this is hardly needed. But, there are a few things that can help you change your life. Only you need to look at them with a different mindset, and set your mind to adopt the changes recommended. This is not easy, it will take a lot out of you, since it requires to put in a lot of thought into things that you do by mere rote or habit. The book can seem preachy at times, and if you are already happy with your life, you can give it a miss.

The review of this book is done at the request of our reader, management student Shikha Vyas. If you want to read the review of a particular book in this space, write to us at [knowledge@fpj.co.in](mailto:knowledge@fpj.co.in)



Say the word research, and the image you automatically conjure up is that of a person looking up something on a search engine. The internet, has totally changed the meaning of research, finds Vinita Bajari

## Looking up online

### In discussion

A few years ago, when you asked students to do some research on a topic and then present their findings, they would at least attempt to look up encyclopaedias and other material and books in the library. Today, that is not the case. Information is so dynamic, that the internet proves to be the best medium in doing research.

"First, let me clarify that when we say research, we mean looking up a particular topic, and learning more about it to either understand it better, apply the concept to solve a problem, or generally improve knowledge. We are not talking about conducting scientific research here," says market research teacher Vanita Shaswat. "And yes, you are correct. The internet has made it extremely easy for students, but I feel that it has also provided them with short cuts. That's what I am afraid of," she says, explaining that since many put up their opinions on blogs and other websites, students conveniently pass on these opinions as their own, and save themselves the trouble on thinking. "They have no clue what a great disservice they are doing to themselves," she nods her head.

Students believe that not only research, the internet is changing a lot of everyday

tasks. Whether it is banking, shopping, reading or even looking up the meaning of a word in the dictionary, the internet has changed the process. "And we cannot complain, since it is for the better. That individuals use it for unfair means is on the individuals, not on the internet. Imagine the human body's circulatory system. All our predecessors had were a few diagrams to learn it from. Our generation has easily available and accessible videos that show the system, the arteries and the veins and the flow of blood. It is amazing, since we are using so much more of ourselves in learning it," says MBBS student Ishita Merchant.

Students are happy with the dynamic information, and professional are happy that they can find all that they want on the same screen. "I remember the process of looking up a word in the dictionary. I had to get up first, then go to the cupboard, fish out the dictionary and then find the meaning. Today, I just open a new tab on my screen or go to the app on my phone. I am not complaining, it actually motivates me to be error free!" says a media professional who works in editing.

Experts, however, feel that looking up something online is a skill that one needs to acquire. And by learning how to research well, you can quickly and easily become knowledgeable about just about anything. It's just like being at your fingertips.

## Sharma Classes

Near Central Cinema (Girgaum)

23691225, 23678861

Failed 7,8,9? don't worry  
Pass SSC (Mum.) NIOS (Delhi)  
Failed F.Y./S.Y. Save your year

Failed XI? pass XII this Year

Pass B.A. / B.Com

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