

HUMAN VALUES & CASE STUDY BASED ON INDIAN ETHOS

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Abstract: Case analysis is nothing new; in fact it has been quite popular particularly among the management teachers and students. But its application in the areas of human values based leadership and stress management is quite novel. The present Paper, at the very outset, introduces the concepts of values and ethics as popularized among the students and professionals by (late) Prof. S K Chakraborty. Then while introducing the conventional ideas about Case Study and Case Method of teaching, it presents the salient features of the unique Prof. Chakraborty's Case Method based on Indian Ethos and brings out a precise comparative analysis between the two in terms of pedagogy, types and outcome. Then it opines that very few cases are actually written and disseminated based on Indian Ethos, not to speak of any pedagogy or method based on the same, the importance of which is increasingly felt, particularly in India, amidst the emphasis on 'self-reliance'. Then the Paper attempts to synthesise the two paradigms and argues that this is necessary for the holistic development of the students and participants. Hence it puts forward a strong case for introducing and popularizing Prof. Chakraborty's Case Method in the management curricula and EDPs in India and abroad.

Keyword: Indian Ethos; Case Method; Management; Human Values; Ethics

Case Study and Case Study Method are well known pedagogical instruments particularly in management education. They have been used in some other disciplines e.g. Law, Medicine etc. with different objectives and methodology. But their usage in inculcating the human values and leadership principles (among the corporate executives, professionals and university students) based on culturally rooted principles of Indian ethos is a novel experiment. We would like to delineate briefly the various aspects of this noble and pioneering endeavour of Prof. S K Chakraborty.

At the outset let us address the question—What are Values? Whom do we approach to get an answer? Einstein, arguably the greatest scientist of the last century, says—"a positive aspiration and effort for an ethical-moral configuration of our common life is of overriding importance. Here no science can save us."¹ Then who can save us? We classify the learned people into four basic categories—(1) Researchers 2) Scholars 3) Thinkers and 4) Realizers—there are levels higher than this but for all our practical purposes we stop here. For our purpose we generally refer to the thinkers and realizers.

Let us introduce the idea with a small illustration—Doctor 1(D1)-keeping a dead patient in the ICU to squeeze more money from patient's family, Doctor 2(D2)-giving free treatment once a week...What made these two doctors behave the way they did? D1-greed, D2-kindness. Now let us convince ourselves-greed, kindness etc. all are emotions emanating from the psychological heart and not intellect related to the brain. So we come to one very important conclusion-**Emotion is the driver of our personality, not intellect.** To clear any doubt, let us listen to some great thinkers-**Einstein** says –"Intellect cannot lead, it can only serve...It is blind to ends and values."² Again, **Swami Vivekananda** opines-"It is the heart

that takes one to the highest plane, which intellect can never reach”³.

These enduring emotions or *hridaybritti*(s) in a person which make him chose his goals as well as means to achieve them are called **Values**. Enduring emotion implies most predominant and often occurring emotion of a man e.g., for a short-tempered person anger is the predominant emotion.

By now we have probably noticed that these **emotions** are of two types-**positive and negative**. The positive emotions (really beneficial to the person as well as to the society) are called Human Values and negative ones (harmful to the person as well as to the society) are called Dis-Values. Intellect or *Buddhi-vritti* serves the emotions, itself being values-neutral. So D1 was driven by Dis-Values and D2 was acting under the influence of Human Values.

Now we will come to the other most important concept i.e. **skills**—which are the external methods and techniques to perform any task. Both D1 and D2 are highly skilled doctors-D1 being a renowned heart surgeon and D2 being a gynaecologist. So skills and values are the two dimensions of human personality (like the two wings of a bird). Both these parameters can be of two types-high and low. Thus we may have four combinations viz. This is a very effective and simple tool to classify oneself and others in an organization and take effective HR interventions. Please note values as we have presented here are universal and perennial whereas skills are domain specific and therefore dependent on space and time. Too much emphasis on skill development which is required to make them job-ready but too less on values—therefore more people are going to quadrant IV?.

Now we need to introduce the concept of ethics. **Ethics** may be defined as the external expressions of values within i.e. Values are the causes, Ethics the effect. In our previous illustration, D1 driven by DV(s) and high skills resorted to unethical activities, D2 on the other hand inspired by Human Values and high skills displayed ethicality. Thus, we find people in High Skill, Low Values quadrant will be most prone to be unethical.

Case Study – Conventional Thought: A conventional case is defined as a descriptive situation (mostly involving managerial problems which have actually occurred in an organization or in a business) which stimulates participants to make decisions—the participants are expected to apply their theoretical knowledge to develop new ideas to solve a problem or manage a situation. Case Study Method is mostly used as a training tool (particularly in Management Education) to develop decision making skills and at times to have other analytical skills regarding team building, inter-personal communication etc. According to Robert K Yin, case study research method is a ‘an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context’⁴. In management education, the case study method was popularized by Harvard Business School in early 20th century. In the last more than hundred years it has evolved into various types and forms and is being used in employee training and recruitment and selection apart from management education. Some scholars have differentiated between case study and case method—the former involves description of a real life situation in which how the problem was solved in real life is also disclosed to the learners whereas in the later, a situation or problem(may not be real life) is presented in which the solution is not hinted at, rather the learners are supposed to come up with ingenious solutions on their own based on their theoretical understanding -- for our present purpose we take both as slightly different versions within the same paradigm as the leaning objective remains the same in both cases viz. development of some specific

skills esp. decision making. Several improvisations are being observed now-a-days in the presentation and administration of the case-e.g. instead of traditional text-based presentation, now-a-days cases are presented through video or internet URLs, at times the case studies are followed by Role Playing sessions so that learners may better empathise with the characters and their problems depicted in the case. In general, the successful implementation of the case depends on the trainer's skill as well as on the motivation of the learners.

Prof. S K Chakraborty (1940-2018) (SKC) had been an ideal educator-a real āchārya. He had developed management courses and executive development programmes on Human Values, Ethics and Leadership based on Bhāratiya Paramparā (Indian Tradition) in which he had applied Case Study extensively. He is author and co-author of 41 books of which 28 are in the field of Indian Ethos, Ethics and Human Values in which he had documented many Cases based on his experiences and interactions with the executives and top leaders of corporate and other areas of management. He had travelled to most parts of the world for addressing seminars and conferences and holding workshops on Indian Ethos, Human Values and Ethics and Leadership in which Cases formed an indispensable tool. The present author feels blessed to have worked with him for many years and delivered more than hundred such programmes in the last nine years of his glorious life⁵.

SKC developed case studies in his own way, used them in his programmes and fine-tuned them based on the response. But the treatment of his cases was quite different compared to that of the conventional management cases used in B-Schools—while the cases in management institutes are conventionally designed and used to develop intellectually rational decision-making skills of the students(through the application of various decision making models and OR techniques), his cases were used to illustrate the theories developed by him and for individual values development—thus while the typical management cases revolve around situations and events, his cases were all targeted on individual personality. He used his cases as mirrors, in front of the participants, so that through the characters (who are real life examples) of his cases, the participants could self-introspect and understand their own personality dynamics (using his theories) and thereby get inspired to orient themselves in the right direction. Along with cases, he used autobiographical notes (mostly of top corporate executives and business leaders) as well as his dialogues with some prominent leaders of his times as pedagogical tools in his workshops. He developed a complete theoretical structure as well as a methodology and pedagogy of his own for genuine individual development from within.

A Case for Prof. S K Chakraborty's Case Method

- Prof SKC developed many cases in his own way & delivered them to thousands of top level executives in PSEs and private sector companies in India as well as in many universities in India & abroad in the last 36 years of his life (1982-2018).
- This author conducted such programmes in more than hundred such workshops along with him as well as conducted conventional case study sessions in many B-schools.
- Hence this presentation is based on direct experience in this field for many years in both paradigms.

Objectives of Prof. S K Chakraborty's Case Method

- Development of **Human Values**

- Development of Leadership traits based on **Rajarshi Leadership Model** developed by him
- Prevention and management of **Mental Stress**
- All his works are based on **Indian Psycho-philosophical Insights** particularly on Vedanta and Yoga philosophy

Conventional Case Study vs Prof Chakraborty's Case Method

ITEM	CONVENTIONAL CASE	PROF. SKC METHOD
WHAT	Actual Situation or Event Centric	Character Centric in mostly actual situations
WHY	To Develop (problem solving) Decision Making Skills, Team spirit, Communication & Inter-personal Skills	To Imbibe (problem prevention) Decision Making & Leadership Values, To Illustrate & Better Understand Theories Based on Indian Ethos, To Help in Self-Introspection & Interiorization
HOW	Situation or Event Analysis leading to Decision Making, No Judgmental Opinion of the Author, Does not Focus on Right or One Single Answer	Character Analysis based on Indian Psycho-Philosophy, Not Loaded with Quantitative Data, Mostly Qualitative & Experiential
PRESENTATION & ADMINISTRATION	Either exposed in Full or in Phases (Incident Method), GDs (mostly un-guided), Group Presentation, Problem Centric Discussion	Through Dialogue, Question Answer, guided GDs, Plenary Session Character Centric Discussions
INNOVATION	Internet or Video Based, Case Study followed by Role Play	Traditionally Oriented
EMPHASIS	Analytical, Logical, Quantitative, Intellectual, Skill Oriented, Specialisation (Functional, Sectoral or Country) Oriented, No Focus on Specific or Right Answer	Spiritual Synthesis & Logic Oriented (Case Method followed by special Meditation Session developed by SKC), Emotion & Human Values Orientation, Independent of Specialisation or Domain Skill-set, Focus on Specific Answer

PROF. SKC METHOD-TYPES

- A **real story** in organisational setting, where characters are more important than the incident/event e.g. 'National Electricals'
- **Dialogue or Discussion** among two or more persons e.g., 'Fast or Slow'
- **Interview** of eminent leader e.g. S P Godrej

- Certain number of **Vignettes** based on the experience of the author and their comparative analysis e.g. ‘*Yoga Khema Vahamyaham*’ and Oblivion

MAJOR OUTCOMES

- Better Comprehension of Theories
- Indirect analysis of one’s own character -- discovery of strengths and weakness
- Theoretical learning reinforced through practical illustrations
- Doubt clearing regarding theories
- Overall individual development in values dimensions

Prof. SKC’s workshops and Case Studies were very well received by the corporate participants. Many of them used to write to him expressing their feelings during and after the workshops and asking for suggestions and guidance. A subjective analysis of these feedbacks establishes the effectiveness of the above outcomes.⁶

In the present paradigm of disproportionate emphasis on skill development (which is undoubtedly very much necessary) a large gap is felt in the area of values development(or character making education) which is the root cause of most of the diseases in the individual as well as in the organizational or societal life.⁷ To attain comprehensive human development through the development of skills and values and thus to fill this void Prof. SKC’s method of Case Study should be included in the mainstream general and technical education including management education.

Notes & References

1. Einstein, Albert; *Ideas & Opinions*; Rupa & Co.(2009),p.53
2. quoted in Chakraborty, S K & Chakraborty, D; *Human Values & Ethics: In Search of Organisational Integrity*; Himalaya Publishing House, (2014),p.7
3. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda (CWSV)*, Advaita Ashrama,Kolkata,2009,vol.2,p.306
4. Yin, R K; *Case Study Research: Design & Methods*, Sage(1984),pp.7to24
5. For a brief account of the thoughts and works of Prof Chakraborty one may refer to: Sarkar, Bidyut Kumar; *Beyond The Autumn Clouds-A Tribute to Prof. S K. Chakraborty*; Prof. S K Chakraborty Memorial Trust(2019)
6. Chakraborty, S K; *Echoes from Another World: 'Manan Kendra'-Shraddhanjali Series:10(Monograph)*;Rabindranath Tagore Centre for Human Values(January 12,2013)
7. “We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas...”—Vivekananda Swami;CWSV,vol.3,p.302

“...the school education put entire emphasis on the intellect and physical side of man (i.e. skill development)...in India we have the inheritance of this

treasure of spiritual wisdom (the source of values/character development). Let the object of our education be to open it out before us and to give us the power to make the use of it in our life..."(comments within parentheses are that of the present author)—Tagore, Rabindranath; *Personality*; Rupa(2002);pp.136, 140

