

Harvard B-School and Kumbh Mela on 20.01.2013

AT MTC GLOBAL PLATFORM

Trigger Question: Mr. Raj Mohinder Pal Verma

Times of India today covered the news about research being done by the team of Harvard Team on all aspects of Kumbh Mela. They are going to study all aspects like organizational, sanitation, health etc.

From Management point of view Kumbh Mela is a great management challenge. Think of around 30 lakhs people take holy dip in about 3-4 years and around 1.2 crore people visiting. Think how so many reach in Allahabad, reach Sangam, Accommodation, Food, Health, Sanitation etc. Spiritual part we are not discussing.

But it does not attract IIMs and other allied Management Schools.

Sri Virendra Goel

Why Kumbh Mela alone? There is so much to learn from the things around us from part time servants (Bai) to house wife, from a pharmacist or retailer, from a street hawker, management lessons are all around us but have students been trained to learn by being observant. Dr. Kumar Manglam Birla was yesterday speaking at the international management conclave of Indore Management Association and he gave a very simple formulae of success of an individual and as a result success of what he is doing. The formulae is OIIE i.e. Observation, Intuition, Innovation and Execution. Do we really teach the students such things?

We have a very pertinent question to ask ourselves – whether we are looking for a CHANGE in the education system or we are looking for a TRANSFORMATION of the education system because change is evolutionary and transformation is revolutionary.

Mr. Stephen Narayan

During a meeting sometime back....we were discussing about Kumbh Mela & Ganga Snaan....one of my friend threw some light on this.... one NRI from the United States who had come on a visit...went to have a holy bath in Ganga in Varanasi...shortly after thata week later...he noticed a sore which became more irritable by each passing day and though he applied antiseptics...it wouldn't heal...finally he went to a dermatologist...who too tried out some medicines which too didn't work....by that time the sore had taken a shape of a wound with puss and infection...he was referred to a bigger Hospital where the expert Skin Specialist after inspection immediately asked him if he had taken a bath in the river here....on affirmative reply...the Doctor

told him that he had contracted some bacteria which had spread through his leg and that would require amputation to save the leg....the poor man was horrified...he then approached some bigger Hospital in the capital where after an extensive treatment they contained the bacteria but warned him not to expose himself again..... we all know that half burnt bodies are also immersed in Ganges leaving it to the turtles to do the finishing...a nick or a bite from these flesh eating turtles is also sufficient to spread the disease..... We all are aware that Kumbh also brings many Saadhu's from the Himalayan ranges who take bath just once in a year....Religious sentiments apart..any educated person who is hygiene conscious would agree that such festivals also result in pollution of the already scarce water resource and going by the news accounts of all channels, the water level this time at Sangam was just about 3 to 4 feet only..... So much for Water Conservation & Fight for a Green Planet.

Sri Virendra Goel

I have one simple question, if water of Ganga is so polluted, why there is no epidemic, why there are only one or two cases of some bacterial infection. Don't we see problem of unknown infection under best of the hygienic conditions. Day in and day out we hear cases of septicemia in best of the hospitals.

Dr. RP Singh

I agree that there has never incidentally been any great catastrophe due to pollution in Ganga river during Kumbh Mela. However, that can not justify or reduce the gravity of poor condition of our rivers including Ganga. I was in Allahabad during 1978 Kumbh mela as a student of Allahabad university. Even those days it was highly polluted. It has become worse since then and need drastic steps to not only arrest the further pollution but cleanse it from present state itself, our religious sentiments apart. Regards, Dr R P Singh

Mr. Stephen Narayanan

Well...it could be because we are more resistance then others who went abroad and lost their immunity along with their Resident Status.... also the entire Media some time back pointed out the origin of Super-Bug from Indian Hospitals. As you rightly pointed out....septicemia is nowadays very common....we often come across some realities which defy science and logic..... an uneducated Farmer's son....who can cure and heal diseases which the most experienced Doctors at times give up and throw their towel.... It Only Happens In INDIA. :)

Sri Virendra Goel

There is no doubt about the poor condition of the river, basically because untreated effluent is being released in the Ganges throughout its path of

travel and this fact is known to most Indians. Polluted water is visible to even naked eyes, still people's faith in Ganges' healing powers and its religious and spiritual importance has remained undisturbed. Hence, there is no logic in saying that such festivals are a burden on the environment and should not be held.

Yes, it happens only in India and there are millions and billions of Hindus who believe that Kumbh is one occasion to attain Nirvana – this despite the fact that Ganga has been polluted their own people by discharging all kinds of untreated affluent in the river and despite the hardships they have to go through to have a holy dip on the occasion. We cannot advocate the futility of such festivals on grounds of hygiene or stress on the environment or any other ecological reasons.

I must clarify here that despite leaving an hour away from another Ardh Kumbh place Ujjain I have never gone to have holy dip in river Kshipra during Kumbh or went for pilgrimage to any such mass gatherings.

Mr. Stephen Naryananan

The fact remains that the growing population needs water for sustaining. It was being said a couple of years back that the next war would be fought over water - and we already see the indication in form of face off between China - Japan & India. Our own states are fighting each other for their share of Water....we have Tamil Nadu in a constant fight with Karnataka for water....and in Center - Delhi....the National Capital has to beg from Haryana & U.P. And most of the times each of the states have different parties in power who wants to dominate the other so it is national level ragging which even the Courts have been unable to unravel.

Haryana has already banned constructions of further Malls - advising the builders to make their own arrangement for water as the ground water level tablet has dropped drastically.

Humanity has no other option but to wait for the Glaciers of the North Pole and the South Pole to melt so that the whole world could once again be covered by water....and we could all be water-borne.

Prof. Arun K Deshmukh

I don't understand the fiasco,

We hype the things only after some foreign entity starts emulating it. Why we began discussing this Kumbh Mela on MTC? just because Harvard shown its interest in it.

Would we discuss it, had it been business as usual?

Why don't any of our so called institutes on national importance viz., IITs, IIMs etc came forward to commence such studies.

We came to know DHARAVI only after it was well studied by Harvard.

Have we become intellectually bankrupt to see the opportunities around?

Dr. Prabhakar Waghodekar

It is good luck that Indian intellectuals felt a need to talk/write about Kumbh Mela after knowing some Harvard students have picked up phenomenon called Kumbh Mela.

Let me state that Kumbha Mela is not a crowd, at the most it is equivalent to fair (Jatra). In Maharashtra since 500 years on the eve of Ashadhi Ekadashi thousands of devotees walk down to Pandharpur from all corners of the state called Dindi and from neighbouring states like Karnataka and Andhra. Same thing can be mentioned about Tarkeshwar in West Bengal and other states are having one or the other event like Dindi. Kumbha Mela and Half Kumbha Mela are being regularly held since thousands of years.

For Kumbha Mela crores of people totally unknown to each other, with different culture, different languages, march voluntarily towards the place of Mela at their own cost (money and physical), not for material gain but something abstract, peace of mind, or some spiritual gain or so. It is really a mystery even for our information era: What is that hidden thread that brings so many people together?

Is our present knowledge enough to unfold this secret? Is it appropriate to look at it in the eyes of the existing Research Methodology or of some jargon like management terminology, or marketing or so?

Most of the research work or the world of business is active for material gains: good dividends to share holders (those who contribute capital to business) and excellent wages to employees (who in turn sell their human power and energy). Hence the terminology of management is revolving around these goals, social obligations, social/community benefits, etc., if they do exist, are merely the by products. In short, we need to reformulate our methodologies.

I have been thinking in this direction since a decade, but in vain. My query is: How could Adi Shankaracharya (who might have initiated Kumbha Mela: I am not sure) just in a decade or so (he became active by the age 18 or so and took samadhi at the

age 32)travel India 2-3 times and establish four Mathas at the strategic locations around the borders of India? How after Dnyaneswara (who wrote on Geeta in Marathi at the age of 16-17 years and took Samadhi at the age 21)Pandharpur Dindi was initiated? Who is responsible to make it continue for more than 500 years? What is the secret? My knowledge of Management and Engineering sciences as yet could not find out an acceptable clue.

I felt myself unlucky to see to it that such a treasure is brought to my notice for scientific analysis by the Harvard students. Is it not a dis-service to the Nation?