Judging people

One day a truck driver was doing his usual load delivery at a mental hospital, by parking his vehicle beside an open drain. After completing the delivery when he was about to move away from the site he noticed a flat tyre of the truck. Soon he jacked up the truck and removed the flat tyre to fix the stepney tyre. When he was about to fix the spare tyre, he accidentally dropped all the four loose bolts in the open drain. He tried his best but could not fish the bolts from the open drain. He started to panic because he didn’t know what to do in the circumstances.

Just then, a patient of the hospital happened to walk past him. Seeing the perplexed driver the patient asked him as to why he was looking perturbed.

The driver thought to himself, since there is nothing much he can do or this mental patient can. However, just to keep the nuisance away, the truck driver explained his predicament to the mental patient and gave a helpless look.

The patient just laughed at the driver and asked, “Can you not even fix such a simple problem? No wonder you are destined to remain a truck driver for life.”

The truck driver was astonished to hear such a comment from the mental guy. He was dumbstruck.

“Listen to me,” said the patient, “take one bolt from each of the remaining three wheels and fix it on to this tyre. Then drive down to the nearest workshop and replace the missing ones. Isn’t it so simple, my friend?”

The truck driver was so impressed with this quick fix answer. So he asked the patient, “How come you are so smart and intelligent and you are here at the mental hospital?”

The patient replied with a smile, “Hello friend, I am asked to stay here not because I am stupid but because I am crazy.”

A passerby who was watching the whole episode approached closer and intervened saying, “Gentlemen, life is like that; haven’t you heard of the fate of the great scientist, Galileo, who was considered as the father of modern science? For telling the truth that the sun was at the centre of the solar system and the earth orbited around the sun he was placed under house arrest for the rest of his life.”

No wonder there are some people, who behave like the truck driver, thinking that others are simply stupid. So, gentlemen, though you all are learned and wise, but, just watch out, there could be some crazy guys in your professional or personal lives, who could give you lot of quick fixes and brush your wisdom.

It is worthwhile not to conclude that others are stupid and better not to judge people by mere looks, stature or background.

Dr.G.P.C.Nayar

Advances in Technology, Engineering and Computing – A Multinational Colloquium - 2017

An International colloquium on Advances in Technology, Engineering and Computing was organised by SCMS School of Engineering and Technology in association with Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment on June 22 and 23. It marked yet another milestone in the achievements of SSET.

Six conferences

The pursuit of globalisation demands crossing the boundaries of the classical disciplines and the colloquium was successful in addressing this need by organising six conferences under the common umbrella. Each conference had...

Contd. on page 2
Students who had won A+ in all the subjects in Plus Two exam, from Ernakulam district, were honoured by SCMS Group and Mathrubhumi jointly at a function held in Ernakulam on June 1. Mr. K. Mohammed Y. Saifulla IAS, District Collector, Ernakulam, Dr. K. S. Radhakrishnan, Former Vice Chancellor, Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady and Cine actor Neeraj Madhav together inaugurated the function. Prof. PC Pillai, Senior Group Director, Dr. Indu Nair, Group Director, Prof. M. Madhavan, Director, SCMS Engineering College and Mr. Sanal Potty, Public Relations Manager participated in the function.

Audience spellbound

The conferences had two plenary and two keynote talks. The first plenary talk on Robotics — Making Man out of Machines delivered by Prof. Prahlad Vadakkepat, National University of Singapore left the audience spellbound with his presentation on the proximity between human beings and robots and on how humanoids have evolved close to human robots from the machine-like robots.

The second plenary talk by Prof. Dean Vucinic, Vesalius College, Vrije Universiteit Brussels, Belgium was an eye-opener as to see the functioning of a human heart using numerical simulation tools. The talk made the audience realise how engineering can help medicine in designing better-suited devices for proper functioning of various organs especially the heart.

Ms. Sherin B.M., Scientist B., Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment also participated in the inaugural ceremony.

The first keynote talk by Dr. Praveen Nagarajan, NIT, Calicut focused on the use of micro-truss models for solving heterogeneous and non-linear behaviour of concrete structures at meso level while the second one by Prof. Alam Md. Mahbub, Harbin Institute of Technology, China, revolved around reducing the vortex-induced vibrations of marine cylindrical structures by adopting an array of cylinders in tandem.

Around 80 papers were received from IITs, NITs, Government Engineering Colleges and University Engineering Colleges for presentation. Around 70 were selected after peer-review and 50 papers were registered for presentation. Paper presentation sessions were conducted in four parallel tracks and about 45 peer reviewed papers were presented. The session chairs were scrupulously picked up from the neighbouring colleges for judging the quality of presentations and the content of the papers. The conference was tied up with a good number of publication partners. All the papers presented for the conference will be published by Research Publishing Services, Singapore. Further papers after substantial modification will be considered for publication in some of the reputed journals/book chapters.

Student symposium

A student symposium was also organised to involve maximum participation from the undergraduate students. It consisted of poster presentations and workshops conducted by i3 India Technologies on Android Application Development and Internet of Things. There were about 150 student participants in all these events put together from SSET and neighbouring engineering colleges.

On the whole, the colloquium proved successful from the feedback received by various participants and session chairs. It showed SSET’s strength to co-ordinate six technical conferences at a time without any hassles. This happened as a result of persistent hard work and excellent teamwork of the SSETians combined with the support and co-operation of the administration and management of SSET.
A paper written by Dr.C.Sengottuvelu, Professor and Head-Consultancy titled 'Enhancement of Value to Retail Customers through SCM' was published by Dhanam magazine, Kochi in their April Issue.

Dr. C.Sengottuvelu, Professor and Head-Consultancy and Dr.V. Raman Nair, Group Director presented a paper titled 'Engagement of Students through Co-curricular Activities: The SCMS Way' at the South Asia Council for Business Schools and Programs Region 10 Conference held on April 24 at SCMS Campus.

Under knowledge sharing programme Ms.Ruby Peethambaran, Co-founder, Fourth Ambit Technologies gave a talk on the topic 'How to leverage the online community of SCMS for better information exchange' on May 29. Mr.Satish C.S., Lecturer in Economics gave a talk on the topic 'Economics of Development and Growth' on June 12. Dr.Rupa R., Associate Professor gave a talk on the topic 'Crowdfunding,' on June 19.

Term IV internship of batch 25 PGDM students commenced on June 19.

World Environment Day was celebrated at SSET under the auspices of MTech Environmental Engineering Department on June 5. Prof.M.Madhavan, Director, SSET inaugurated the celebration planting a sapling in the campus. Dr.Sunny George, Director, SCMS Water Institute and Dr.Ratheesh Menon, Associate Professor were present on the occasion.

World Environment Day was celebrated under the auspices of M.Ftech Environmental Engineering Department on June 5. Prof.M.Madhavan, Director, SSET inaugurated the celebration planting a sapling in the campus. Dr.Sunny George, Director, SCMS Water Institute and Dr.Ratheesh Menon, Associate Professor were present on the occasion.

To add value the pen also carries a seed of the agasthya tree. If you throw away a paper pen it will grow into an agasthya tree which has high medicinal value. The tree can even be grown as a cash crop in place of rubber. She conducted a pen drive initiative in which she collected 7.5 lakh plastic pens. She is planning to put up an educative installation at the Kochi Biennale using these pens, the first of its kind in the world.

She also spoke on her other projects like scented candle project, drinking water supply project, wick kriya and so on.

Prof.M.Madhavan, Director, SSET planting a sapling in the campus in the presence of Dr.Sunny George, Director, SCMs Water Institute, Dr.Ratheesh Menon, Associate Professor and students.

Ms.Lakshmi N.Menon, Founder of PURE Living speaking at the World Environment Day celebrations. Sitting beside L-R: Dr.G.Sashi Kumar, Principal, SSTM, Ms.K.Latha, HoD-Commerce and Mr.M.Arunkumar, NSS Programme Officer.

Dr.Dean Vucinic, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium addressing the faculty at SCMS COCHIN School of Business.

Dr.Dean Vucinic, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium visiting SCMS COCHIN School of Business on June 21 and interacted with the faculty. Dr.Dean is actively involved in promoting and encouraging international cooperation in research and development, and education. He is the European Commission expert in Horizon 2020, the biggest ever EU Research and Innovation programme. He proposed his intension to collaborate with SCMS in future research projects. The areas of collaboration are being identified. He also spoke on the possible internationalisation of knowledge through collaborative working. Dr.Filomina PGeorge, Director, SCMS COCHIN School of Business spoke on the opportunities opening before us and the scope for making a better world through mutual cooperation. Prof Baiju Radhakrishnan and and Dr.V.Raman Nair, Group Directors also participated in the discussions.

Paper published

Paper presented

Knowledge sharing programme

Term internship

World Environment Day celebrated with eco-friendly pens

Paper pens are made out of waste paper exclusively by women and paraplegic people. It helps to generate income for those people.
World Environment Day at SCMS College of Polytechnics

World Environment Day was celebrated in SCMS College of Polytechnics on June 5 with the theme ‘Connecting People to Nature.’ Dr. Indu Nair, Group Director inaugurated the celebrations by lighting the lamp. The Eco club was also inaugurated by Dr. Indu Nair handing over a sapling to Mathew B. Kooran, Student Convener of Eco Club. A committee was formed for managing the club involving students from each branch with a staff advisor to supervise.

Dr. Mohan B, Associate Professor, SCMS COCHIN School of Business gave the keynote address and spoke on the importance of the environment day and the need for maintaining the biodiversity for the future generations. He highlighted the role played by Rachel Carson, American marine biologist and author of the book Silent Spring, in spearheading the environmental protection movement. The biggest threat to environment is the developmental model being pursued by the world, he pointed out. In order to improve the environment both poverty and greed have to be alleviated, he argued.

Mr. Baby P.P., Principal, SCMS College of Polytechnics, and Ms Parvathy S.Nair, Lecturer also addressed the gathering. From the student side Mathew B. Kooran, (Student Convener, Eco Club) and Rejpy Geo Antony also spoke. Prizes for Dr. Salim Ali Memorial Quiz competition were distributed by Dr. Indu Nair. Prof. C. I. Abdul Rahiman, Director, SCMS College of Polytechnics and Dr. Mohan B, Associate Professor, SCMS COCHIN School of Business are also in the picture.

Hundred saplings were planted in the campus as part of the celebrations.

Co-authored a book

Mr. Manu Melwin Joy, Assistant Professor co-authored a book Fun is the Future – A Collection of Compelling Gamification Success Stories published by Educreation Publishing, New Delhi.

Faculty achievement

Ms. Catherine Mary Mathew, Assistant Professor acquired a Post Graduate Diploma in Customer Relationship Management from Symbiosis Centre for Distance Learning with A+ grade.

World No Tobacco Day observed

On the occasion of the ‘World No Tobacco Day’ on May 31 an awareness programme was organised under the auspices of the NSS Unit of SSTM on the evils of tobacco usage. Mr. V.K. Salil Kumar, DySP-Anti-narcotics Cell, Ernakulam Rural inaugurated the programme. Mr. Sanal Kumar, Excise Preventive Officer spoke at length from his experience not only on the baleful effects of tobacco but also on the various disastrous practices currently invading the youth. A short film depicting the evils of liquor and drugs was screened. Dr Sanju George Chakkunkal, Psychiatrist, Rajagiri Hospital spoke on the carcinogenic effects of tobacco and warned against the powerful pro tobacco lobby. Dr.G. Sashi Kumar, Principal, SSTM presided. Mr. Arunkumar M., Programme Officer - NSS Unit also spoke.

Mr. V.K. Salil Kumar, DySP-Anti-narcotics Cell, Ernakulam Rural inaugurating the awareness programme. Sitting beside L-R: Mr. Sanal Kumar, Excise Preventive Officer, Dr Sanju George Chakkunkal, Psychiatrist, Rajagiri Hospital and Dr.G. Sashi Kumar, Principal, SSTM.

Reading Day observed

Reading Day was observed on June 19 under the auspices of the NSS Unit at SSTM. Ms. Sreekumari Ramachandran, noted novelist and short story writer was the chief guest. The experience from reading good books is equivalent to the taste of the food that your

Molecular workshop on DNA

A molecular workshop on the role of PCR tool in DNA studies for the benefit of final year graduate students of biotechnology and all those in other biological disciplines will be conducted at the Biotechnology campus at South Kalamassery. The week-long workshop will begin on July 3.
mother prepares for you, opined Ms. Sreekumari in her inaugural address. By reading *Amarchitrakatha* you will learn the history of our great country and our great epics. Those who practice regular reading will never develop Alzheimer’s disease, remarked Ms. Sreekumari. Dr. Sashi Kumar G., Principal presided. Ms. K. Latha, HoD-Commerce, Mr. M. Arunkumar, NSS Programme Officer and Unit members S. Anagha and Gayathri Ajith also spoke. The handwritten copy of the book titled ‘*Parayan Bakkivachathu*’ produced by the members was released by Ms. Sreekumari Ramachandran by presenting a copy to Mr. Sanal Potty, Public Relations Manager.

**International Yoga Day**

The Third International Yoga Day was celebrated on June 21 under the auspices of the NSS Unit and in association with CII, Art of Living, and Young Indians. Yogacharya Rajagopalkrishna was the chief guest who guided the yoga session. NSS volunteers and faculty members participated.

**SSET Digest**

**SCMS School of Engineering and Technology**

**Project presentations**

The projects titled, (1) Vehicle Load Monitoring System, (2) Shopping Assistance for Blind, (3) Life Detection and Rescue System, and (4) Automated guidance for physically disabled, have been selected for the final competition the ‘COIN.’ ‘Conclave Conference Competition’ to be held at IIT Delhi on June 24. The projects are done by our fourth semester students under the guidance of Prof. R. Sahadevan, HoD, Dr. Sunil Jacob, Professor and faculty members of ECE department.

Two research articles have also been selected for presentation and publication in the proceedings by IIT Delhi.

1. IITD/CONF/A0112: ‘Camotransmutese’ co-authored by Dr. Sunil Jacob, Professor, Ms. Saira Joseph, Assistant Professor of ECE Department and Joel George, eighth semester ECE student.

2. IITD/CONF/A0145: ‘Real Time Monitoring System for Rail by Wireless Technology’ co-authored by Dr. Sunil Jacob, Professor-ECE, Dr. Sheeja Janardhanan, Associate Professor-Mechanical and Sadiq Mohammed, eighth semester Mechanical Engineering student.

**Dream, design and make @ FabLab**

SSET FabLab has been successfully completed. The Lab is ready to run in full swing. The installation was headed by Mr. Luciano Betolidi, International Operations Director, FAB Foundation and supported by two technicians from Kerala Startup Mission. Mr. Luciano highly appreciated the involvement and support extended by SSET staff members, Dr. Sunil Jacob, Professor-EC, Mr. Sajith E., Assistant Professor-Mechanical and Mr. Nikhil Joseph, Computer Lab Assistant, to complete the installation before the scheduled time. The installation was followed by demonstration of machines and accessories to faculty members and students representing different departments of SSET.

**Top ranking for SCMS Engineering College**

As per ‘The Competition Success Review’ July, 2017 issue, SSET is ranked 6th in the National level ranking of ‘Outstanding Engineering Colleges of Excellence’ and 2nd among ‘The Top Engineering Colleges ranked State Wise’. The survey was conducted to identify the best colleges across the country in engineering education.

The FabLab has the facility that could excite many of our students irrespective of the branch and semesters they belong to. Each department has to take effective initiatives to expose students to all the facilities, motivate them to come up with their ideas and support them to convert it into prototypes or even real products that could be projected to a startup or a funded project work.

FabLabs were born from an outreach project by Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA, in 2005. FabLab is a technical prototyping platform for innovation and invention, providing stimulus for local entrepreneurship. A FabLab is also a platform for learning and innovation — a place to play, to create, to learn, to mentor, to invent. To be a FabLab means connecting to a global community of learners, educators, technologists, researchers, makers and innovators — a knowledge sharing network that spans 30 countries and 24 time zones. Because all FabLabs share common tools and processes, the programme is building a global network, a distributed laboratory for research and invention. By bringing these elements together, FabLab is inspiring the next generation of entrepreneurs, engineers and manufacturing talents.

There are about 1100 FabLabs across the globe and India houses just under 50 of them. The Make in India and various other initiatives of central and state government requires quality facilities like this to create a highly competitive ecosystem for innovative minds to showcase their ideas.

**Alumnus’ achievement**

Mr. Dipin PR., alumnus of SCMS Engineering College, 2009 pass out Mechanical Engineering batch, bagged 135th rank in Civil Services Examination 2017.

**Article published**

Dr. Sunny George, Director, SCMS Water Institute published an article titled ‘Make Water Management a Way of Life’ in the magazine *Pallikkutam* (June 2017 issue) brought out by Rajagiri Group of Institutions, Kochi.
No doubt, SSET has high potential - Dr. Dean Vucinic

(Dr. (Prof.) Dean Vucinic, Vesalius College, affiliated to Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium was in our campus during the month of June. He is a senior research scientist with expertise in aerospace engineering, computer graphics and human-computer interaction. He was interviewed by Dr. Sheeja Janardhanan, Associate Professor-ME in the presence of Dr. Sunil Jacob, Professor-EC and Mr. Sreesyam Divakaran, Assistant Professor-EE. Excerpts.)

Q: We are now heading towards clean energy sources, but are we not burning extra coal to provide the infrastructure and power to operate the so-called emission-less clean energy sources such as solar panels, wind turbines or electric vehicles?
A: Yes, what you say is correct but eventually we shall overcome this problem. Every new technology comes with certain pros and cons.

Q: How about using a heterogeneous combination of electronics, electrical and mechanical components for tapping energy from the natural resources?
A: Of course, yes. That is a prime focus of research these days. There are many researchers working in such areas. One such is Prof. Jovica V. Milanovic, University of Manchester. You can be in touch with him on projects on tapping energy from heterogeneous sources.

Q: What are your suggestions to help SSET reach its goals on renewable energy in the future?
A: I see it is basically through optimising all energy sources and focusing on improving the technology to harness the energy available in abundance. Splendid ideas with no facilities may not help. It is advisable to associate with similar research groups and carryout the tasks and reach the goal of becoming green.

Q: You are a Computational Fluid Dynamics expert. Is CFD today capable enough for studying the complete dynamics of fish-like autonomous underwater vehicles?
A: Yes. We need to devise better control elements for better controllability. I have already done similar work for airships. For simulations the preferred solvers are NUMECA and FLOWVISION. In Europe similar research is being carried out in the Universities of Zagreb, Split and Rijeka. I can connect you with people and that will definitely help you build your capabilities in this area.

Q: Could you please tell us something about your popular airship project?
A: The project is called MAAT – Multibody Advanced Airship for Transport – and develops innovative high altitude airship. The airship system offers a completely new approach towards passenger and freight transport as it can exchange passengers and freight during flight operations. This grants a new perspective with regard to global freight transport and logistics supply chains may considerably be shortened. We built a remotely operated model. Positioning of thrusters and docking were the major challenges. Your NEMO – Navigational Emergency Marine Object – is similar to our airships. You can use the same logic here too.

Q: What is your opinion on using Non-Newtonian fluids such as blood for computations using the conventional governing equations?
A: As of now the simulations are based on the assumption that blood is Newtonian. Bringing realistic characteristics into simulations is the biggest challenge. The research is still progressing in these areas.

Q: How easy is it to simulate the contraction and expansion of human heart muscles?
A: It is indeed a complex one. It is a two way Fluid-Structure-Interaction problem. The heart muscles are not made up of one homogeneous solid; instead it is a heterogeneous combination. The valves should be carefully modeled to obtain a correct simulation which in turn helps in the design of devices for heart patients.

Q: From the illustration on the different projects carried out at SSET, what do you comment on our potential.
A: There is no doubt, I see a high potential here. But you need to have high performance computing devices and better softwares. We shall together work to bring Flow Vision software here. Let us also devise some schemes for the support of various projects here.

SCMS, knowledge partner for water supply project of Rotary Club of Cochin Milan

SCMS has been selected as the knowledge partner by Rotary Club of Cochin Milan for their community-based pipe water supply project at Mankaikadavu of Udayamperoor Panchayat in Ernakulam district. The project is envisaged as a replicable model project at Mankaikadavu of Udayamperoor Panchayat in Ernakulam district. The project is funded by Rotary International. On completion of the project at least 100 houses will get clean drinking water at their door steps. Our faculty and MTech students have already started a detailed survey of the area for generating the basic data. Study and implementation of such a community-owned and decentralised pipe water supply project will be of immense value and remarkable real-time experience for our MTech students.

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Internships

Our even semester B.Tech students are undergoing internships with various organisations during the semester break.

Placement news

The following organisations conducted recruitment drive for our 2017 batch students during June 2017.

- Cabot Technology
- Pivot System
- Byjus Think and Learn
- KSB MIL Controls Limited

Reflections and reminiscences

I thought it would be an easy task to write about the four years I spent at SSET. After penning the first draft, I realised that I was not writing about these four years, but rather an experience for a life time, which actually moulded my character and ensured growth in every aspect.

I joined SSET for the one and only objective – study and get a bachelor’s degree in technology. And this, as expected, was easily possible due to the academic exposure that we gained from SSET which, no doubt, stands one among the best engineering colleges in Kerala. Exams and other curriculum works were a pleasurable task, thanks to the dedicated team in charge of academics. Fortunately the technical cells in our college render great service by providing information about the latest developments in technology. During placement drives, we are able to face the selection process with great confidence as we are technologically literate and advanced.

The placement cell in our college does a commendable job by providing professional placement training and offering opportunities in reputed firms. As a result, I am myself placed with Byjus Think and Learn Private Limited.

SSET is not a military base where it’s all book no fun. After all, we are humans, and we like to show off our talents, and enjoy a little as well. The two great fests of SSET, Igniz and Vipanchika, ensured that everyone got a chance to sharpen their skills or showcase talent. And oh yeah, we had a lot of fun.

I can only cherish these memories, once I bid farewell to my family, the SSET family. As I graduate and enter a new phase in my life, I realise that what am I really grateful for is the opportunity I got to serve as a member of the Helping Hands Organisation (H₂O), and later as its chairman, while it gave me an exposure to real life outside the four walls of the college. Here we all of us hold hands together and take an oath to serve our society and community by being helping hands….some say that it’s a way in which we contribute to the society, but little do they know, it’s the society that contributes to our personality development, thus making us real humans, and not machines.

Well, I guess that’s it. I know I didn’t do justice to SSET and I guess I never can, because words can never express emotions.

Muhsin K.  
2017 pass out - B.Tech Mechanical Engineering

SSA News

SCMS School of Architecture

Wall to wall housing

Perhaps the biggest issues the future generations in this part of the world would face might be related to the limited availability of land and the rise in land value. To counter this, our BArch second year students in SCMS School of Architecture have come up with the idea of ‘row housing.’ They have made a miniature of the proposal and it was reviewed by popular South African architect Peter Rich.

“Every year they do a project. This year we gave them this idea to develop,” said Ms.Asha O.S., Assistant Professor who was one of the faculty members who gave the assignment to the students. “The concept was inspired by the model of agraharams. In future, the land price would be very high and it may not become affordable for everyone to buy land. Flats are there but communication between neighbours would be limited or nil. The concept of row housing is a good substitute,” she clarified.

According to the concept, there would be a row of houses with shared walls and a common recreation area. Economy, communication and effective use of land are the three major factors that make this project viable. “We asked each student to design each house in the master plan and gave them six months to complete it. They were told to attach a shop with each house so that eventually it will grow as a shopping street,” explained Ms. Asha.

The activities were spearheaded by Mr.Roy Antony, Guest Faculty. The students had an interactive session with Mr.Peter Rich. They have developed a plan keeping the needs of the new gen in mind and hope that it would help the future generation. Let us hope sharing walls will bring people together.

Miniature model of row housing
From labour to action: transitions in engaging humans in work

Dr.P.Madhu M A (English), MA (Social Work), PhD. Professor & HoD-HR

The raw earth is turned into world by human efforts. Three succinct terms explain human efforts that transform: work, labour and action. Transition and teleology of transformation is work; effort, toil extracted for transition is labour; and active human engagement, its vita activa, is its action part. Of these three, labour as toil, is replaceable with machine or animal labour. Labour has nothing uniquely human says Hanna Arendt in her book Of Human Condition. Here, I trace the transition of treating human effort as labour to vita activa of involved human action.

Human endeavour creates workspace, the springboard for further work, labour and action. It is workspace by the arena of work it produces. Workspace evolves historically and spreads globally. It ideates the world with differing perspectives of human action. Trajectory and co-evolution of science, technology, and ideations of property rights, labours and market popped up the modern world from the cooking pot of workspace.

Modern global workplace had begun with imagining The Wealth of the Nations, as lettered by Adam Smith. There, we see aristocracy representing nations saw labour in the context of accumulation of wealth. National interest justified expansion, colonisation, property accumulation, and enslavement of labour. Until efficient systems of monetary rewards were introduced, labour was indistinguishable from slave ownership. It limited entrepreneurship, as owners had to live with fixed skill sets of slaves. Buying them for physical toil was an investment. Slavery was sticky. It was blocking fast transformation. Hence, there were speculations and ponderings about using human labour for productivity.

Workspace was modernised in the milieu of industrial revolution as labour was separated from labourer, the erstwhile slave. Industriousness required adapting to transitions. Hence, in modern world, it was not slave, but labour was purchased. Labour had to be lured, regulated or enforced by law to abide by work-ethics. Progressively, it replaced not only slavery with labour but also patterns of traditional work and family labour with systematised division of labour working under command bureaucratic structures, labour specialisation and divisions of labour. Social transition brought by factory systems of labour had to be propped-up by laws of labour regulations, personnel management, regulations of working hours, compensation, working conditions, security, privileges, benefits, and management of disputes. Association of labourer with labour was still prevalent throughout modern workplace. Hence, seniority and experience were the criteria of workmanship. However, the presumptions are fast fading as performance replaced seniority in deciding the worth.

In later phase, with the rise of modern accounting, bookkeeping and auditing the logic percolated to labour management. Since then labour is treated as an accountable entity amenable to calculations and quantifications in terms of asset or liability. This gave personnel management a new name - Human Resource Management. Labour for the HR accountant is not a psychological management of stress and grievances, but move ahead for optimum return on investment. HR professionals had to justify investment by its returns. It took an accounting turn on cost cutting, human productivity and performance assessment. While the intention was to emphasise the ‘resource’ aspect, its human aspect was raising the legitimate question whether humans be objectified as ‘resources.’

Currently, we realise humans are not mere labour force but actors entangled in working relation with the world. While we are still governed by the rules of late modern industrial world, the field of business in the advanced age of information opens us to newer measures of human resource development. The information infrastructure, growth of people analytics, emerging significance of cultural competency of workspace, recognition of work-right or right-work policies along with other information avenues transformed communicating and communion potentials of all involved as it had never been precedent. Coming up is the world of omni-transparency and omni-communion in which none is hidden from another. Nurtured by transparency and omni-connect of information flow it raises expectation, competition, competency and fairness. Business today has to become organic response system adopting itself to the emerging impulses of the future, responding to the potential developments, and catering to the needs of unconventional consumers under the watchful eyes of other stakeholders. The challenge is completely human – personal, social, cultural and political.

Business today is emerging into a body of service that equitably links its stakeholders through information infrastructure that demands fairness from all actors as co-creators. The trichotomy of investors, labourers and consumers and the dichotomy of product and service are fusing together into one organic unity that efficiently serves all. Currently, the field of HR is maturing beyond the erstwhile accounting for performance of human labour. Now the role of HR profession is transforming from human resource profession to the profession of human relations. The transition demands tougher and strategic task ahead for the profession.

Emergent workspace is not satisfied with performance scales of the HR auditor. It demands competency as suitability to remain relevant. Being competent is infused with living reality of workplace transitions. Competency demands flexibility, suitability, reflexivity, adaptability and the capacity to co-evolve. It demands human intuition and ethical intelligence. It is preparing business acumen for future ready services. HR professionals today are expected to move beyond functional aspects of personnel management, or auditing aspect of performance management, towards strategic competence management. It involves developing the corporate vision in tune with the transforming social reality and breaking the abstract vision into practices and patterns of behaviour. It is to coax action of the employees in the direction of desired cultural competence.

Another intriguing expectation from HR profession is finding and nurturing talents. Performance is task related, competency is job related and talents are flavour of integrated skill sets unique to individuals. Talents are not merely skills to perform tasks, but uncommon potentials and tacit innate characters to perform competently in any circumstance. Talent management involves preventing bad hiring through predicting talent needs, identifying, developing, allocating and retaining talents. Predictive analytics is one of the ways to ensure the reach of targeted talents.

Studies in competency and talent management suggest that they are intrinsically connected with organisational culture and its cultural competence. Sense of honesty, fairness, equity, understanding, tolerance, diversity, mutual trust, cordial relationships, innovativeness, freedom and other cultural aspects of goodness contributes in nurturing talent, competency and in turn performance. Strictly speaking, they were not part of human resource management till recently. Organisational culture determines important factors of organisational success like employee engagement, sense of accountability or entrepreneurship. It is not sufficient to declare them as organisational values for employment branding. Making values working for business and keeping it culturally fit is an HR challenge today. Managing personnel as labour towards producing and selling products to consumers is the old model of HR. The current challenge is to trigger vita activa of active talents serving the needy from within culturally competent work environments.