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# EMPOWERING TIMES



## **THINKING ALOUD**

Employee Relations/Industrial  
Relations in India: The Future of Work,  
Relationships and the Human Being  
Vijayan



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Senior HR Professional



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Yeshasvi Pachpore  
Founder - Praggyan, Pune



Dear Reader,

Today, most of us spend a major portion of our day at the workplace and therefore it becomes imperative for management to ensure that their employees are not only happy as well as cordial relations between various stakeholders are maintained. The current developments in the Employee Relations (ER) space in India and globally made us look at this theme for this month - **Employee Relations at the Workplace**. Organizations today are walking that extra mile to establish a work culture that encourages healthy working relations especially at a time when changes in the business environment is inevitable. We have senior HR professional, **Dipak Gadekar** in the **Podium** segment who enlightens us on the shift from Industrial Relations to Employee Relations.

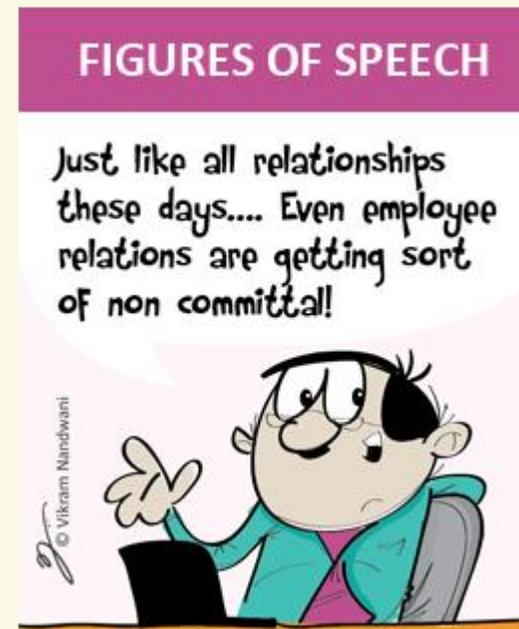
In the **Thinking Aloud** section, **Vijayan** highlights that Employee Relations will continue to play an important role in organizations.

**Meeta Lee** reviews 'An Unfinished Agenda' - the autobiography of the owner of pharma company Dr Reddy's Laboratories in the **We Recommend** section. The book is an insightful read of Dr Reddy's personal journey from his village to the corner office of the globally recognised pharma company.

In the **Wonder Women** segment, we feature **Yeshasvi Pachpore**, founder of Pune based organization, **Praggyan**, and her entrepreneurial journey.

In **Figures of Speech**, **Vikram's** twist on 'Employee Relations'!

As always, we value your opinion, so do let us know how you liked this issue. To visit our previous issues you can visit the Resources section on the website or simply [Click Here](#). You can also follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#),



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## THINKING ALOUD

# Employee Relations/Industrial Relations in India: The Future of Work, Relationships and the Human Being

- Vijayan

It is well known that disruption has overturned older business models overnight. In recent years, this disruption has been aided and accelerated by technology interventions. According to Mr Nandan Nilekani (Chairman, Infosys), the biggest phenomenon we are witnessing is the shift of technological power away from organizations AND a shift of such power towards the hands of the customer/consumer. Employee/Industrial Relations will and is, increasingly being influenced with respect to the type of actors and the nature of the relationships between them. Let me unbundle some of the key issues, challenges and opportunities.

The 'Uberisation' of business modelling, to a great extent has been mirrored in OLA, Swiggy, Gaana.com, Flipkart, Book-My-Show, PayTM, etc. Owning physical assets has ceased to become a pre-requisite for delivering value to customers/consumers. Sharing/pay by use economy has enabled customers/consumers to better manage their income and spends and maintain a certain level of lifestyle, despite muted economic growth.

Such 'aggregator' models have triggered discussions around the world as to who are the employer and the employee/worker/workman. In the case of Uber/OLA, drivers are self-employed, but use the company's ride-sharing software platform and part with a portion of their earnings to the company. The related question is whether such drivers are to be protected with a guaranteed minimum wage/salary and other labour legislations that are available to similarly skilled workers. This dilemma is being contested in different courts across the world

and we have not seen a clear direction. The employee-employer relationship - which is the bedrock of all Indian labour legislations - is under threat, with the emergence of such collarless employees.

Moving to another dimension, Employee/Industrial Relations leadership has to begin wearing new lenses while taking stock of their human assets. They should factor the fairness and equity of health (physical, psychological, rewards, growth) of 'all human resources' that are employed across the value chain, regardless of whether they are permanent, contractual, on/off rolls, etc. This will also be the trigger to move away from only site/location centric leverage in framing Employee/Industrial Relations policies/processes and generate traction towards the framing of 'sustainable human assets & their well-being'.

Another red-hot button is the lack of equity, when the salaries of the junior most employees and the senior most are placed side by side. It is estimated that the ratio of CEO compensation to the median salary of the junior-most employees in India, is in excess of 1000:1. Even in advanced/developed countries of the West, this ratio is around 500/600:1, while in the Eastern part of the world it is closer to 15/20:1 (Japan). It is also reported that 58.5% of India's wealth is owned by 1% of our population while 80% of India's wealth is owned by just 10% of the population. These discouraging statistics need to be viewed in context of the formal sector employment in India being limited to 8/9% of the population.

The above trend in inequity is likely to destroy collaborative efforts within/external to the organization. The collaboration is an important competency for the success of the business model that is increasingly moving to a network of 'a small core of permanent employees', a range of smaller/specialised individuals/set-ups, contingent staff, etc. The widening gap in equity is also reflected in the extent to which organization policies and attention is disproportionately assigned to the needs/wants/desires of Managers. The organization is 'consumed' in the 'high maintenance burden for a few employees' while moderate/minimal attention is paid to the needs/wants of the large number of the workforce.

If the differential between the salaries of the junior and the top most Managers are not reduced, the purchasing power of the former would come down, which in turn is not good news for the Indian economy. It is hence important to care and prioritise investments to build the mental and physical health and quality lifestyle for all employees. This also includes particular attention to the rest/recuperation and renewal for more and more

employees who work 24 by 7 shifts and/or working for long hours with computers/other machines.

It is in this context that the concept of Universal Basic Income (UBI) is being talked about more loudly. Even in a prosperous country like Switzerland, UBI was put to vote. Though the vote was defeated, it is a bell weather for what may become paramount in lesser developed countries and societies.

Finally, one needs to call out the urgent need for Managers and other leaders of organizations/industry to pay heightened attention to small and elevating behaviours of high impact engagement; e.g., giving credit to others, generating joy and collaboration in the work place and building organization purpose into every employee's task and role.

Much to the surprise of many, it is premature to pronounce the demise of the art and science of sound, sustainable, competitive and mutually beneficial Employee/Industrial Relations.

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## PODIUM

### Interview with Dipak Gadekar Senior HR Professional



*Dipak Gadekar is a senior HR professional with over 35 years of comprehensive experience covering various facets of HR management at the operational and strategic level. He is actively associated with HR professional associations. Dipak is the Founder Member of the Thane HR Group, an association of HR professionals and HR Infotek - an association of HR professionals working in IT and IT enabled industries.*

*He has been a visiting faculty at Welingkar Institute of Management Studies and Vivekananda Institute of Management Studies. Apart from this, Dipak was a subject matter expert of the SHRM Panel on Industrial Relations for 2010-11 & 2011-12. A science graduate from Nagpur University, he holds a Law degree and a post graduate degree in Labour Studies from Mumbai University. Dipak has strong interests in social service activities as well.*

**ET: From Industrial Relations (IR) earlier to Employee Relations (ER) currently, what have been some significant shifts in recent years?**

**DG:** The shift from classical Industrial Relations approach to the current Employee Relations is not a mere name change. It involves a paradigm shift - from a power supremacy (we v/s they) to more 'collaborative', from managing a Group to connecting with Individuals, from adversarial to partnering for collective good.

**ET: What challenges do ER professionals need to deal with, especially in the context of the rise of 'knowledge workers'?**

**DG:** With the advent of knowledge workers and the challenging times that the economy has been facing lately, trade unionism in general has been a bit subdued in recent times. The new generation of HR fraternity does not seem keen to handle the IR/ER piece of the people management gamut. This has created a scarcity of capable and willing ER professionals who could handle these matters in the best interest of all stake holders. Also the new methods of manufacturing or service delivery through the outsourced/contracted third-party employees have created its own issues. ER is a very complex art calling for knowledge of individual and group behavior of human beings, knowledge of the law of the land, excellent negotiations skills and a judgment of fairness. Successful ER requires considerable amount of time and effort to be invested in understanding the organization (people) and developing a rapport. Periodical change of person in-charge of ER and/or management pressure to cobble a quick fix solution at times leads to creating potential hazards which could surface anytime in the future.

Also, the knowledge worker would be more interested in understanding and appreciating the logic and rationale behind decisions/policies, etc.

**ET: With the rise of automation and robotics, among other advancements, is ER losing its significance? Please share your thoughts.**

**DG:** ER will remain significant as long as there is a presence of the human element in any enterprise. In fact, the 'nuisance value' of this element could be significantly high even in tech intensive organizations as the small element of PEOPLE could be capable of putting the whole investment in technology to a naught, if not managed properly. Only the approach and methodology would change but its significance would continue.

**ET: What are some ER mantras to move from the classic 'confrontation' to developing a rewarding 'collaboration' environment?**

**DG:** Personal integrity and adherence to values is one of the most important requirements to be successful in collaborative ER, in addition to the skills and knowledge discussed above. Unless you are respected as an individual, you are not likely to succeed in ER. Mutual trust is another key element of a collaborative ER environment and it calls for its own investment in understanding and appreciating each other's perspective which can be achieved only through continuous dialogue. One has to give up power positions and instead play the role of a facilitator/catalyst.

**ET: As a senior HR leader, what is your advice to professionals aiming to empower people?**

**DG:** Once, while delivering the opening address to a gathering of HR professionals at Kolkata, HH Mother Teresa said something to the effect that to be a successful leader, you need to love your people, and to love them you need to know them. If you keep judging people, when would you love them?

I suppose this is a very powerful message, easy to understand but not so easy to practice. The geographically distributed complex organizations of today cannot work effectively unless they have empowered people resources. To that end, we need to 'BELIEVE' in our people, to start with, put in place processes which enables them to take decisions and provide guidelines with which they can check their decisions, when in doubt. We need to have systems in place to help them keep their tech skills and other competencies sharpened - a culture of recognition and celebration, and above all, an environment where people do not hesitate to take calculated risks without the fear of retribution, should the attempt fail.

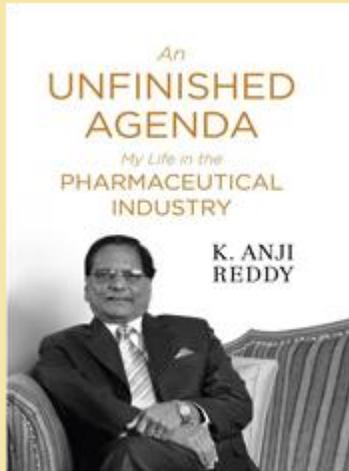
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WE RECOMMEND

## An Unfinished Agenda: My Life in the Pharmaceuticals Industry

- Dr K. Anji Reddy

- Reviewed by Meeta Lee



"An Unfinished Agenda" is an unemotional yet intense autobiography of Dr K. Anji Reddy, the founder of Dr Reddy's Laboratories Ltd, Hyderabad. It is detailed with a lot of anecdotes and is very descriptive about the pharmaceutical industry.

The motivational factor behind this scientist turned entrepreneur is the historic landing on the moon by Neil Armstrong in 1969. Dr Reddy attributes his success to this event which inspired him to establish his own pharmaceutical company and realise his dream of providing affordable medicines to the world. Born in 1941 at Tadepalli, a small town in Andhra Pradesh, Dr Anji Reddy completed his schooling and graduated from the University Department of Chemical Technology, Mumbai and earned his Doctorate from the National Chemical Laboratory in Pune. He started his career with Indian Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Limited in 1967 and founded Dr Reddy's Laboratories in 1984. Top on his list was to manufacture bulk drugs and sell them to the multinational and local industry for making finished dosages at reasonable prices, which was enabled by the new Patents Act in 1972. Though the bulk prices were lower, Dr Reddy observed that many pharma companies were unwilling to pass on the benefit to needy patients, so he came up with a very simple formula - one Dollar equals one Rupee. The best example is Enalapril which he launched with the trade name Enam. He priced it at ₹ 1.20 whereas the price in the USA was US\$ 1.20.

The discovery of new drugs had always been very close to Dr Reddy's heart and he felt extremely joyous when a

new drug was discovered as it felt like a reward finding a cure for a specific disease. This was always his lifelong ambition which is echoed in the title of the book. He came to realising his dream when he licensed two molecules to Novo Nordisk for development. Sadly, work on each was stopped before it could reach its conclusion. While Balaglitazar, named after God Balaji, was an improvement over a molecule indicated for the treatment of diabetes, Ragaglitazar was a first-in-class molecule that could treat diabetes and lower harmful cholesterol and, therefore, had the potential to become a blockbuster. In fact, there is an entire chapter in this book which describes in great depth the failure of Ragaglitazar. Dr Reddy's disappointment is very evident when one reads this chapter.

Another ambitious move is when Dr Reddy acquired Betapharm, Germany's fourth largest generic company in 2005. It was the biggest overseas acquisition by an Indian company. Despite competition from Ranbaxy, Dr Reddy's walked away with the deal. But in 2007, the German government decided to give the power to prescribe medicines to insurance companies. This impacted the profits and sales force of Dr Reddy's Laboratories and they had to write this investment down and report a loss.

Filled with interesting discoveries made by many great scientists and how they made their mark in the healthcare industry through these discoveries, this book makes a very interesting read. It shows that there is much more to the pharmaceutical world than just chemical equations. In a nutshell, "An Unfinished Agenda" is all about Dr Reddy's missionary zeal and faith in science and the urge to do what he could in every walk of life with steadfast conviction, be it affordable medicines or drug discovery or social responsibility.

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## WONDER WOMEN

### Yeshasvi Pachpore

#### Founder - Praggyan, Pune



Praggyan, a Pune based organization was founded by Yeshasvi Pachpore in 2016 which focuses on data collection for village level development planning. Her idea came about while volunteering for CSR activities where she realised that there was a gap between the actual needs of the beneficiaries and the focus of interventions. Once when they were distributing books in village schools bordering the industrial area, they found that their roofs were leaking and children were not even attending school. The books were unnecessary if there was no one to read! This made her think about information gaps and how these could be bridged.

In order to reduce this gap, Praggyan was founded. She came across many NGOs that needed impact assessment studies. Government institutions, corporate, philanthropic foundations all supported social development and initiatives but they lacked data on when and where to invest, the impact on investments, is there an actual need for support, etc. Existing survey methods were also inappropriate which often resulted in no data or outdated/unsearchable data.

With the idea of working for the social good, she took an online social entrepreneurship course. At the end of the course, there was a business plan competition where more than 185 groups participated with their ideas. Her idea was to develop a health sector database for effective decision making along with a platform to aggregate social organizations working in health and medicine suppliers. After winning the competition with a seed funding of US\$ 5,000, she started exploring the idea further and realised the dire need for data based decision making in the social sector and decided not to limit the idea to health data. This led to developing Data101, the data collection app.

It was never Yeshasvi's dream to become an entrepreneur. However, her ever learning attitude and willingness to try different activities led her to become one. She manages multiple activities like business development, technical deliveries as well as operations, although it comes with its own set of challenges. Sales is the biggest challenge for any first time entrepreneur, especially when one is trying to work outside one's domain experience.

Yeshasvi cites that entrepreneurship is hard and every day is a struggle. But it brings a new challenge and one must not give up. One must not blindly keep working on things which you think are required for the idea to work. She advises that women entrepreneurs should work on their strategies and make changes according to the market. While there can be many external challenges, the main challenge comes from women themselves - lack of self-confidence and tendency to not take risks. Leadership does not depend on gender.

To know more about Praggyan, please visit [www.praggyan.com](http://www.praggyan.com)

For her efforts, Yeshasvi deserves a Standing Ovation!

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## THROUGH THE LENS



Naturalist, **Rupesh Balsara** spots the Himalayan blue sheep or the Bharal during his latest trip to Leh. The Bharal has the ability to remain motionless and can easily camouflage if noticed. They are active throughout the day, alternating between feeding and resting on mountain slopes.

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