

HERE & NOW



NAVIGATING A CHANGING WORLD

December -2021

FOREWORD TO HERE & NOW NEWSLETTER: ISSUE DECEMBER 2021



It gives me great pleasure to announce this issue of Here and Now. This issue looks at the impact of the changes that Covid19 has brought in, which have forced us to navigate in a different world.

Individuals and institutions actually have been resilient through these Covid19-affected months. ISABS, through its unique training methodology and mentoring support has shown us how to be resilient in our lives. But the test comes when we have to use our skills to navigate a changing world with hope and a positive outlook on life.

And this is why we have this as the theme of this issue of Here and Now. Our brilliant and open contributors have shared their experience of how they struggled, coped, and even leveraged the difficult Covid19 conditions and their fears to come out on top with a positive outlook on life.

The offerings in this issue of Here and Now are a mix of accounts of personal change experiences, organizational change initiatives, book and movie reviews, and updates on ISABS' activities in the various regions. We also honour professional members, G. Rajanna, Paul Siromani, KK Mehta, and CM Srivastava who have passed on after being in the ISABS fold for several decades.

Working online to bring out this issue is thanks to the contributions from the various authors and poets. It is also thanks to my team of Mukta, Sanjyot, Siddharth, VLK Sarma and Lakshmi, all of whom have worked tirelessly from their locations in Pune, Mumbai, Jamnagar, and Bangalore. The communication, ideas, editing, artwork, and design I owe entirely to them and the final product is truly a labour of love.

As always, please feel free to get in touch with us with your feedback and suggestions on isabs.hnn@gmail.com.

With kind regards and best wishes for Christmas and the New Year!

Kantha Rao V.N.
Dean-Research and Publications
ISABS
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FROM THE EDITORS' DESK



We are releasing this second issue for 2021 with the theme “Navigating a Changing World”. The theme is not a casual one. It is the overarching ethos of the world as it is today.

Over the long months of this year, Covid19 pandemic has continued to keep us cautious behind face masks and social distancing. The changed environment of the past 2 years is beginning to wear on many of us as we deal with the ‘new normal’ of the pandemic-stricken world around us.

In this issue, our contributors share their lived experience of self and the world around as they confronted challenges and struggles, both within and without as well as the joy in being with or discovering more about Self and others.

Ranjini Banerjee talks about her experience of an ISABS lab and how this has led to being comfortable in the ‘here and now.’ Shakti Sharan Roy analyzes and proposes how to deal with uncertainty, while Sonia Uttamchandani talks of her struggle to change fixed patterns of behavior. Veda Srinivasan shares her reflections on being locked down during Covid19 and how it provided an opportunity for creativity.

Tejinder Bhogal’s review of a documentary film gives us a look into the tipping point in a family when one action of a woman can change the power dynamics in the family. Tultul Biswas shares how the NGO she worked with helped schools and children with technological adaptation during the Covid19 crisis and the togetherness with children and communities that came as a result of it.

Abad Ahmad’s article on the relevance of planned organization development in a changing world reminds us how the best OD can transform an organization to a higher level of excellence and performance. Also

presented is a short report by Sonali Kelkar on ISABS' recently concluded ABS Summit which saw presentations, workshops, and IdeaSplashes by several Indian and global practitioners of ABS. This is the third such Summit ISABS has held in the past 5 years to include ABS streams other than T-Groups in the discourse of behavioral sciences.

A review of the book "How Stella Saved the Farm" by Mukta Kamplikar runs us through a fictional account of the animal world (much like Animal Farm). She shows how the book is a metaphor for disciplined change management and innovation. Other creative offerings are not far behind. Sushma Sharma, Mukta Kamplikar and Sushovan Sircar present lovely poems woven around feelings that accompany change.

Our Regional Update shows that ISABS' Regions have managed to rustle up energy and enthusiasm despite the Covid19 challenges and held meetings and events online. Eastern and Southern regions will hold the first in-person events in 2 years while the Northern region to hold an in person event in December! Do read for yourselves what they have to say in the Regional Roundup included in this issue.

A big 'Thank you' to the other members of our H&N team Kantha Rao, Sanjyot Pethe, Siddharth Shah, and Mukta Kamplikar who have quietly and without fuss followed up on authors (and even got a few people to write for the first time!). It is thanks to their untiring efforts that this edition of H&N is an interesting offering.

For us, as editors, being part of the H&N team has been a wonderful and rewarding experience of navigating change ourselves. We learnt to work on Google Drive editing the articles, enjoyed the back-and-forth in the many Zoom meetings with the editorial team and seeing all the work come together!

VLK Sarma and Lakshmi Raman



ARTICLES



RELEVANCE OF ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT IN A CHANGING WORLD

Dr. Abad Ahmad

In these highly turbulent times, with radical changes in the business environment and within organizations driven by highly innovative developments in Information & Communications Technology (ICT), efficiency and convenience in work may have improved. But human processes have become marginalized. Such change may have, in fact, led to decrease in effectiveness, innovative capabilities and developing a culture of high performance in these organizations. Increasingly, it is being realized that there is no substitute for face-to-face interaction in teams as well as in other role relationships along with virtual interactions. The emerging solution is a hybrid model combining both such methods of human interaction.

The rapidly changing business environment and pattern of working within organizations call for effective methods of introducing change in them. One of the most effective methods of introducing change in organizations is Organization Development (OD).

OD is a planned systematic and 'system-wide' change process based on Behavioral Science knowledge and skills, aimed at transforming an organization to a new and higher level of effectiveness and excellence. The main purpose of OD is to enhance the internal capability of an organization to cope with change in its external environment.

It is a holistic and value-based change process that enhances the organization's overall effectiveness by tapping its human potential and improving its human processes to evolve superior strategy, clarity and ownership of goals and roles, openness in communication, shared decision-making, conflict resolution, intra- and inter-departmental teamwork. It seeks to align individual and team motivation and goals with the organization's goals, develop leadership skills at all levels, and empower personnel across the organization to proactively develop creative and innovative solutions. A central theme of OD efforts is to develop a healthy, supportive, positive, value-oriented organizational culture that transforms it into a Learning Organization and enables it to continually and pro-actively adapt to the challenges of the dynamic, changing environment.

Being a holistic, client-centered, and long-term development approach, OD addresses all issues that emerge in the process as important: through data-based studies of the organization, with the active involvement of its client system. Therefore, in addition to the intangible human processes, it also focuses on the tangible aspects that affect organizational effectiveness such as Strategy, Structure, and Systems. According to some authors, a good place to start organizational change is to look at the 'content levers of change' which are critical for organizational performance such as Marketing, Quality, Costs, Technology (including innovation, knowledge development and utilization), and Human Resource Management. Each of these is supported by a set of structures, processes and procedures that need to be strengthened in the implementation stage in OD.

Unlike a top-down imposed change that usually leads to high resistance, alienation, and dysfunctional consequences, OD is a collaborative and participative approach that exposes all relevant levels and

functions to the possibilities of a meaningful, mutually beneficial, and constructive change. It achieves this by involving them in different phases - in diagnosing, developing a suitable strategy for change, its implementation, and evaluation. For this purpose, it utilizes well-developed Behavioral Science-based theories, models and methods that have been evolved through considerable research and experimentation by Behavioral Scientists and OD consultants. As emphasized by Nilakant and Ramnarayan, "Organizational change is not about restructuring, reorganizing, merging or downsizing... Fundamentally it is all about changing the ways in which people think and act in an organization. It is about mental models and mindsets.." Some of the well-known theories and models that provide the conceptual framework for OD programs are the Action Research Model, the Force-Field Theory of Change, Process Consultancy, Learning Organization, and Appreciative Inquiry.



The Action Research Model that underpins most OD programs explicates the basic elements in a planned change process in the organizations and social systems. It consists of collecting relevant and valid data and feedback to relevant individuals, groups, and levels in the organization. It means joint diagnosis, joint action planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation - through inter-personal, small group and large group interventions.

The success of OD in transforming an organization to a higher level of excellence and performance requires the full support, commitment and involvement of the Top Management, and long-term engagement to introduce change in the total system, a selected unit, or a sub-system of the organization. Usually, such a change process is facilitated by professional OD consultants, although internal OD-like change efforts by top

management or leadership too have been found to be very successful in transforming organizations.

Most organizations abroad and in India in the public, business, and industrial sectors, as well as in sectors like healthcare and other public systems that have earnestly engaged in professionally-conducted OD efforts driven by the leadership and vision of the top management, have achieved remarkable results.



Dr. Abad Ahmad has worked closely with the pioneers in T-Groups and ABS and is a founder member of the ISABS. He has been Chairman, Aga Khan Foundation India and Pro Vice Chancellor, University of Delhi. He has done extensive consultancy assignments on Organization Development and executive development programs for a large number of public and private sector organizations.

Dr. Abad Ahmad was awarded the "Richard Beckhard Award for exemplary work and contribution to the field of OD" by the International Organization for Organization Development (IODA).



UNITED WE STAND – AN NGO’S RESILIENCE IN TURBULENT TIMES

Tultul Biswas

I have been part of Eklavya Foundation – first as a student volunteer, learning and contributing at the same time, then as an editorial staff, and now as a member of the Academic Council that steers the organization’s work and academic policies. Eklavya was set up in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh in 1982. As soon as it was founded, it was entrusted with taking ahead the pioneering Hoshangabad Science Teaching Program. Over the years, Eklavya has developed academic programs in languages, in mathematics for the primary school level and in social science for the middle school level. It also brought in important dimensions of community engagement in education to the fore-front of educational discourse in the country.

In a sense, the reason Eklavya has been able to weather the storms in its life and bring about some change in educational thinking in the country is because it has, over the years, learnt to allow itself to adapt, change and be responsive to the external environment. The recent pandemic witnessed the same resilience in the Eklavya team and helped us adapt to face the adversities of lockdown and prolonged school closure. Just as the Covid19 case-loads were rising in early 2020, and an impending closure of sorts was round the corner, a technical team within Eklavya set up systems for enabling work from remote locations for all its staff. From accessing office-based server machines from remote locations to orienting team leads in using various platforms like Zoom and Google Meet, most of the Eklavya members were prepared to shift to a home-based work model by 15th March 2020.

Technological adaptation settled, the next challenge was to keep the team members scattered in different and sometimes remote locations together and keep their morale up. By the first week of April 2020, the field project teams had started online daily reading and discussion sessions - in groups of 10 or 20. Connecting for about 2 hours every day, these sessions served two vital purposes. Firstly, they gave space to all to share the challenges they faced, and to offer emotional support to each other as part of a community. Secondly, they truly became Communities of Practice, where we were reading and reflecting on our work together - trying to link theory, praxis, and learning, bonded by shared intellectual stimulation.

However, communicating with school students was a different type of challenge. When the pandemic-related lockdown was imposed in March 2020, Eklavya was actively working with over 60,000 children and some 2000 government schoolteachers across the rural stretches of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. The field teams were not able to reach out to students although they continued interacting with teachers over the phone even during the lockdown phase. These interactions were mostly built around the challenges teachers were facing in different Covid19- related duties being thrust on them, together with their own learning needs in such challenging times. Some teachers willingly joined Eklavya’s online reading and academic enrichment sessions. We saw that these interactions threw up disheartening images: most teachers had been entrusted with the duty to ensure their students’ digital learning and were quite frustrated trying, with very little success, to connect with the students through cell phones.

Our sustained interaction with government schoolteachers and our dialogue with the Rajya Shiksha Kendra (RSK or State Office of Education, MP) brought into focus the digital divide we are living in. It re-emphasized the need to reach out to children face-to-face. In a series of meetings at the state level, the

RSK team with a few NGOs working on education jointly worked out a campaign called the Hamara Ghar Hamara Vidyalaya (HGHV). Under this program, teachers would visit their neighborhoods and work with parents in reaching formal schooling to children. Within the HGHV campaign was mooted the idea of Mohalla (neighborhood) classes – an idea that Eklavya had already tried out successfully in several of its field areas and hence advocated strongly.

Eklavya has been running community-based learning support centers called Shiksha Protsahan Kendras (SPKs) that reach out to the most marginalized first-generation school-goers. These centers provide them with the academic support that is needed to sustain them in mainstream schools. SPK centers have been a model of reaching meaningful learning experiences to children from the wage-laborer, landless agricultural laborer, Dalit, and Adivasi families in remote rural areas. Since education is not solely the result of schooling, but has a lot to do with family, parental, sibling, and neighborhood support, an SPK serves to create a community-based solution for children who lack home support in education, often because they are the first generation literates in their families.

Health and safety cautions kept schools closed for the better part of the academic year 2020-21 and large congregations of children and group activities were disallowed. Eklavya therefore decided to go back to the system of neighborhood school and decentralized the SPKs further by taking it to each locality/hamlet where a child resides. Thus emerged the Mohalla Learning Activity Centre (Mohalla LAC), a comfortable learning space in the immediate vicinity of the child, aimed to continue engagement, with meaningful and joyful learning experiences scaffolded by either an older sibling or local youth or a parent.

Our experience with the approximately 600 Mohalla LACs tells us that the most crucial and immediate need is to help children get out of home and meet their peers and deal with the prolonged stress that they have been undergoing. Children who study in government schools come from some of the most socio-economically marginalized families. Stress has been high in these families for many months – leading to both oppressive and depressive circumstances within households. The Mohalla LAC space offers children a space to get away from these stressful situations at home and be with peers, and express

themselves by talking, writing, and drawing their experiences of the lockdown and more. Lastly, what the pandemic further strengthened in Eklavya is the organizational value of staying together. As we faced a funds crunch for a number of ongoing sanctioned projects, and revenue generated through sales of publications plummeted, the Eklavya Board stayed together to find solutions. It was decided that firstly, no staff would be laid off due to the financial crisis the organization faced. Secondly, as we had to tighten



our organizational belts, a tiered system of reverse salary cuts was worked out - with higher-paid staff bearing the biggest cuts and those in the lowermost salary slab facing no cuts at all. This was implemented from August 2020 till March 2021. And when finances stabilized, it was discontinued. This spirit of staying together to find solutions and keep everyone safe together on a rocking boat has been the bedrock of Eklavya's resilience strategy – practiced and perfected over 40 years of its existence.

The Aesop's fable of 'Unity is Strength' – where a bundle of sticks were easily broken when they were separated, but not so in a bundle suddenly held new meaning for us. It was a lived reality that we as a community practiced.



Tultul Biswas did her masters in Chemistry and Sociology and taught in a school in Bhopal. She started working with Eklavya Foundation (www.eklavya.in) in 1991 and is now part of a team engaged in designing learning opportunities, workshops, short courses for teachers and grass-root level education activists to bring about change in classroom practices.

Mother of a 15-year old daughter, Tultul is a part of the Indian feminist movement. She has a keen interest in folk and classical music.

A CHANGE IN MY LIFE – MERGING TRADITION AND MODERNITY

Anitha Reddy

Early 2020, way before covid struck, the dominant emotions I was experiencing were uncertainty, fear, and chaos. But that was just me. I felt like a lone warrior, fighting a losing battle against a sinking hole that was pulling me deeper and deeper into it. With feeling that I had no control over it and no logical solution in sight, the only thing that helped me find anchor and gave strength was to move towards spirituality, towards rituals that gave me a sense of peace and trust. Saying my prayers with complete belief that someone somewhere was listening to them and would hear my cry.

I was blessed to have a few friends with whom I could share what was happening in my life. It was during these discussions that we realized that having someone to speak to made it easier to face the challenges. Thus germinated the idea of **talkyng**, a safe space where people can come together to share and listen to each other's life experiences. As we began implementing the idea in February 2020, I was wondering how to enable people to speak about something when they considered theirs a lonely battle. It seemed a difficult take, would they trust this space?

At this juncture Covid struck. And suddenly uncertainty, fear and chaos became a global phenomenon.

Thanks to an opportunity to volunteer for the Government of Karnataka Covid Control Room, I saw the scale of impact from different angles. There is no government that could have been prepared for this kind of a situation. While each of us was coming to terms with what it meant to us, the uncertainty, fear, and chaos were visible everywhere. People not knowing if they would have a job the next day. Fear of death, fear of hospitalization with no known treatment. Fear of losing a loved one. Fear of helplessness if Covid19 struck. Helplessness all around, including us as volunteers seeing that daily wage worker travel back to his native place with a small bag and zero savings. There was chaos, with so much misinformation floating around.

And what struck me was that across all classes of people, the anchor points were similar - ritual, prayer, spirituality. Somehow, our logical thinking had taken a step back. The race for having more wasn't as relevant to most people. Just being alive, surviving, being in the here and now was important. I wouldn't say all, but definitely a larger section of society moved towards believing in a Power that we can't see or prove.

And we were doing it together. The fact that it was a global phenomenon made it easier to speak about our fears. As stories were being shared at **talkyng**, I saw the same phenomenon flowing there as well. While uncertainty, chaos and fear were still around, the hesitation to talk about these reduced. And by talking about it, we were better equipped to work through the challenges. Where the path was unclear, prayers, rituals and traditions became the most discussed topics. Gratitude became the most used, thought and sought after word.

As I was reflecting, it occurred to me that we had this knowhow with us through so many centuries. Scripts passed on from our ancestors gave us guidelines on concepts which were beyond logical thinking. I remember my mother playing *Vishnu Sahasranamam* in the mornings and me getting irritated with her. Festivals meant traditions which required extra work and I would ask why we were still stuck with irrelevant rituals. I loved wearing a saree but if I were going to a happening party, I would change into more western attire.

Somewhere I believed that traditions, rituals, and prayer were what old-fashioned people did; and I didn't want to belong or be associated with them. I called myself a forward thinker and staying with anything 'ancient' was not my cup of tea. I would proclaim that I was spiritual but not religious because that was the cool thing to say. I am not judging myself right now. Being told that I couldn't enter a temple or touch certain things while having my menstrual cycles had left some scars on me as a 13-year old girl.

Modernity or tradition, dismissing either by boxing it may not be the way forward. How about merging both? How about we understand our rituals and traditions better and keep what works for today and discard what's not relevant?

As I navigate through these changing times, I am reflecting on traditions that are dear to me and how they are helping me in meaning-making. Lighting the lamps on Diwali night is more than symbolism today for me. I say my prayers with the intention to invite prosperity and abundance. I connect the quote "Darkness is nothing but the absence of light" to my Diwali celebrations. On *Ugadi* (Telugu New Year, also celebrated as *Gudi Padwa* in Maharashtra and elsewhere), we make a drink mixing jaggery, raw mango, neem leaves, tamarind, salt, and chili powder – bringing together 6 flavors. It is a symbolic reminder to be prepared to experience all types of flavors that life has to offer. On *Ganesh Chaturthi*, my most favorite festival, I am learning to be okay with letting go. I invite Ganesh, the elephant God into my home with all fervor, knowing very well that when it is time to send him back to the earth, I do it with the same fervor.

There are some traditions with which I don't agree. I prefer donating milk rather than pouring it on the *Shivling*. Festivals are more about meeting family and friends rather than indulging in gold and expensive gifts.

Now when I play the *Vishnu Sahasranamam* shlokas in the mornings as an anchoring exercise, I see my mom smiling and saying "Oh, you don't get angry about it *now*?" My children comment "Oh, you are behaving like your mom now". I look at them and smile, hoping they will feel differently about it when they grow a little older. I hope they will make their own identity by merging their ancestral traditions with their present.

The merging of the traditional and the modern has allowed me to be able to look beyond me, my family, and my friends. There is a sense that we are all one, connected to each other. The traditions have helped me to deep dive into myself and connect to a source of energy, to love that which I didn't understand

before. There is a sense of peace and lightness every time I practice meditation or yoga or go into Nature and connect to the elements.



A recent trip into the Himalayas brought out these reflections in action. I am sharing here a photograph from the trip.

That's me at Everest Base Camp wearing a saree with bulky shoes. Embracing my culture, doing what I love and yet being functional. A friend commented "Saree with sneakers epitomizes you". For me it was simply a joyful moment of self-expression which came from being comfortable with who I am. As I look deeper, I am discovering many more ways to continue exploring myself. It gives me courage to keep going back to the knowhow our scriptures gave us. I hope this story spurs others to write more such stories of merging the old and the new as we

move forward!



Anitha Reddy is Co-Founder, Talkyng. She has Done her Phase-A as part of her ISABS Journey. She is an adventurer who loves trekking and travelling and can be reached at anitha.explorer@gmail.com

AN EXPERIMENT IN ENCOUNTERING CHANGE

Karishma Chhabria

As children, we were taught that experiments are only conducted in Science labs. No one ever told us that we would need to experiment with our behaviors and life on a daily basis later in life.

Here is how my life has transpired – as a child growing up, I only had one dream – to be an air hostess. That was how I had decided the course of my life would be and that is how it went. My dream came true and I started flying with a reputed airline. Only to realize a few years later that I cannot do this for a lifetime. That realization brought me to Ground Zero.

And so, there I was, with no plan, no higher education under my belt. That's when my first experiment with change began. Calling it difficult would be an understatement. Finding new footing, new grounding to take flight into a new way of life, lesser salary and hence a reduced lifestyle, and many more such changes that come along in a Domino Effect. Yet, it all worked out and I did find my new ground and moved into the training profession.

Why am I saying all this here?

Because, while I pen my thoughts about change, I realize that this is probably *that* constant in life for which we were never trained. We were taught Science, Maths, other subjects, and various languages. It makes me wonder: would life be any different if dealing with change and its consequences had been taught to us in our formative years?

Would we be more Flexible in our mindset?

Would we be less Anxious as people?

Would we be able to deal better with Beginnings & Endings?

Would we be more Emotionally intelligent?

And of course the 'Less' side, which is:

Would there be lesser cardiac arrests and hypertension around?

Would we enjoy better mental health?

Would Suicide rates be lesser?

Would we be able to react better if things didn't go our way?

Would our relationships be healthier and more accommodative?

Would we be more Open to situations?

And many more such 'woulds' emerge in my mind as I go on with this article. Most answers to the above questions also emerge, leaning more towards a Yes and bringing in vibrant possibilities.

The way life and our existence is designed spells the word Change – Day to Night, Life to Death with various phases in between. Sunset & Sunrise, phases of the Moon, the movement of planets around us, the change of Seasons, the Concept of Time itself... All of these tell us how we were designed to change. However, the existential world of literature, mythology, folk tales, and movies seem to go in exactly the opposite direction .

Bollywood movies, folk tales and myths have time and again mentioned how people don't change and how heroic that is. In the Epic Ramayan, Lord Rama's morals and principles never changed, which led to the sacrifice of Sita. But, ironically, Lord Rama is more worshipped than Sita is!

Moving on to the epic Mahabharata, where Duryodhana, whose evil ways led to the end of a kingdom. To his mother Gandhari who chose to not remove her blindfold and decided to not help prevent its destruction. What about memes like “Main Apni Favourite Hu” in Jab We Met and “Bas bol diya toh bol diya” in another popular movie?

And if you start making a note, you will find many more such stories and instances around you, some of them very deeply rooted in our very own social conditioning and the laws of religion, caste, gender that sternly state you mustn't change.

Hasn't all the literature promoted not changing? Whereas change itself seems to be not changing. it's no wonder that Life and the constant movement in life is the prime reason for stress, burnout, breakdowns in relationships and self-worth.

Having acknowledged above that growing up, we weren't taught about change, I think this should be considered a serious subject for education in the formative years. I come to the *Here & Now*. What is it that each of us can do to make our relationship with change better? How can we take individual responsibility to pass on this learning to future generations?

These are a few thoughts that come to mind. And while you read this, you may well come up with your own and contribute to the very Law of Life. It's almost like conserving the Environment, the Emotional Climate of Human life:

- Pause – Reflect – Acknowledge what Change does to us
- Journal your stimulus response to any kind of change
- Understand your Anxiety – see if it's a habit or a habitual response to things
- Meditate and Centre yourself to what is happening within you
- Treat Change as an experiment and know it can go either way or any way
- Be more Accepting of a current situation
- Try and not be stuck in your own old ways
- Be in touch with every feeling that passes within you and communicate your thoughts and feelings
- Don't fool yourself & deny what is happening Here and Now
- Don't create a coping mechanism that can often turn into a defense strategy which doesn't help
- Distraction is another word for Stalling and hence not helpful in anyway
- Know that talking to a therapist can be immensely helpful and will enable you to view things more objectively
- Don't try and differentiate between the Head and the Heart – truth be told, our heart has only been put in place to regulate blood flow & keep us alive. Everything else - from Cupid to logic to emotions - the Head is responsible for. Sorry to break that Bubble 😊
- Lead a more conscious lifestyle – mentally, physically, emotionally
- Create a more aware generation, educate others wherever you feel you can
- Positive influence always works when you are seen to Practice what you preach
- Change the narrative of the word Change in your own Ideology and Mind set
- Be willing and open to Newness, no matter how uncomfortable it makes you
- And lastly – keep Faith in yourself and your ability to manage yourself better – you my friend were pretty much designed for it!

Writing this article has allowed me to think more broadly, speak my thoughts out loud and created more belief in my capabilities to think about Life and Change. This enforces my belief in Journaling and the power of Reading my own thoughts.

So my dear readers, Life and everything that comes with it is an Experiment. If there is something our journey in ISABS has taught us – it is that Experiments come with consequences and that the choice is always ours to make.

Risk, Authenticity, Spontaneity and Communication are the 4 wheels of the Vehicle of Life we drive.

Remember, it is not Change but the Journey to Change that defines you. Try and enjoy Change, it may lead you to a better destination than you ever imagined.



Karishma is a Corporate Trainer & a Behavioural Coach and is the Director at – Get Skilled Training Solutions.

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LEVERAGING AN ENVIRONMENT OF UNCERTAINTY

Shakti Saran Roy

While the term ‘Uncertainty’ has always been a favorite subject of management gurus and behavioral science experts, it seems to have suddenly become a buzzword in the aftermath of Covid-19. Most of the discussions around uncertainty, however, are about how to manage, how to overcome, and how to handle it.... But here, I suggest that we shift our focus on how to leverage it. That, I think, would make a real difference to us.

It is not as if I am saying something new, or that no one has thought about it before me. Yet, I think some readers may find something different in the way I am approaching it.

Before we talk of ‘Leveraging,’ let us first look at ‘Uncertainty’ in terms of what it is and what its impact on the environment is on our psyche, thinking process, emotions, the outcomes etc. in terms of the extremes of the continuum associated with it.

There is a common perception that ‘Certainty’ is positive and ‘Uncertainty’ is negative. That certainty automatically leads to steady growth and success. But is it really so? Or is it just a myth that we carry in our minds? Let us look at both of these in a little more detail.

Impact of Certainty vs. Uncertainty				
1	2	3	4	5
ABOUT	CERTAINTY		UNCERTAINTY	
	Positive	Negative	Negative	Positive
Things around	Clear, defined	Rigid orderliness	Ambiguous	Open to risks
Intellect	Comfortable	Dormant	Uncomfortable	Challenging
Internal stance	Confident	Fixated	Unsure, shaken	expectant
Attitude of self	Relaxed, Complacent	Careless	Giving up, hopeless	Charged up by challenge
Senses	Eased	Dulled	Tensed	Alert, sharpened
Availability of data, instructions	Clear rules	Fixed, set, cannot cross boundaries	Caught up in search for patterns	Creating own rules
Approach to issues	Routine, No stress	Casual	Subdued, defensive, withdrawn	Proactive

How to proceed	Just follow rules	Bound by rules	Lost in search for directions	Take initiative
Solutions	Readily available	Follow precedence, no risk-taking	At sea, no precedence	Using creativity, setting precedents
Resources	Available routinely	No scope for innovations	Not available, resource myopia	Create, invent, innovate resources
Results	Already set	Failure unacceptable	Unknown, no yardstick for success	Setting own targets / milestones
Growth pattern	Steady growth	Only incremental growth	Dipping	Looking for quantum jumps
Feelings about Success	Satisfied with nominal gains	Nothing to celebrate, boring	Fear of failure, avoiding failure	Joy of success / overcoming challenges
Likely attitude of others	No scope for criticism	No appreciation either	Ridicule	Surprise appreciation

I have tried to plot just some of the parameters and possibilities. You may add others that come to mind. Some of the basic possibilities that we see from analyzing the above are:

1. Both 'Certainty' and 'Uncertainty' can have positive or negative outcomes. In fact, the continuum can be seen as a curve from Certain/positive to Uncertain/positive.
2. Col. 2 & 3 depict the two extremes of positive and negative for 'Certainty', while Col. 4 & 5 pertain to similar possible outcomes of 'Uncertainty'.
3. While the external environment of 'Certainty' or 'Uncertainty' is largely beyond our control and largely unavoidable, how we respond to it and allow it to influence or even overwhelm us is internal to us.
4. While the two columns under each depict the two extremes of the continuum (positive and negative), individuals and organizations would generally be operating at some intermediate point in between the two extremes. However, you can define the general stance as positive or negative by looking at the tilt to either side of the curve.
5. There is no guarantee that a positive approach will always result in success, but the reverse is almost usually true. By giving up and doing nothing, we are certainly not going to get anywhere.
6. Even if you don't succeed after tilting towards Uncertain/positive in column 5, you would at least have had the satisfaction of having tried sincerely, would have learnt from the experience, and

most probably gained some admirers and well-wishers. All these will be extremely useful for you in the next venture.

How to develop the ability for a positive approach in the midst of uncertainty

There are so many training programs on Leadership, Problem Solving, Creativity, Innovation, Decision Making, and so on. There are also any number of books which propound a lot of theories, and recommend structured exercises, experience sharing and motivational talks on multifarious topics. You may hopefully get equipped in those various areas by reading them. But theory is not experience and might translate into learning only to a limited extent. .

In contrast, let us take Sensitivity Labs (short for 'laboratories') such as ISABS offers. The only objective is knowing the impact of self on others, discovering your own dormant potential and some such others. This is as Greek to the participants as to the organizations that sponsor them. I have faced this query from many of the sponsors who have not attended the lab themselves, and hence ask blankly 'Actually, what do you teach in the labs?' Their faces become even more blank after I have tried to explain what we "teach." Yet, they keep sending their personnel to the labs. It is probably because they see the positive change in them after the lab experience. My biggest motivator (and sponsor) for labs has been my wife, who is always encouraging me to do lab after lab. So there must be something to it. I must be doing something right after each lab! For the limited purpose of this article, let us look at how a sensitivity lab might equip you for 'Uncertainty.'

As mentioned just now, the uncertainty starts right from the objective of the lab itself. Without any defined topic, you don't really know what is going to happen. Going back to the table above, you would see that all the factors and impacts associated with the uncertainty in the environment today, also occur once you enter the lab. You live with a total lack of rules, agenda, procedure, precedents, guidance and even the objective in the lab - not once but several times over a day and till the last day. There are cycles and repetitions. Just as you think that you have gotten over the initial shock and that things are clear now, there is some intervention which compels you to look at another angle, another ambiguity. Taking initiative, setting your own agenda for learning, communicating, creating norms, problem solving, overcoming resistance to ambiguity and fear of ridicule, experimenting with new behavior, trial, and error, moving from fear of failure to joy of success, identifying and leveraging resources that were erstwhile not visible, innovating – the whole range of responses listed in columns 4 and 5 are lived through. It is a common phenomenon that lab participants steadily move from the fear of uncertainty to welcoming uncertainty and risk-taking and the energy it brings as the lab progresses. So it is not as if you only learn the theory of being and becoming. You go through a process of experiencing the changing of your own mindset and also practice looking at the world through it simultaneously. What is it but equipping yourself to deal with 'Uncertainty'? The pace of each participant and the final extent of shift each one makes from coping with uncertainty to celebrating it (col. 4 to col 5) might vary, but there is no doubt that each one surely makes a shift, with very rare exceptions.

So, if we conclude that you develop the ability to deal with uncertainty in a lab, the next obvious question is how to leverage uncertainty, because that is what I have put as the title of this article.

Asking this question is like asking ‘how to eat’ after you have learnt to cook. Well, when you know how to cook and are hungry, you will surely cook something and would know how to eat it. It comes quite naturally. That is to say, when you know how to handle uncertainty positively, you will surely use your abilities to meet your needs suitably by seizing the opportunity as it arises. Despite the fact that this is one of the learnings from a lab not mentioned in the objectives, the lab does teach you to appreciate the present moment. ‘*Carpe diem*’ (seize the day)!

Remember the famous saying – ‘Necessity is the mother of invention’? To that we may add – ‘Uncertainty is the father of Innovation.’

Happy Leveraging Uncertainty.



Shakti is a professional member of ISABS. He is a mechanical engineer but got interested in human behavior after attending his first lab at ISABS. Shakti then spent about last 15 years of his service career as a faculty in HR related topics. He is now retired.



MY STRUGGLE TO CHANGE

Sonia Uttamchandani

When Sanjyot reminded me to follow-up on my intention to contribute an article to Here and Now, I had to draw on my reservoir of Resilience to make sure that I delivered on it at least this time!

As I reflected on what to share through this article, I realized that I have had a very “mixed” relationship with the word “Change” since my childhood.

I would like to share two personal anecdotes in this context, which some readers from India can easily relate to.



During my childhood, I saw that my parents had strong values such as a good home means a neat and ordered home. Ironically, this was to me, a welcome rule that brought order and peace. Another thing was always wearing slippers at home in order not to dirty bed-linen and clothes. I loved wandering barefoot which I did while Dad was away. When it was time for him to return home, our slippers would be back on, but on the odd day that my father summoned me for something, I would be caught barefoot. Oh, how difficult it was for me to change!

I recall having a basket of my favorite toys during the same growing years. My mother used to talk to me often while chopping vegetables, and those used to be my favorite moments, talking, and listening to her. One day she asked me whether, now that I was growing up, I would be willing to gift those toys to someone who could least afford them? As Diwali was fast approaching, she suggested that this might be a good time to check on what toys I wanted to give away.

I immediately said “Yes”!!!! As I looked into the basket, each toy or set of toys brought back fond memories as they were all lovingly gifted by some dear aunt or uncle on special occasions. But a voice within me said “This Diwali, I want to be the child who gifts her most loved toys to another so they too can play just like me.” And I gave away the whole lot of it without retaining a single item.

These two experiences, in particular the second experience narrated above, holds a powerful metaphor for me in the context of “change,” whether it be related to self or inter-personal settings, at home or in groups or on the work front. Until we experience “a strong intrinsic pull” to change, no power on earth can make us change.

Whether in the corporate world or social settings of working in groups, we are deeply influenced by social mores, beliefs and assumptions, family values, past experiences and suchlike which act as

external “propellers” for change. The need to succeed, to excel and to beat the competition and win coveted awards or recognition, for instance, are also a few external propellers

As Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs indicates, as we mature and grow, the need for societal recognition grows stronger. Because of this, we may continue to satisfy our hunger to learn and grow and the desire to leave a lasting legacy. ***In the process, we learn to ‘navigate change.’***

It goes without saying that the pace of this navigation can be energizing at times and at other times, painfully sapping of our own nervous system and that of those around us.

Just like the plethora of colors that exists in Nature and continually change their hues, change in us can happen in myriad ways. It could be rapid, or even painfully slow, taking several days, months or even years.

Viewed from a reductionist perspective, change, when completed, can be compared to a vast mountain disintegrating into the desert, or to an instantaneous evaporation of water into steam. And there could be many shades of grey in between. However, elemental to all change(s) that I have experienced and keenly observed in me and others is a process of struggle that brings about clarity in the mind and frees up mental space and energy when a person is ready to let go of her/his mental baggage.

I have had some of the most memorable experiences of change during my ISABS Labs {short for ‘laboratories’} and with my mentors or coaches. The inner process of struggle to change is similar in lab settings too. However, in my experience, for change to set in and become sustainable, the undernoted three steps are a prerequisite:

Firstly, I need to be ready to deal with the discomfort of critical feedback and questions from others (struggle to see how I come across to others). Secondly, I must openly and authentically evaluate what is presented to me by others (struggle for clarity). And thirdly, I need to feel the need to change strongly within, leading to decisions on what behavior to give up, what to modify or sublimate for something new to emerge in me (struggle to behave differently). No worthwhile change will come about in me – or, for that matter, others - until the above process has been set in motion.

Some habits and beliefs are so deep-rooted in our psyche, that in order to change them, we need honest insight and resilience. At such times, the process itself may need further iterations, as newer steps or yardsticks for clarifying keep emerging!

In order to help birth the process of change in a more integral way, I find these coaching questions to be highly relevant:

1. Who do I become as I act, respond, or show up the way I do? (As against ‘who do I yearn to be?’)
2. What matters most to me? (In the primordial laws of the Universe, one can’t have everything one wants, hence the need for informed choice)
3. What makes me feel lighter / alive / joyful / free? (Life need not be a burden of only ‘To-do’s,’

My question to myself at a spiritual level: What am I willing to let- go of or sacrifice to realize my higher self?)

And as I confront some of these questions about myself, I am sure to find nooks and crannies I overlooked but am also sure to be rewarded with the juice of life called "Choice."

But that calls for another piece like this one, doesn't it?



Sonia Uttamchandani has 3 decades' professional experience in Corporate Finance and Business Excellence. For past 5 years she is helping individuals, build greater capacity for trauma healing & leadership in life. The gentle yet deep work of SE & NVC forms the bedrock of this practice. In her personal time she enjoys reading, being in nature, listening to mystic poetry/music, Vipassna, Indian Yoga & dabbling with numbers. She can be reached at resilientpractitioner@gmail.com



NAVIGATING THROUGH TIMES OF CHANGE

Veda Srinivasan

We have heard the maxim that change is the only constant and we have dealt with change all our lives. Yet, current times have become the symbol of change like never before. Everyone has experienced the changes that the last two years have brought into our lives. I am sharing some thoughts on how I saw this change and what are some of my reflections on the same.

The value of what you have in hand is always perceived as higher than the value of what you are going to get. Therefore, you hesitate to let go or resist moving forward. Maybe because of the force of habit, we consider what we have a better option. When we are aware of our own resistance and begin to see things on their own merit (and not based on what we are comfortable with), then possibilities open up.

When the lockdown started in 2020 as a result of the pandemic, I experienced it like solitary confinement. It was not even possible to step out of the house for a walk; and since I live alone, it was quite challenging. There were many things I could do to pass the time, but like a sugar rush these activities left me more depleted than nourished

I have always believed that the universe holds me. And this time, it came in the form of the Yoga Sutras. I had been interested in enrolling for this course conducted by Raghu Anantharayanan of Sumedhas Academy, but it was in-person. Being out of India made it tough for me. However, due to the pandemic, it was made an online offering and I could enroll. The wisdom shared in these sutras became an anchor that not only stabilized me but also gave me a framework to deepen my spiritual growth. We were given a book written by Raghu titled “Learning through Yoga” and one line from the book has stayed with me: “What if you were to accept life as it comes to you?” Contemplating on this one sentence revealed so much to me. I began to ask “What does this moment offer me? Where is the resistance within me coming from? What does this reveal about me?”

As I stopped resisting **what is**, and started observing myself, I experienced calmness. My perspective shifted from a feeling of confinement to feeling that this was a great opportunity to deepen my knowledge of self. Yoga, meditation, more reading, reflection, and journaling - all became part of my regular practices; and unlike the emptiness that indulging in social media and Netflix, left me with, I now felt more wholesome and at peace.

Around the same time, I also volunteered to join the Research team at ISABS. My regular work schedule didn't leave me much time for other commitments, but the situation was different now and I accepted the offer. The work with ISABS exposed me to the world of phenomenology and dialogic self-theory, and the experience of being part of this group has been an enriching one. It has taught me to access my internal resources and understand my Self better. The best part was that it was complementary to the philosophy of the Yoga Sutras and therefore offered me more pathways for integration.

Since schools were closed, my son came home to stay. We were able to spend a lot of quality time with each other, which had not been possible for several years. I received the Yoga Sutras and my son's visit as gifts from the Universe. When we let go of our attachment to what should be, we become more

welcoming of what is and can be. Of course, there were losses too, and grief for what was happening around, but I was able to deal with them with more equanimity.

This shift in my way of looking at my confinement as an opportunity also helped at work. At my workplace too, things were stalled, work was down to a trickle and there were long periods where nothing moved. The new perspective helped me reframe the emptiness as quietness and quietness as a place of great possibilities. I am an OD professional, and this also had an impact on client work. If we are calm within, we see the other person more clearly. It is no way 'all still waters,' but the more still the water, the better you see the reflection.

The pandemic was the catalyst for this. It helped me move from 'doing' to 'thinking' and 'feeling,' and now, 'being.' In the earlier paradigm, achievement was at the center and so also productivity. Now, when



there is work, I still enjoy it, but it is no longer my primary driver. I look at other avenues to express myself. Painting and sketching were something I enjoyed as a child, and I went back to them. The other thought I had been nurturing for the past few years was to do something for women. This led to the creation of an initiative called "Talkyng" with Anitha Reddy of NGO AVAS. These are circles where women come together and converse on different topics. The rationale is that when women have a safe, non-judgmental space and a community, they can find solutions to their problems themselves. We started with doing one session every two weeks. Today, we do three 'talkyng' sessions a week.

To conclude, my way of navigating through this period of change was operating from centeredness. My yoga practice as well as study of the Yoga Sutras and phenomenology helped me. These principles have universal application and in the changing world can bring in a lot of value and meaning.

“When people allow themselves to be fully aware and in touch with who they currently are, change and growth then emerge as the inevitable and natural outcome of such contact and genuine self-knowledge,” says Gestalt psychology’s paradoxical theory of change.



Veda is an organization development specialist with over 20 years’ experience and is currently based in Singapore and works with a leading MNC. She holds a postgraduate degree in Social Science from Central University, Hyderabad, and a postgraduate certificate in HR from XLRI. She’s an ICF certified coach and Professional Member of Indian Society for Applied Behavioral Science (ISABS)



REFLECTIONS



ARRIVING INTO THE PRESENT

Ranjini Banerjee

ISABS had been on my radar for some years. Many of my friends, besides my Mentor, had strongly recommended attending an ISABS lab. They saw it as a powerful experience to know oneself better and the impact one has on the world. So, when I enrolled for the first ISABS online laboratory ('lab' for short) offered by ISABS in August 2020, it was with considerable excitement, curiosity, and a bit of nervous anticipation. The six day journey that unfolded was nothing like I had ever experienced before, and neither did I expect it to have such an impact on my life. 'Life changing' is a way of putting it mildly.

At the outset, the lab brought to me the awareness of my deep discomfort with silence. I realized how much I depend on conversations, verbal cues, and instructions in group settings to be able to plan each interaction and response. When the lab situation offered me silence instead, I was immediately disconcerted. My mind swiftly went back to the past - grasping for references, trying to interpret and respond from what I had known and experienced in the past as I had no cues from the present.. It was uncomfortable being there, without knowing how to act. I thought there was nothing of value for me in the present. Only in retrospect did I realize that there was something significant and alive in my feelings of 'discomfort.' In my reacting and responding in learnt ways to my environment, I was unable to recognize and acknowledge what was available to me in the present. And this was just the beginning!

Over the next few days there were many more discoveries I made in the lab setup with the group of my fellow participants and the facilitators. All of them were right there with me; and yet my perceptions, interactions and responses were constantly coming from my past experience - my past *interfering* in my engagement with people in the *here and now*.

The first four days were challenging for me to stay connected, as the interactions in the group threw up projections, patterns, and shadow sides that I had kept successfully hidden or was completely unconscious about. I was surprised that simply taking in information available in the moment, updating myself with that information and trying to respond and refer only to what was happening in the moment could begin to unveil so much about me! The facilitators acted like the banks of a flowing river, firm but compassionate. I must confess that my deep appreciation for their facilitation came only at the end of this journey, when I realized how important a role they had played in not letting me escape into the comfort of my old ways and keeping me anchored time and again to what was unfolding in the group.

The greatest difficulty came up in getting in touch with my feelings and voicing how I felt, as often it was not pleasant to feel what I did, let alone express it. And having to stay in the moment was not letting me bypass it. When I realized this, I could see how I had developed a pattern of suppressing my feelings in the moment, how this act of suppressing them changed them in subtle ways, and that I could never return to it in exactly the same way I had first experienced it. Also, this baggage of unexplored feelings has held great power over me, and has kept changing my experience of the world, my behavior, my very way of being. More often than not, it is unconscious and therefore unavailable to me to explore. This also led to my impact on others being very different from what I intended it to be, because the underlying baggage showed up in unexpected ways, leading to disappointments and feelings remaining further unexpressed,, setting the vicious cycle in motion again.

After struggling to find a way out of this cycle, there came a moment when I finally stopped the inner struggle and surrendered to the present moment. I was guided and supported to start paying attention to what was happening to me in the moment, what I was feeling, what were the emotions that predominated; and then attempting to express all of this to my group. It made me feel very vulnerable, something I have tried very fiercely to protect. I also experienced the companion emotion of fear!

Now, fear is a predominant emotion that strongly influences how I am in any given moment. How safe I feel directly impacts my feelings of fear and vulnerability and therefore my ability to be authentic. Here is where I felt the immense support and role of the facilitators and my fellow participants in creating an environment of safety for me to be able to explore my feelings of vulnerability. It allowed me to stay in the present, fully in touch with feelings that were coming up, and feel safe to express these without the



fear of judgments. It was truly a breakthrough moment for me in the lab. Once I was able to experience this, the shift to a place of ease was tangible, visceral, liberating.

A core part of the lab experience was that the process of feedback kept me alive and encouraged throughout the sessions. I think this was a significant factor in making me aware of the impact I have on others, if it matches my intent, and how I can work to close that gap. Genuine feedback truly is the mirror that can support the journey of inner transformations if I am open to receiving it without getting defensive. The ability to ask for, receive and give feedback is truly one of the biggest learnings I took home from my experience with ISABS.

More than a year has passed since my participation in the lab and yes, this has been a difficult year on different fronts for most of us. The narrowing down of our worlds due to the pandemic has brought about more intimate, intense interactions and for spending time reflecting on my inner journey, growth and overall taking stock of my life. I can truly say that during this period, the lab experience and learning that I brought back from the ISABS lab have gifted me the precious ability to more and more be in the Present which is the only place from where Life can be engaged with and experienced - fully, joyfully, and abundantly.



Ranjini is an intuitive, telepathic energy communicator. She offers sessions on Akashic Records reading, Animal Communication, Soul Communication and Oracle Card reading. She is also a facilitator for Past Life Regression therapy, Breathwork and Inner Child Healing and uses the different modalities as required to support her clients in their journey of innerwork and self-discovery. She has attended ECHO 1

अंकुर.....

Shilpa Kamble

ISABS मेरे जिंदगी की वो खुबसूरत बारिश है जिसमें बहुत कुछ तेहसनहेस के बाद एक उम्मीद भरी सुबह आयी। उस बरसात मैं मेरे अन्दर का अहंकार, खुद के प्रति का गुस्सा, खुद को कम समजनेका कीचड़ मानो धुल सा गया। जिंदगी मीट्री की खुशबु जैसी महसूस होने लगी। और उसके बाद छोटे छोटे उम्मीद के, प्यार के, आत्मविश्वास के अंकुर खिलने लगे और मनो की मेरी कल मैं जीने की आदत भी भए गई। सचमुच जिन्दगी आसान लगने लगी।

Basic lab के बाद मैंने खुद मैं बहोत बदलाव पाए। जिसमे एक था खुद को प्यार करना। Basic lab के बाद हर वक्त मैं खुद के और करीब आ गयी। क्यू की हर वक्त मुझे क्या हो रहा है इसका एहसास जो होने लगा था।

जब से मैंने ISABS जर्नी शुरु की है तब से जिन्दगी जीने का मजा कुछ और ही लगने लगा है। एक इन्सान करके सजीव बनकर जीना मैंने ISABS में आकर सिखा। हर बार खुद में एक नया बदलाव देखकर मैं बहोत खुश हुई। जिंदगी और अच्छे से जीने के लिये मैं इसमें दिए हुए फीडबैक क मुझे बहोत उपयोग होता है। मेरे आजू बाजु में मेरे जैसे इन्सान रहते है यह एहसास ISABS ने हमेशा ज़िन्दा रखा है।

Advance lab मैं मेरे कुछ defense mechanism सामने आये। जेसे उस लैब में मैंने मेरे फीडबैक लेने के पद्धति के बारे में सिखा की, मुझे कोई नेगेटिव फीडबैक देता है तो मुझे बहजोत गुस्सा आता है और उस वजह से मैं आगे नहीं जाती हूँ वाही पर रुक जाती हूँ। दूसरी बात की मैंने खुदको बहोत नाजुक बना रखा है। उसका नुकसान यह था की कोई भी व्यक्ति मुझसे डायरेक्ट बात नहीं करना चाहता। उसकी वजह से चाहकर भी वह इन्सान मेरे पास नहीं आ सकता था। मैंने मेरा और एक पैटर्न देखा और उसपर काम भी किया की कोई भी इन्सान मेरे हिसाब से परफेक्ट नहीं है तो वह मुझे बिलकुल पसंद नहीं आता था फिर वह कितना भी अच्छा क्यों न हो।

Phase A मैं मैंने मेरे फीडबैक लेने का तरीका देखा की GOOD OFFENCE IS THE BEST DEFENCE यह मेरा डिफेन्स मैकेनिज्म है। मैंने देखा की मुझपर कोई हावी होने से पहले मैं दुसरे लोगोपर हावी हो जाऊ ताकि कोई मुझे कम न समझे। मैंने यह भी जाना की यह मेरी प्रोजेक्शन की प्रक्रिया थी। मुझे कोई कम नहीं समझ रहा था लेकिन मुझे ऐसा

लग रहा था की वह मुझे कम समझेंगे और मुझपर हावी होंगे इसलिए मैं हमेशा गुस्से में इंटरवेंशन करती थी या फीडबैक देती थी | लेकिन इस वजह से मेरा दुसरे लोगोंके प्रति CARING AND CONCERN उनतक नहीं पोहोचता था | इस बात के ऊपर मैंने कम किया आज भी कर रही हु |

इस journey मै मुझे बहुत सारे अच्छे लोग मिले जीनोने बहुत प्रशंसा की | कुछ लोग ऐसे भी मिले जिन्होंने मेरी भाषा, मेरे कपडो को देखकर मुझे कम समझा उस वक्त बहुत गुस्सा आया था पर अब नहीं | लगता क्यू की शायद उनके लिए भाषा और कपडे मायने रखते हो पर मेरे लिए इंसान बहुत मायने रखता है | यह मुझे महसूस हुआ |

ISABS करनेसे मेरी निजी जिंदगी मैं भी बहुत बदलाव मैंने महसूस किये है सबसे बड़ी बात जो मैंने सीखी वो ये है की let go करना | **let go** करने से हमेशा अपने लोग **come back** होते है यह मैंने सिखा | अगर हम किसी और ट्रेनिंग से आते है तो हमे ऐसा लगता है की इस ट्रेनिंग के विषय मैं हम आगे है या सबसे ऊपर है | लेकिन ISABS करने का एक मज़ा है की सभी लोग एक समान दीखते है |

मैं एक सामाजिक संस्था मै काम करती हु | संस्था मैं project cordinator के पद काम कर रही हु | मेरे पास TB project है इस project मै हम TB मरिजोके साथ काम करते है | TB बीमारी होने के कारन मरीज बहुत टूट जाता है उन्हें सपोर्ट की जरूरत होती है | ISABS करनेके वजहसे उनको इमोशनल सपोर्ट करना आसन हो जाता है | वो क्या सोचते है ,उनकी क्या फीलिंग है यह जानने के लिए आसानी हो जाती है | बस उनकी जिंदगी TB बीमारी की वजह से रुक जाती है but उनमे भी आगे जाने की क्षमता होती है यह मैंने सिखा और वही implement कर रही हु | cordinator होने के कारन मुझे टीम के साथ काम करना पड़ता है यह मोका मैंने नहीं छोडती हु जो भी टीम मेम्बर ISABS के लिए तैयार उन्हें LAB के लिए जरूर बोलती हु |

मेरी आर्थिक परिस्थिति इतनी अच्छी नहीं है | मैंने जितनी भी लैब की है वह सब लोन लेकर किया है | अपने आप में बदलाव देखने की खुशी मुझे यह सब करने के लिये तैयार करती है |

अपने आपमें जो बदलाव मैंने पाए है, इस तरीके के बदलाव और लोगोंमें हो तो मुझे अच्छा लगेगा | मेरी संस्था में बहुत सारे लोग इस प्रक्रिया में है लेकिन आर्थिक स्थिति अच्छी नहीं होने के कारण वह यह जर्नी में शामिल नहीं हो सकते |

मेरी इस journey में मुजे बहुत लोगोने निस्वार्थ भावनासे सपोर्ट किया मै उनका तहदिलसे शुक्रिया अदा करती हु |

जो लोग अपने आप में बदलाव लाना चाहते है ऐसे लोगोंके लिये मैं कुछ करू तो मुझे बहुत अच्छा और खुशी महसूस होगी | यह क्षमता मुझमें है इसलिए मैं इस journey मे मै रहेना चाहती हूँ | मुझे ये भी लगता है की यह सिखने का जो प्रवाह शुरू हुआ है जो कभी खत्म नहीं होगा |



Shilpa Kamble has completed her BA in sociology and now is appearing for MSW (Master in Social work). She works with an NGO as a project coordinator. She can be reached at shilpa.b.kamble@gmail.com.



POEMS



I Think, I Feel Something

I think,

I feel something.

Hang on,

Think? Or feel?

Thinking? Or feeling?

This sounds like an onion,

That certainly needs peeling.

Feelings, like onions,

May cause me some tears.

For every inner layer,

Is wrapped in new fears.

All this peeling

Can make me weary

Which brings me back

To my initial query.

Is it a thought?

Or is it a feeling?

What is it exactly

with which I'm dealing?

Well, within my bones,

I can't deny,

Lives a nervous butterfly.

It was born in my heart,

Then got to my head,

Plunged into my tummy

And made a comfy bed.



Ah! That certainly sounds like a feeling.
And now that I'm aware,
Maybe I can start healing.
But wait,
This "healing" that they speak of---
What does it entail?
They say, "it is simple----release this butterfly."
(trapped in its jail).
It longs to escape,
and take its own shape.
I can hear that it sings,
as it unfurls its wings.
And,
In the now & the here
the butterfly,
gently sang into my ear:
"If you wish to be free,
Just hold a hand or three.
Climb up that wall,
That you built up so tall,
And take an honest call.
If you're ready to fall,
Then you're ready to fly."
And find the answer to
"Who am I?"

-Sushovan

05.09.21

36



Sushovan is a New Delhi based journalist reporting at the intersection of technology and society. He has worked with The Telegraph newspaper and The Quint. He holds an MA in journalism and documentary film making from Jamia Millia Islamia University and an MA in cyber policy from Georgetown University, Washington D.C. Sushovan can be contacted at sushovan.sircar@gmail.com.



EMBRACING THE UNKNOWN

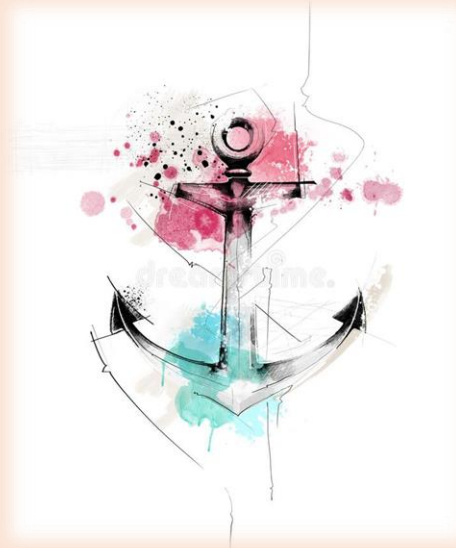
Sushma Sharma

Walk on
To the new places
You dream of.
Talk to the stones on the way.
They have untold stories
To tell.
Spend a few heart-beats
On the green grass.
It will kiss away
Your tiredness.
Meet the clouds head on
They will drench your soul and
Pick up the pieces of your turmoil.
Hug the trees
For a few moments,
The generosity of nature
Will leave you breathless!
Befriend the road you tread on.
You walk endlessly
Without forming any relationship
With the path
Which lies awaiting like a lover.
Above all,
Say hello to yourself
Admire the spirit of your quest - And walk on.....

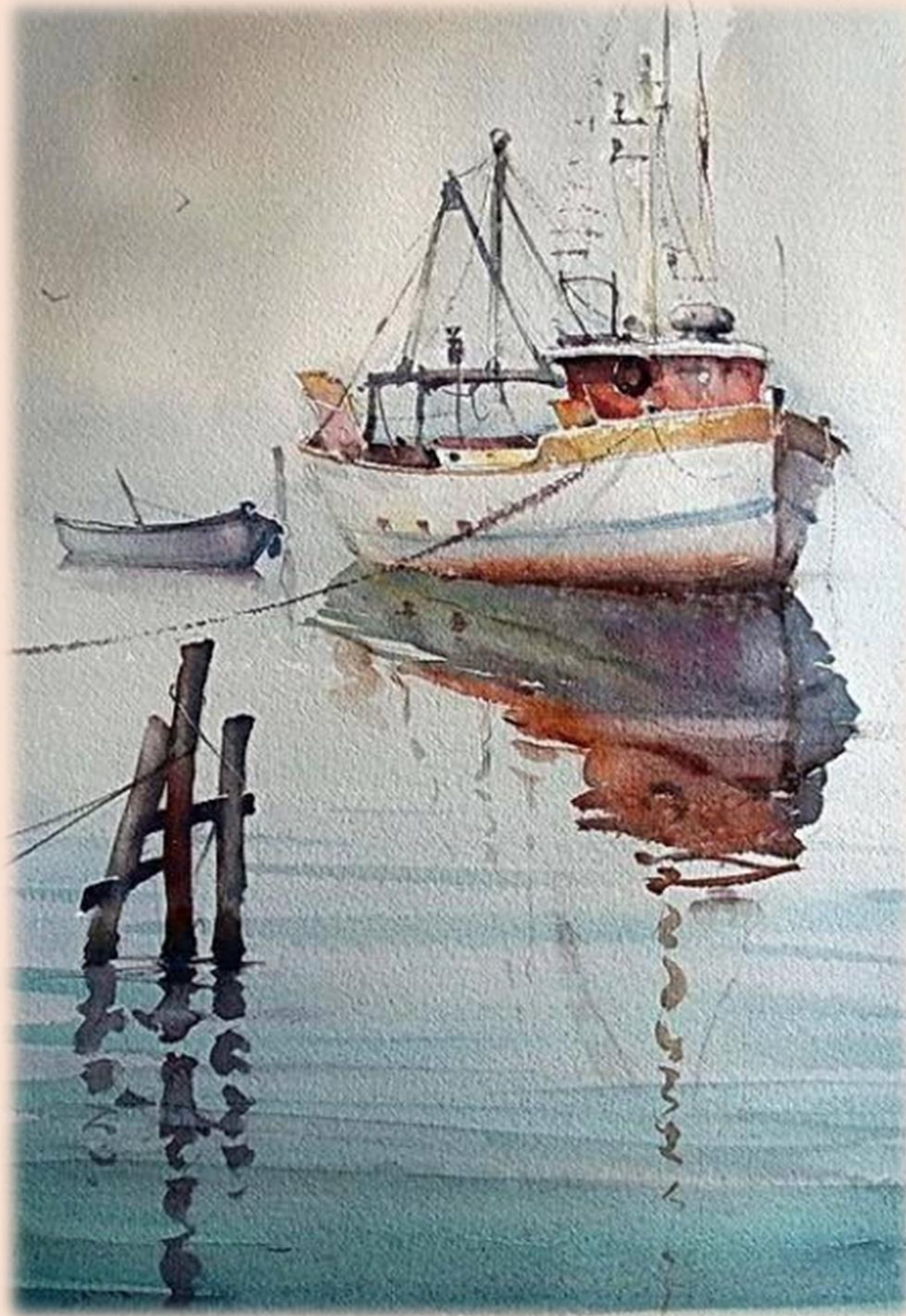




Sushma is a professional member of ISABS and a co-creator of Resonate Consulting which specializes in OD and Change. She flirts with life and is passionate about possibilities of change. Sushma can be reached at sushma@resonateconsulting.in



INTERVIEWS



INTERVIEW WITH MUKUL JOSHI, DIRECTOR, ODCP

H&N Team: Thank you for taking time to interact with us. How has your experience been as Director ODCP (Organization Development Certification Program)?

Mukul: Ah! I have been thinking about this, you know, and it's been very educational, to answer in one word. It has been experiential learning at its best for me. Because of the pandemic I have been balancing between sensitivity and purpose. At one time 50% of our students were impacted by Covid19 directly. Managing everything across our sacred TTT (Time, Task and Territory) boundaries was really challenging. And we can't stretch Time boundaries beyond a point as it impacts learning. Territory has completely shifted online now and delivering Tasks has been a challenge.

In Batch 12 we have 18 students, and despite all the challenges in Batch 13, we again have 17 students. The continued trust that the community is placing in the ISABS brand has been very motivating for me to see. Thus, I also have a sense of being a Trustee for ISABS in this role.

H&N Team: What are your thoughts around the 'new normal' and its impact on OD?

Mukul: The pandemic has catalyzed technology adoption. The impact of a hybrid world - virtual and real, on our roles, is still being studied. It has had the biggest impact on relationship building. However we all are adapting to it. For example, Batch 12 was very clear on wanting to do in-person sessions. We see a complete shift in Batch 13 where there is complete acceptance of the virtual, and in fact, relief at not having to travel.

Because of the new normal, the pressure on OD practitioners is going to be a lot more in terms of delivering value.

The boundaries between roles are blurring. So, the need for skill set development is a lot more and a whole lot different now. In the online mode, we experience the other only in two dimensions, we are not aware if the other person is taking the call from the hospital, their kitchen or I drawing room. The need to check-in and understand the context of other people has drastically increased. We require far more sensitivity and broader skill sets to make an impact in the virtual medium. The needs may not change, however, the way we fulfil those needs is drastically impacted.

In working online, because the nature of conversation is mostly linear, we are not able to include everybody. Normally, the time given to a particular meeting is far more. But here, there is no water cooler conversation, no informality coming through unless you design it. So there is a lot of consciousness that is required now.

H&N Team: Those are some really great insights. Changing gears, the theme for this edition of Here & Now is 'Navigating Change.' What are your thoughts around this? How do these insights help in navigating change?

Mukul: I liked the last theme of H&N as well. It was around resilience. To me, both resilience and navigating change are closely linked. For us to successfully navigate change, we need to stop comparing.

This is the biggest factor in resilience. No point comparing online with off-line! No point comparing the past and future! We need to learn to accept situations as they are. Comparison stops that, it drains our energy. The important things to focus on are the right things to do in this situation! To navigate change, we have to operate from our locus of control and put our energies into what we can do. We have to focus on taking care of our health, immunity, and following norms.

I believe resilience is not a skill anymore, resilience is an attitude now - an attitude that needs sharpening every day. A shift that people will have to bring in to survive and thrive.

To develop that attitude you need to keep renewing the psychological contract with all stakeholders. Every time you're on an online platform you have to keep reviewing the emotional boundary. We know that resilient leadership means being empathic etc. But what does it really mean in practice in a virtual world? It is about energizing ourselves on a daily basis despite the distancing. In virtual, the transitioning time between roles is very less. I open the laptop and I am an employee. I shut it down, and I am a mom/dad/husband etc. Sometimes I have to cater to my boss' and family's needs at the same time! That has impacted everything. There is a complete overhaul of our relationship with self and others. This requires far more resilience.

In general, we have to let go of short term gains for long term gains. This is resilience and taking control of change to navigate it. Dealing with routine and monotony to do the necessary are very important in this.

H&N Team: Next, ISABS is completing 50 years. What are your thoughts on our Golden Jubilee?

Mukul: Personally, I will say that my life has changed after being associated with ISABS, I have become much more effective in my roles. I have become calmer. At the same time in the current changing context, ISABS reflects 'within' to be more relevant on the outside. And my wish is that we do that ASAP.

For example, we need to understand who our customers are today and what do they want? How relevant are we? We need to renew and reinvent ourselves to be more relevant today. How active are we in the social media space?

How can we apply processes to all areas of life? How can we also look at the impact of our organization and not just output? These are a few questions I ponder about when I think of ISABS!

Today if you look at the percentage of Professional Members in ISABS, 60% of them are above the age of 60, only 40% are below 60. Is there enough in-flow in the system? How will the system renew without new blood?

H&N Team: I am curious to know how many members in the Board are above and below 60?

Mukul: There, we still have a healthy balance. But there are other processes like inclusion/ exclusion. What is the way in which we are doing it? These are all the challenges we need to talk about and learn to talk about on an online platform.

Also, ISABS has a great deal of support from its volunteers. However in the changing scenario, we must pause to check and be willing to ask some difficult questions. One such question is: 'Is the volunteering model right for ISABS in the current context?' 'Is volunteering causing any conflict of interest?'



In 50 years we have established, survived, and thrived. I think now that we are back at survival level we need to relook at ourselves. There is no doubt about that. And when I say survival, I mean it also in a positive sense. It is an opportunity to reconsider some of our tenets. The question is, do we have enough energy for that?

H&N Team: What support would you want from the larger community for your role?

Mukul: I have absolutely great support from people I have reached out to. For example, for the new batch interviews, I reached out to the 12/13 coaches we have. More than 50% immediately said 'Yes'! I don't see any challenge in terms of support from the community. I thank them for this support.

From an institution perspective, I want us to start looking at our systems and processes. For example, we need a skill matrix. We don't have this. It is a very simple example of how we need to reskill and renew ourselves. The more we focus on systems and processes, the more our reskilling will be organic rather than forced. We need to reflect on what is a better version of ISABS in the given context. My pet peeve is that we are focusing on 'becoming' while I want us to be focusing on 'being a better person.' This requires continuous improvement. I really look forward to that.



Mukul has been associated with ISABS as a Professional Member since 2006. He has volunteered his time on the National PDP & Professional Excellence committees. He was part of the Academic and Planning Council of ODCP as well. For the term 2020-2022 he is Director ODCP (Organization Development Certification Program).

'It's about affiliation, reaching out and being sensitive'

AN INTERVIEW WITH ISABS JOINT DEANS - PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (PDP)

Team H&N : Thank you for taking time out to interact with us! Can you share something about how you see your role?

Monsoon: It is our pleasure to interact with you. The Professional Development Program(PDP) is an integral part of ISABS. We are the temporary holders of a domain within ISABS - we are continuing a rich tradition, something that has years of building blocks. There have been incredible efforts made over the years to strengthen, develop and roll-out the PDP program. The way I see our role is that it is to make these building blocks more personal, more transparent, and more accessible. We remain very connected to the PDP participants and partner with them on supporting their process and growing the institutional processes. Also, we have seen two sets of PDP participants: those for whom the journey has been very rewarding and enriching; and others for whom it has been interrupted, confusing or difficult. We are trying to ensure that the journey is a learning stretch for all people.

Altaf: As a participant and later as a professional member, I always saw potential in people to improve their journey with ISABS. I saw an opportunity to align the intent mentioned in our mission with the action on ground. I am sure that all deans have wanted this, but somehow we have not adhered to the stated process. Thus, I decided to come on this side of the fence and do something about it. Also, we are living in a time when there is a lot of change in the world. New ways of living life. Therefore, change is required within the PDP system too. How do we make the journey more relevant for today's times?

Team H&N: Thanks for bringing the aspect of newness. That was exactly my next question. What are the different new things you are trying in this role?

Monsoon: I believe this need for change entrusted to us took us out of a semi-comatose state! Certainly, the status quo of the system got disrupted. I think the real credit as to how ISABS is relevant till today came from how everyone in the system adapted to do T-groups online. Adaptability and trying new things is in us. However, the mechanisms for adaptability may have got put on auto-pilot over time.

This change that Covid19 brought about was very refreshing and energizing to see. We also leveraged this. We realized that people in the PDP journey were looking for some anchoring, re-connecting and remembering as a community. So we bolstered our efforts to create community. Because of this shift to the online mode, we were also able to examine some things that were there on paper but not implemented. The birthing of Reflection sessions with the Dean Research took place from here. Now our idea is to institutionalize it.

Altaf : We have been able to respond to the change and also been able to do out-of-the box thinking to bring in some new ideas. An example is looking at Phases of the labs in two parts. It is a decision that took a lot of background work. Small things like introducing the link to participants' situations back home,

having group sessions to orient participants before they start the lab journey, making calls to individual participants to understand their experience and their response to feedback they received, and so on.

Team H&N : If you try to imagine Feb 2020, are there any among your priorities that have not been addressed? What other changes were planned before the push to the online mode for labs?

Monsoon : We feel great pride that every single thing that we had mentioned in our initial board meeting is being worked upon. Projects such as review and streamlining of the PDP reading material which was initiated by earlier Deans has come to fruition. Also, the Book project is underway - the intention was to tap into our member community and bring out indigenous and original work created meeting international standards with a culture- specific lens. The book is being published by Routledge and will be available by 2022.

Altaf : Before the pandemic and the online push, we had a plan in place and we went about implementing most of it. Looking back on the last 18 months we believe that we have been able to achieve more than what we would have in non-Covid19/ in-person times. The virtual medium made it possible to meet online frequently and keep up the momentum. Having said this, one important thing which is pending is to revisit the PDP & Mentoring guidelines. We see scope for providing further clarity in the guidelines.

Team H&N : Ok. Let's move on to the next segment. How do you see 50 years of ISABS and your role in that context of the Golden Jubilee celebrations this year?

Altaf : A few years ago I was part of a Memorandum Review committee. There were three main objectives which stood out for me.

- 1) Affiliation needs - ISABS is a place where professionals come and seek guidance, love, and affection
- 2) Reaching out to the unserved and marginalized
- 3) Creating more professionals (sensitivity trainers) in society.

Thus the PDP process has been a focus right from the beginning because it addressed all these needs. This core legacy continues. Like many past Boards, we are also discussing if we want to be focused just on T-groups or expand into other areas of applied behavioral science as well. Post these discussions there may be a shift in how the PDP process is conducted. We are working towards the idea of offering Process work as a Certificate Course. However, as of now there is no major change, just bringing more rigor into the system.

Monsoon B : I think there are two things that we have not given the same weightage to over time: One, we have become a group of T-group facilitators and two, the world has changed over 50 years, and even more so in the recent virtual world. Now people have access to global learning and training programs. I feel - why are we not leveraging these to compete on a world platform? The only way we can do this is by showing clear return on investment (ROI) to learners. I do believe that there is some freshness we can put into these discussions in our Golden Jubilee year. This would need us to also look at the philosophy of volunteering as distinct from how it is practiced within ISABS.

Team H&N : Well, as of now we are a very volunteer-driven organization. In that spirit, is there any support you would seek from the larger community?

Altaf : Some recent discussions have been around the PDP journey in regional languages. If this is where we want to go, we need more resources. Not in terms of money but ideation, execution, human resources, and content creation.

Monsoon B : My fundamental ask is: Let's all grow up together and not grow old together! I think that everything new that is introduced, the community should give it a fair chance. It may work or may not work. However, the resistance that, 'we didn't or can't do it like this' will make us grow old! Growing up requires a fresh perspective and a fresh energy. My wish is for the community to hold that as the intention moving forward.

It doesn't have to be an abandonment of all that has worked for us. But it is about: 'Am I willing to trust people who are trying out something new, have good intentions and some wisdom around it? They may not have all the answers, and that is fine. I believe this is one thing that is very important as a community for us.



The other thing that perplexes me is that there may be a sense of entitlement about what the institution owes me. There is also complacency and perhaps some disenchantment among members with ISABS - If some needs are not being met, my wish is that people are able to recognize these and find ways to meet these needs in other ways. If we just keep bringing these needs into the system, it will weigh heavily on those who are working to propel us forward; and the needs may still remain unmet. Re-committing ourselves to the work within and outside the labs is essential. We all have benefited from those who planned and executed what came before us and we need to uphold that legacy.

Altaf : Adding to the above, I think it is also very important that we pursue continuous learning. We can learn so much from the participants and newer professional members. Their readings are wider and they are astute. However, I see many 'senior' members think that they have 'arrived' and there is nothing more to learn. Till this mind set changes, PDP will not grow the way it needs to grow.

Monsoon: Also, I think that there are reasons why we are still only at 150 Professional Members even after 50 years. Only about half of that number remain active. This is the central question for us as an organization. If our core is so stuck, there is something in the system that needs to be reset and refreshed. The desire is to find openness so that we thrive in this coming era! I am very much a part of the 150, so this is a self-reflection piece, not a criticism. If we want the baby to be healthy during developmental cycles, we look to the nourishment that we provide it. Similarly, if we don't give that nourishment to our system, it will not grow. What are those nutrients is my question. The whole of ISABS for me is about partnering. I am glad that Altaf and I have been able to develop the PDP system further and are walking the talk.



Monsoon Bissell is a bi-product :Bi-racial, bi-cultural, bi-continental, bi-sexual and certainly, non-binary! She's a storyteller at heart who discovered the magic of listening. Monsoon facilitates, coaches, mentors, teaches, and serves on the boards of socially conscious entrepreneurial companies.



Altaf Shaikh is an Organisation Development Consultant and a Certified Life Coach focused on Relationship issues. He specialises in looking at workspaces through an anti-oppressive lens. He is the Co-Founder of Urja Trust (www.urjatrust.org) an NGO working with homeless young women. He also designs and conducts youth leadership programs around Power, Diversity, Inclusion, Equity. Altaf has a passion for food and cooking, travel, and adventure.

BOOK AND MOVIE REVIEW



Book review: A Tale about Making Innovation Happen

HOW STELLA SAVED THE FARM: BY VIJAY GOVINDARAJAN AND CHRIS TRIMBLE

Dr Mukta Kamplikar



A young sheep named Stella takes off on a holiday after graduating school, hiking on the Inca trail in Peru, where she meets a handsome alpaca named Alejandro. The two woolly animals have a whirlwind romance, thereby setting the stage for “How Stella Saved the Farm.” Fables have been used since time immemorial to drive home moral messages. “How Stella Saved the Farm” reminds me of George Orwell's 1945 classic “Animal Farm” that I reviewed as part of my Professional Development Program work at ISABS. “Animal Farm” is a classic that highlights the dangers of communism and much more. Or the more recent John Kotter’s “Our Iceberg Is Melting,” a fable emphasizing the importance of responding effectively to change in an ever-

changing world.

“How Stella Saved the Farm” is a metaphorical take on how disciplined change management and innovation can enable organizations to move into the next S-Curve. The most engaging element in the book is its fictional ‘Windsor Farm,’ with not so fictional characters and situations. The farm, which is run by animals, faces the risk of becoming redundant. It must decide whether to continue the way it has been working (faster, stronger, more efficient) or take the risk of exploring uncharted pastures.

Windsor Farm, owned by Deirdre, a mare, produces commodity products like wool, milk and grains whose prices are dropping steadily. Though it is a tightly-run operation with the highest productivity levels, Windsor is under severe pressure from the larger mechanized farms run by humans, especially the one owned by its neighbor, McGillicuddy, who has already offered to buy Deirdre out. Two weeks earlier, Deirdre had launched a contest, a 'big idea hunt' for the future of the farm, where all the animals were invited to come up with new business ideas. On the day Stella returns from her holiday, 40 teams are presenting their ideas. She hears Maisie, the farm’s elegant Holstein cow, propose the idea of creating a magazine, ‘Bovine Style,’ featuring trends in luxury fashion. This sets Stella's mind whirring and she impulsively makes a suggestion of her own — that Windsor Farm get into the business of luxury wool, the kind produced by Peru's alpaca. This innovative idea, born of exposure to new animals and new places on her holiday, is just a start. It sets in motion a chain of events at Windsor Farm that illustrate the many problems of executing an innovation.

For starters, Deirdre and Bull need to decide on who will be in charge of the new business. Stella herself is just out of school and in no position to lead. They pick Mav (short for Maverick), a confident, energetic middle management stallion who has no respect for tradition. Mav is to report to Rambo, the head of Bovine Operations, who in turn reports to Bull. Mav hits a brick wall as soon as he starts setting up the new business — the Purchase Head won't okay the high salaries for the alpaca, and Maisie can't spare time to work on a marketing brochure. Deirdre realizes that one leader can't make innovation happen — Mav needs his own full-time team, and he needs to report directly to the CEO. Though he's named the book after Stella, Govindarajan makes it clear that she's not necessarily the only one who really saved the farm.

In the real world, there is always this glamour associated with 'idea generation,' says Govindarajan, adding "People tend to celebrate only the Stella's, leaving out the many people who spend long hours making the idea happen. Execution is considered a grind, leading innovation to fail in many companies." The challenges in executing the luxury wool project are many.

"How Stella Saved the Farm" is about the lessons that Windsor Farm learns about making innovation happen — that sharing existing resources only works up to a point, that conflicts between the old and new are inevitable, that building a dedicated team for a totally new business vertical is like building a different company. And, like all good CEOs, Deirdre makes time to read up on the subject.



The central theme of the book is Innovation and Change Management. Dierdre, the CEO of the farm, realizes the need to explore new business avenues for Windsor Farm and this triggers the innovation journey. Through confronting a series of key obstacles, Dierdre outlines some important lessons:

- The journey of innovation is very different from what one imagines (or plans) it to be. An idea is just the beginning. For an innovation to be successful, it has to be given disproportionately higher priority in terms of resources and sponsorship.

- One can't measure the performance of an innovation idea or the innovation leader using conventional parameters. Innovation is a process of '*disciplined experimentation*' and these experiments have to be reviewed for effectiveness. The Windsor Farm innovation leader, Mav, is carefully guided through this process.
- Innovation is a complex interplay of dynamic organization structures, operations, and human emotions. The last is the most overlooked and easiest to be missed - and many change management interventions fail because of the same.

Contrary to the title of the book, Stella is not the only person who saves the farm. In fact, she introduces the idea; and what follows is an interplay of team dynamics, conflicts, and prioritization.

I found this book particularly interesting given that we, as a generation and citizens of this world, have been challenged by the recent COVID-19 pandemic which has, in many ways, changed the face of the earth and tremendously impacted the way we do things.

I also relate to this book deeply because: 1. Stella is female, and it only reconfirms my bias that the feminine is powerful and that it can change the world. 2. As a woman with creative and innovative ideas, I find the book is a wonderful way to begin stimulating open and non-defensive conversations about what it really takes to make innovation happen 3. As an employee, who had constantly questioned the status quo in organizations I worked with, the challenges it entailed, the friction it caused and the learnings that it brought and 4. As part of a generation that straddles tradition and modernity simultaneously and keeps inching forward with its struggles and successes.

Some interesting pointers for me were:

- How to create a shared understanding of the destination and the path? Without a proper alignment – there is a high chance that people will continue to routinely dedicate their attention to their everyday work. How do we help ourselves and others see beyond what is at hand?
- What are the key roles and who are best suited to deliver on these? How can we get the right people onboard? It's important that the innovation team members are released from their existing responsibilities for complete immersion in the new initiative.
- What are the conflicts that are arising and what is the buzz on the (informal) grapevine? How do we manage these conflicts? Are team members getting burnt out? Who are the influencers? Who are the detractors? How do we address all of them?
- Every time that we are at a loss, or need to take a crucial decision, how do we dig deep into our values and culture to answer tough questions?

The book also explores the themes of succession planning, managing GenY talent and managing specific talent groups.

- The book begins with the need for a change in the top management - when Marcus, the CEO, decides to hand over the reins of the company to his daughter Deirdre instead of his long-term

number two – the “Bull.” Bull is an epitome of ‘Stronger, Faster and more Efficient,’ the mantras that have kept the Windsor Farm profitable all these years. But are these mantras relevant today?

- Stella the sheep and Maisie the elegant cow are the quintessential GenY’s in the Farm – unconventional and determined. Stella goes off backpacking and brings back ideas critical to the Farm’s survival. Maisie is a creative and enthusiastic nut. A series of mission critical roles explore the passion and talents of both Stella and Maisie. These are excellent examples of how different talents can together meet organizational goals.

The last chapters of the book are reserved for one of the most difficult issues concerning innovation – how do you evaluate performance and appraise those responsible for it? By the end of the book, the luxury wool business is still consuming more cash than it is generating. The investments made are beginning to show results, but the animals are very resentful of the way the luxury wool operation is draining the reserves created by the existing business lines.

“How Stella Saved the Farm” ends happily, with the luxury wool business growing exponentially. The book is easy to read and can be finished in a single sitting. The reader comes away from Windsor Farm with a better understanding of innovation and change and the myths that typically surround the organizations that it stands for.



Mukta is an intern at ISABS. She is the founder and chief consultant at MUKTA – Liberating Human Potential (a Human Capital Development Consulting firm) and a partner at CEEI. Mukta paints and writes with passion and has published 4 poetry books. Mukta also dabbles in theatre and uses many art forms in her work.

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JUICE: A CHANGE STORY

Tejinder S. Bhogal

A hot, sultry evening

This is the story of a group of people gathering in the home of one couple for a party. It is a hot day, and sweat drips and settles into people's clothes making these cling to the skin.. Not an ideal day, but nonetheless, the Singh couple, Mr. Singh and his wife Manju, are hosting four other couples for dinner. The five couples have been neatly uncoupled into two binary systems here: the men, settled on sofas in the drawing room, eating savories, savouring the breeze of the room cooler; and the women, standing in the kitchen, preparing savories for the men, centred around the heat of the two gas stoves.

The men are united as colleagues; the women because each is the wife of a colleague. The men address each other by their surnames: Singh, Khan, Shukla, and one (respectfully) as Panditji. The women call each other either Bhabhi (sister-in-law), or by first name. Three children - the son of the Singhs, another boy and girl; and a maid-servant, Parbatiya, define the demography of the house.

The System of Men

The men cooled by the cooler, still need to take out their heat on women. First in line is the recently appointed woman boss of Mr. Singh. Mr. Singh says with condescension that he has explained everything to her, 'like one would to a child'. Yet, she still insists that Mr. Singh send his recommendations to her by e-mail. No wonder his head has started to buzz like a nest of hornets. Panditji chips in supportively, "She should never have been appointed. We all know that women are too weak to stand up to the toughness, the daily grind of modern-day work-life."

The second woman to be roasted is Hillary Clinton. This is because, the youngest man in the group explains that unlike her, Trump has got the b***s to shake America out of its torpor. The Bengali gentleman gamely tries to scoff at Trump, but the b***s of Trump trump the entire debate. The men trumpet their laughter at this decisive conclusion.

Every once in a while, the men take a bite out of the chicken legs, pull each other's leg, and then laugh uproariously. Their conversation is engaged and humorous, it is the perfect Adda, the set of topics that usually get men going. Just before dinner is served, and the short movie being screened reaches its climax, one of the men gleefully announces to another round of resounding laughter, that Trump punched Hillary Clinton's face.

The System of Women

All the five wives and the maid, Parbatiya, are in the kitchen near the two stoves. One of the guest wives, a Bengali going by her accent is clad in a bright blue saree. She is gamely seated on the floor, kneading dough. The youngest of the wives, Mrs. Shukla, clearly pregnant, and seated on a chair, announces in a troubled voice that she is being asked (by whom?) to give up her job after delivery. This leads to a debate. One of the wives says that this is bound to happen. Mrs. Khan says piously that it is best to invest in the child, because after a few years, his is the only company she can hope to receive at home. To which the Bengali wife spiritedly responds, “Is the child like a fixed deposit? How can you be certain that your child will accompany you for the rest of your life? Why not invest in a good relationship with your husband?”

Parbatiya

The heat of the stoves is getting to the Bengali wife, and Manju Singh, the hostess is helped by Parbatiya to locate and set up a table fan. Parbatiya. Parbatiya is also at hand to help cool Manju Singh’s burnt fingers by getting her ice to put on them. But when Mrs. Shukla hands Parbatiya tea in a steel glass (rather than in a special china cup like the other women), the maid, clearly in a huff, announces that she is going home.

Manju Singh

Manju Singh, the hostess has been cooking and continually serving the men sitting in the drawing room the fried chicken and chickpea snacks, and refilling the water cooler so that their pati devs (lord husbands) in the drawing room feel comfortable; and at her husband’s insistence, shooing the kids away from the drawing room. Her fingers have got burnt at the stoves and the table fan in the kitchen after a diffident start has given up the ghost. She calls out to her husband to help, but despite replying, he promptly forgets to do so in his merriment-laden evening with his colleagues.

Manju Singh is clearly upset and we can see that this is increasing by the moment. When one of the wives cites Manju Singh’s example of giving up her job after delivery, she snaps back, “Just because I did so, does she too have to follow my example? Is there a rule that one has to give up one’s job after a baby?” And after a pause, she follows it up sarcastically with, “How can he change the baby’s diaper; the TV remote control will drop off from his hand”. The women look at her, trying to figure out if she is being serious or just ironic.

Juice

The kitchen is sweltering, and the new batch of chicken legs is taking time to cook. Parbatiya has left in a huff and the fan has stopped working when Mr. Singh calls out to his wife “Hurry up Manju, it’s getting late”. Manju pauses, stiffens her lips and stops what she is doing. She has come to a decision.

She turns off the gas, walks to the fridge, takes out a chilled bottle of juice and pours a glass for herself. She then walks into the drawing room, noisily dragging a chair to the front of the cooler and sits down in it. She turns her face to the cooler, and takes a slow, long sip of her drink. By the time, the laughter of the men has died out like the sound of the last train leaving the metro station. Manju Singh looks around slowly at her husband, at the other men, and finally back to her husband. All the men are looking down, somewhat shamefaced, and dazed by the suddenness of her act. Mr. Singh, Manju's pati dev glowers at her, but when Manju, eyes damp but not teary, looks at him with unaccustomed firmness, he too lowers his head, defeated.

The Beginning of System change

Imagine the Singh relationship as a system, a system in which the rules favor the husband, rules that Manju had accepted when she came into this family. She accepted these rules when she gave up her job after having a baby, when her husband refused to help in child care; and today, where he treats her like a servant in her own home. Somewhere, unknown to herself, her priority of needs has changed, and she has shifted the ground rules. In the heat of the kitchen, even as she plays gracious hostess, putting aside her need to be cared for by her husband, the need to be respected, to have her own professional identity – her needs suddenly bubble up. In short, her personal system changes, and as a result, in one stroke, she challenges the rules of the relationship system.

We don't know what will happen next – perhaps the Singhs will have a huge fight after the guests go away, he may shout at her, beat her. She may go off to her parents' place or perhaps (oh we so wish so!), Mr. Singh, in the interest of domestic peace might embrace some house work and child care. Whatever happens, we know that their relationship will never again be the same after this tipping point.



Six other systems seem to have got impacted by Manju's action - the group of women, the group of men, and the four other couples. Even as Manju was making her deafeningly quiet public statement, the entire system of women watched open-mouthed from the kitchen. In their next meeting, the women are bound to talk about this while the men will studiously avoid the topic and talk of IPL or their new woman boss.

The tipping point was the single defiant act of Manju. which affected six other systems. Like a domino which sets other dominoes to fall one after another. Manju has changed, her relationship with her husband has definitely changed. The seeds of change have been planted in six other systems. (See the 2017 Large Short film, 'Juice' at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-Sk7fQG1jE&t=506s>)

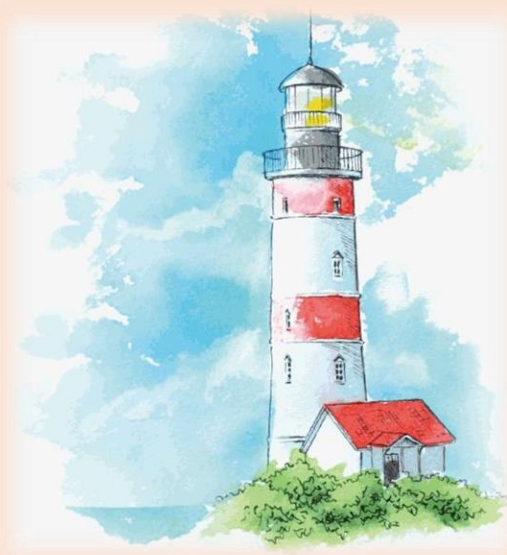
Tejinder S. Bhogal

August 2021



(See the 2017 Large Short film, 'Juice' at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-Sk7fQG1jE&t=506s>)

I am a graduate in agriculture and a PG in Rural Management. I am a professional member of ISABS. I work in the area of OD and Mentoring with Social Change organizations. I am passionately into literature, poetry, writing, birds, and insects – not necessarily in this order.



POEMS AND PAINTINGS



THE WORLD IS CHANGING

TT Srinath

The World is changing, so is my life.

Can I in this changed World speak peace without strife?

What we do in ISABS is to bring home this truth.

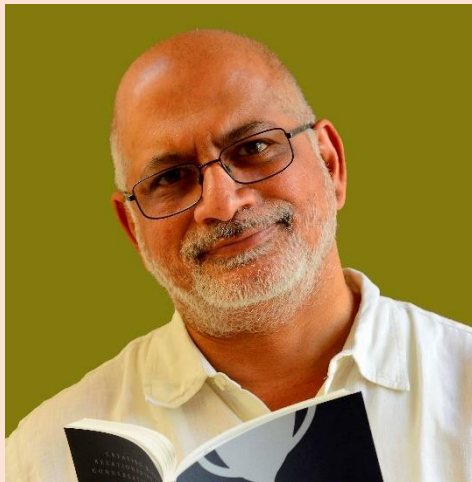
Where there is no chicanery nor I am sleuth.

ISABS has for me stood for integrity.

For values beyond manipulated infirmities.

And in this jubilee year if we can this reaffirm with love?

Then surely we will be blessed by the angels, from above.



T.T.Srinath, Ph.d., lives in Chennai, India. He has done extensive work in Gestalt, Psychodrama and Sociodrama. He works in both the corporate and non-corporate sector, facilitating human interaction processes. He is an active member of the oldest English Theatre company in India, The Madras Players. He can be reached at ttsrinath@gmail.com and his website is www.ttsrinath.com

He is a professional member of ISABS

WINTER SPARROW

Mukta Kamplkar

There's always a do- list
Business leftovers...
Regrets – allowed to keep terms
Arriving in your cold dry city this time
I was filled with the warmth of your kitchen and
its fire
Dark blue nights did not sleep in my bed
Pink mornings in my eyes looked for you instead

You are close by, I know...Just around the corner
There! just there...where the street is narrow
Talk to me! talk to me - winter sparrow
You're so dear to me from far...not nearby
But stay! Be around...
Don't fly away Ask me how I am, or may be who I
am
Find me...find me before sunset today



I AM CHANGING

Mukta Kamplikar



I am changing

And starting to note that -
Sometimes the Hero stumbles and
falls in my eyes –

Right out of the pages of a fairy tale
Sometimes the Heroine doesn't want
to be saved
Sometimes the Villain aches for help
Sometimes the Dragon is rescued by
the Dwarf

And the little Lost Girl finds herself in
the dark
Sometimes Maleficent is kind
Sometimes the Witch is the prettiest
one,

And the Knight doesn't have a shining
armor and the Prince is cunning

Sometimes the Godman is naive
Stuff is often not what it all seemed
like,

I am growing up; I am changing to
note that just because we were told
all this - doesn't make it true



Mukta is an intern at ISABS. She is the founder and chief consultant at MUKTA – Liberating Human Potential (a Human Capital Development Consulting firm) and a partner at CEEI. Mukta paints and writes with passion and has published 4 poetry books. Mukta also dabbles in theatre and uses many art forms in her work.

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Winning - My Auto-suggestion

Losers live in classic style,

In the never world of "someday I will".

They blame bad-luck each time they lose;

And hide with sickness, drugs, and booze.

Losing is a habit; so is winning.

The way to change is by beginning;

To live each day as if my last;

Not in the future nor in the past.

To want it now, to dream it now;

To plan it now, to do it now.

To close my eyes and clearly see,

That person I'd most like to be.

To love myself and give away

All the love I can to-day.

I think I can; I know I can;

Become my greatest coach and fan.

Time, the speedster takes the toll; And everyday is my super bowl.

I think I can; I know I can become a most uncommon man.



Ram is a professional member of ISABS associated with ISABS since 1999. He is a master practitioner and trainer of NLP . Ram has a passion for human process facilitation for individual and large system effectiveness. Ram can be reached at ramlingin@gmail.com



ISABS UPDATES



THE ISABS ABS GLOBAL SUMMIT 2021 – AN OVERVIEW

Sonali Kelkar

“How can one have a conference during the lockdown?? Let’s just postpone it till the pandemic is over.”

“Online Conference? That too in ABS (applied behavioral science)? Not possible!”

“People want to meet in person, to network, to experience; that's what will ensure it’s meaningful.”

These and other such comments were heard (all online or on phone, remember, the pandemic was on?) and almost came in the way of ensuring that the ISABS ABS Conference would be held. But then, if behavioral scientists are unable to take a leap of faith and model change, they wouldn’t be practicing what they preach. So, ISABS respectfully bowed to the nay-sayers and decided to go ahead with the ISABS ABS Global Summit 2021, the third such conference in 5 years. While the other two were held in 2018 and 2019 as in-person events, the 2021 Summit would have to be held entirely online. The challenge was on multiple fronts – relational, organizational and technological. However, ISABS had held entire events online by now and had acquired the experience and expertise to undertake this global event.

The preliminary work of the Summit commenced as early as January 2021. The brochure was sent out to professional members, all the collected contacts of professional members both within India and abroad, to recently graduated ISABS participants and captains of business and industry that ISABS thought might be interested, either to make a presentation or to participate.

The ABS Summit 2021 was a wholly online event that had papers presented in four categories

- Co-creating in Complexity
- Beyond Barriers
- Emerging Trends – Economics, Emotionality and Society
- Spiritual Paths – Ancient to Contemporary Practices

The presentations/workshops were in four formats: Invited/keynote speakers, paper presentations, workshops and IdeaSplash. These formats and the parallel sessions helped to provide energizing variety for the delegates and break the possible monotony of one paper after another.

The timings of the Summit were fixed such that international delegates could join in with ease. Sessions ran from 3 pm each day and concluded at 8.45 – 9 pm. Uniquely, each day commenced with a half-hour check-in and fellowship in break-out rooms. The inaugural address and special addresses were held in the Sangam ‘room’ for all delegates. This was followed by parallel presentations in different online rooms, aptly named Narmada, Teesta, Ganga and Kaveri for the rivers that are part of India’s geography and mindscape of learning. The sessions lasted for an hour. Each session was anchored by a professional

member or intern of ISABS. There was a 15-minute break midway through the day's proceedings and 5 minute breaks for delegates to transition from one 'room' to another. Hyperlinks were provided as part of the Programme Schedule to facilitate easy transition for delegates and presenters from one session to another. A team of 6 formed the IT team that coordinated the entire event so it ran seamlessly for the 5 days. Some 32 volunteers were available online to help delegates and presenters with any technical problems of connectivity or 'how to' issues.

On four of the five days, the conference also offered 20-minute cultural interludes in the evenings by way of performances by Indian artistes on the shehnai, the santoor, Sufi music and an Odissi performance.

The Summit commenced on 21st September 2021 at 3 pm. Delegates from across India and many other countries had signed up to attend the Summit. ABS stalwarts, innovators and forward thinkers from across India and eight other countries shared their ideas through the presentations or workshops or IdeaSplashes.



Everyone – from presenters to delegates to anchors seemed comfortable with the online mode. This could be because the world adapted to working online from the first pandemic lockdowns in early 2020 and so they were familiar with online presentations.

In all, the ISABS ABS Global Summit 2021 saw 308 delegates participating of whom 12 were from other countries. Of the delegates, as many as 169 were women. That is 55% of the total!

There were 34 presentations, 23 of them by women. The presentations over the five days around a variety of subjects: from lessons from Antaranga yoga and ancient yogic wisdom and modern knowledge, the power of paradox and polarity thinking, basics of process work, a conversation about the history of OD and humble leadership, dreams and dreaming, the role of bias and prejudice in nation building, social entrepreneurship for women, taming your inner dragon, Buddhist psychology, Indian psychodrama to name a few.



The ABS Summit was held in the momentous Golden Jubilee (50th year) of ISABS. ISABS had instituted Honour awards for individuals who had made notable contributions to the field of Applied Behavioural Science. In the concluding session of the ABS Summit, these awards were bestowed on four individuals and two NGOs.

Well done, ISABS. It seems like patting ourselves on the back but it is well earned. We are now in the process of publishing a book of the Summit presentations both online and in print, which will become available from May 2022.



Sonali Kelkar is Regional Co-ordinator, Western India Region, Indian Society For Applied Behavioural Science (ISABS). She can be reached at +91-9870260208

Regional Updates

ISABS Regions faced a challenging year of 2021. Covid19 was on its second (and even third) wave across the world. WFH or Work From Home has become a familiar term with even children. WFH added to the work burdens of the office workforce who struggled to balance work life and domestic responsibilities along with supervising the children's online classes. These routines are yet to return to normal from continuing fear of catching the virus. In such a scenario, holding monthly meetings in-person continued to be a no-no. However, ISABS' resilient Regional Representatives rose to the occasion and organized meetings online for professional members and PDP participants to keep the fabric of relationships in ISABS intact and vibrant.

Western Region: Coordinator: Sonali Kelkar

A new offering from the Western Region was that of Wisdom Circles – gatherings of professional members for a workshop or a talk on a topic of interest offered by one of the members. This was a way not only to experience and learn something new, restricted as we all have been by the Covid19 situation. Sukhwinder Sircar anchored one Wisdom Circle in Aug 2021 on "The Feminine in Lab work".

A semi-structured program was conducted for students of KG Somaiya College of Management in the first week of September 2021. A total of 22 students (12 from 1st year and 10 students from 2nd year Management course) volunteered for the separate 3 day labs for each group. Prior to the lab, professional members Aroon Joshi, Mukul Joshi, Archana Shrivastava, Kiran Lalsangi and Aishwarya Hariharan gave the students an overview of ISAS and its relevant to the corporate world many of them would be entering after their course. The lab was facilitated by Archana Shrivastava and Kiran Lalsangi with Mukta Kamplkar designing and conducting the Community sessions.

Monthly meetings have been held regularly online in the Region. This has enabled more members participate as distance was no longer a barrier. Mukul Joshi presented a lecture-discussion on 'Power and Me' at one meeting. Sonali Kelkar spoke on 'Communicating and Connecting Authentically' at another meeting.

Eastern Region: Coordinator: Khirod Pattanayak.

Eastern Region launched its Event "Kolkata 21" from 9th – 13th November 2021 at Kolkata. This was the first in-person event being held by the Region after nearly 2 years of the Covid19 situation. The event had 3 labs: 2 BLHP and 1 combined BLHP & ALHP lab with a total of 19 participants in all. Because of Covid19 fears among regular client organizations, getting participants was a very difficult task, leading us to develop an almost entirely new client base. There were 10 from the corporate sector, 7 from NGOs and 2 Individuals. Only 2 were from an existing client organization. The faculty consisted of 4 professional members: Manas Shukla, Bhanumurthy Kota, Rashmi Saxena and Khirod Pattnaik and 1 intern, Krushna Sawant.

Several firsts were added to the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for conducting the event. Everyone in the event was provided with disposable face masks, bottles of hand sanitizer and individual refillable

water bottles. Each person also gave a written undertaking to follow Covid-appropriate behavior. It does not hurt to be cautious, especially as this was our first 'outing' after the pandemic struck in March 2020.

Eastern Region also held regular monthly meetings online. Kakoli Saha spoke on 'Exploring Partnership Processes' . 'Pandemic reflections' were facilitated by Sukhvinder Sircar at one meeting. 'My T-Group Experiences' was presented by Rashmi Saxena in another meeting, while Bhanumurthy Kota spoke to the members present on 'Organizing Your Time and Space.'

The Region plans to organize more in-person events in other cities in the Region over the next year. We also plan to have a Professional Members' get-together in one of the events.

Northern Region: Coordinator: Kumud Issar

Monthly meetings have been held regularly online over the earlier part of this year. At one such meeting, Pradeep Prakash spoke to the members on 'Spirituality and Process Work.' NP Singh addressed the members at another meeting on 'Receiving the Reward.' 'Design thinking' was the theme of the talk by Amitabh Jha in yet another meeting of.

Northern Region is planning to hold 'Sabrang,' an in-person event in December 2021. They plan to conduct BLHP and ALHP labs in this event.

Southern Region: Coordinator: Hema Sekhar

Monthly meetings have been held online. A presentation on 'Power, Rank & Privilege' was made by Eswara Prasad in end-May 2021. In a few other meetings, the topic veered round to how PMs and AMs would like to contribute towards their vision for the region.

A learning session was held for Professional Members by Lalitha Iyer in June 2021. "Mining the Moment - Exploring the Challenges of being in the Here & Now.' It was a lively session which left all of us with some interesting questions to ponder upon.

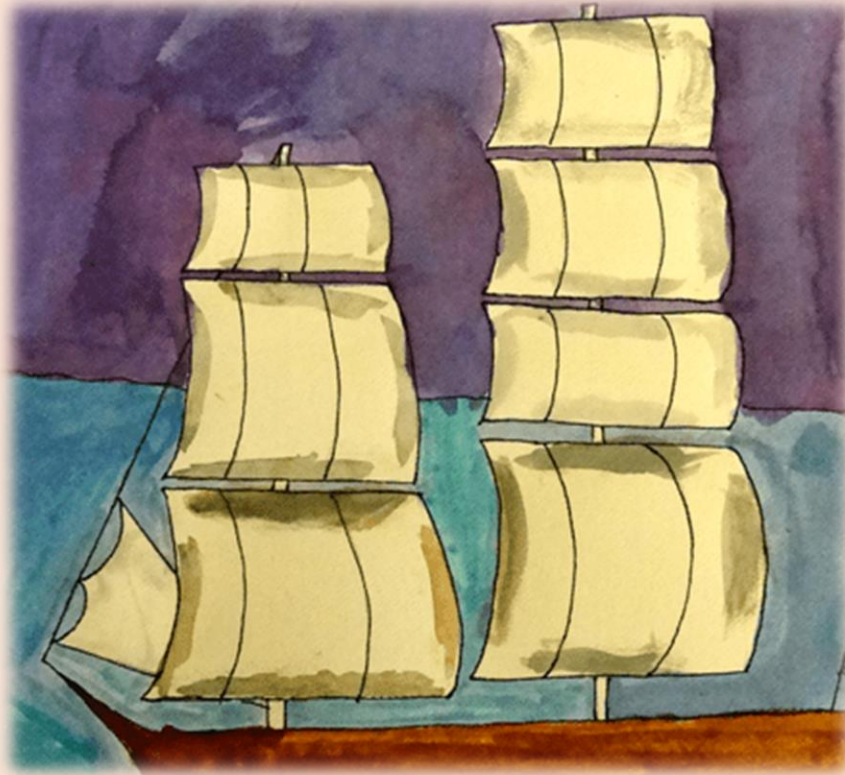
The PDP group in the Region organized a session on 'Gender Sensitivity' facilitated by Sincy & Sridhar. The half-day session held online saw 7 PDP candidates taking part. Feedback from them was that the session was well-structured and engaging. They unanimously requested for a 2-3 day in-depth session later on.

The southern region also organized an event in the first week of December. It was a good diverse event (age and employment sector and gender wise) with a group size of 44 . Participants 36, 7 PMs and 1 intern. Labs - 3 BLHP , 1 ALHP , 60/40 gender balance women to men

Southern Region lost a few professional member stalwarts recently. They were G. Rajanna and Dr Paul Siromani, both of whom passed on in June 2021. The region co-hosted an online memorial meeting for Dr Paul Siromani with the Northern and Eastern regions. Paul was one of the founder-members of ISABS and will be missed dearly. The Region also held an online Memorial session to celebrate Rajanna's life, at which his bereaved family were also present. Rajanna, a great trainer in the Jo-Hari window was an asset to ISABS and will be missed by his colleagues in ISABS.

Letters to the Editor and Feedback on the Issue:

Please send your feedback and suggestions to isabs.hnn@gmail.com



So pick up all the defeats
like those stones from under your feet
and fling them into the sea
Smell the air
watch these gulls fly
Adjust the mast
and sail away
in search of newer victories

Mukta

Here and Now Team – Kantha Rao, VLK Sarma, Lakshmi Raman, Sanjyot Pethe, Mukta Kamplikar, Siddharth Shah

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