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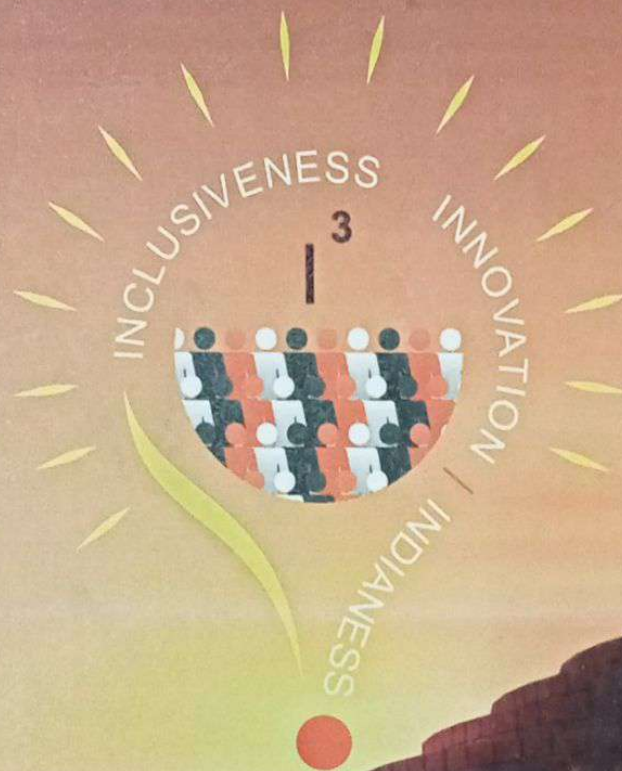
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India's potential

JANUARY 23 AND 24, 2015



Conference Proceedings



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**SADHU VASWANI INSTITUTE OF  
MANAGEMENT STUDIES FOR GIRLS  
(SVIMS), Pune**

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**INDIA'S POTENTIAL**

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## Ethical Innovation

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### Abstract:

Ethics is an idea or moral belief that influences the behavior and attitudes of a group of people. Ethics is also the study of questions about what is morally right or wrong. The process of translating an idea or invention into a good or service that creates value is known as 'Innovation'. To be called an innovation, an idea must be replicable at an economical cost and must satisfy a specific need. People in their everyday lives do take ethics into consideration in their judgments. They consider whether they're fairly representing themselves in description in an online dating site, or a job application. From the steamboat to the camera phone, innovations push communities to the frontiers of their knowledge and their comfort zone. Innovation and change are inevitable in an organization. Ethics plays a crucial role in leading innovation in the organization. It guides employees and managers when carrying out their roles. Ethical innovation produces a sustainable competitive advantage for the organization, creating good technology-community relationship.

**Keywords:** Ethics, innovation, competition

### Introduction:

The world is becoming increasingly competitive and innovation has become very important in organizations. Fifty years back you only talked about competition from your local region. Today, you produce a product, you try to patent it, but within about six months some company has produced something pretty close and they have worked around your patents as well. Customer expectations are also sky high. Customers today have very little patience with products that are old. All of this means that in a rapidly changing globally competitive environment, companies have no option but to be innovative. The measure of innovation at the

organizational level relates to individuals, team-level assessments, and private companies from the smallest to the largest. Measure of innovation for organizations can be conducted by surveys, workshops, consultants, or internal benchmarking. Many may question whether acknowledging the ethics of innovation would make the technology less scientific or objective. Ignoring the moral implications of an innovation, however, does not make the implications go away.

Business has an important role in innovation for many communities. Acknowledging that role and the responsibilities it carries will allow businesses to create value for themselves and their many stakeholders. Ethical innovation produces a sustainable competitive advantage for the organization, creating good technology-community relationships.

### Scope and Objectives:

1. To analyse the need of Innovation in an organisation.
2. To discuss the role of Ethics in an Innovation.

### Innovation and Organization:

Innovation can be described as the ability to define and develop new products and services and deliver them to the market. It is the fundamental source of value creation in organisations and an important enabler of competitive advantage.

Apple and Samsung, in the cell phone market, have been very good at innovating. They innovate in somewhat different ways. It's interesting, if you think about Apple, they came up with the iPhone, and if you look at the design of the iPhone today and compare it with the original design, there are lots of similarities, but yet there's been a lot of change. In the middle of all that change they've managed to keep the identity, the soul of the product intact.

On the other hand if you think about companies like Samsung, they have scores of phones which are quite distinct in the market, and they approach innovation as “we’ll produce a phone for every type of customer and pretty much saturate the market with phones”.

Here are two companies that have adopted very different approaches to innovation, but each approach works in its own way. Apple has the “Let’s look at the product, let’s refine it, let’s make it more jewel like, let’s put in some more functionality but let’s keep the soul of the product the same.” Whereas Samsung’s approach is: “Let’s do a lot of things in order to overwhelm the customer with choice.”

Also the other kind of innovation that is really coming to the fore right now, especially with the economy being what it is at the moment, is that there is no such thing as frugal innovation, innovation on a shoestring, so to say. A lot of ideas about how to do things simply, how to innovate on a shoestring, are now coming back to developed economies from developing economies, whereas historically the flow of innovation has always been from developed economies to developing economies. This is a reverse innovation that’s also taking place right now. There are a lot of interesting changes in the way companies are looking at innovation.

From an academic viewpoint, one of the things that we always try to do is not just to give managers and students concepts related to innovation, but tangible tools and techniques that they can go ahead and apply to be innovative on an anytime, anywhere basis.

Successful innovation is often a question of matching what the company does inside, in terms of the innovation processes, and what is happening on the outside, in terms of how is the brand positioned, what are the market segments the company goes after, what is the degree of competition, etc.

Therefore it is particularly important for successful organizations to build, not just some core competencies which is what they’re good at and stick to them, it’s also important for them to build a business ability of strategic flexibility, which is the ability to be good at change, the ability to challenge their past, to challenge their core competencies and to ask “What is it that I should carry forward into the future, and what is

it that I should leave behind?” Then there are some new core competencies that enable companies to intersect with the environment where it’s going. That can often be difficult because it is often so difficult for companies to step away and to sometimes even renounce what has made them successful in the past.

This is the old argument that you can take a horse to water but you can’t make it drink. If people deep within their hearts don’t want to change, they don’t want to be innovative and nothing’s going to happen.

If managers spend the entire day thinking about next quarter’s results, they are not going to be innovative. You have to create the time, the white board, and the room where people can get together and have the opportunity to think about change and to be innovative.

Motivation, opportunity and ability are required for innovation. You could be highly motivated. You could create the time and the space, the opportunity, but if you don’t know how to be innovative, nothing’s going to happen. Likewise, you could be highly motivated. You could have the ability, but if you don’t create the time and the space to be innovative, nothing’s going to happen. Finally, you could have the time and the space, you could know how to do it, but if you don’t really want to do it deep inside you, nothing’s going to happen.

#### **Ethics of Innovation:**

There are clear ethical rules that govern innovation. The regulatory ethics states that deviations from standard involve a degree of experimentation that requires a set of procedures to assure the protection of the rights and welfare of research subjects. For example, any innovative research or new medical procedure must be reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board.

When designing and implementing innovative tools or programs in the developing world, it is important to assign best practices in order for products to be successful and ethical. Important factors to consider include:

- **Impact:** How much difference will the innovation make to improve the current product?

- **Appropriateness:** Will the intervention be affordable, robust, adjustable and acceptable socially, culturally and politically?
- **Feasibility:** Can it realistically be developed and bring into the action within a time frame available/allowed?
- **Knowledge gap:** Does the innovation make any advancement by creating new knowledge?
- **Indirect benefits:** Does it address issues such as environmental improvement and income generation that have indirect and positive effects?

An innovation may lead to unintended and undesired consequences due to error on the part of the implementer. This is often due to the assumption that actions which have in the past led to the desired outcome will continue to do so. In order to anticipate the impact of an innovation, proper research should be conducted.

Evaluation needs to focus on measuring outcomes that reveal the extent and kinds of impact the project has on its participants. Impact could be reported in the amount of change in behavior, attitude, skills, knowledge or condition of the target population.

Innovation is necessary these days. But how is it connected to ethics? If you understand the domain of ethics properly, the connection is clear. In point of fact, innovation is an ethical matter through and through, because ethics is fundamentally concerned with anything that can promote human wellbeing. So ethics is relevant to assessing the goals of innovation, to the process by which it is carried out, and to evaluating its outcomes.

Innovation is generally a good thing, ethically, because it is aimed at allowing us to do new and desirable things. Most typically, this gets expressed in the painfully vague ambition to 'raise productivity.' The extension and enriching of human lives are good goals, which in turn make innovation generally a good thing.

Lives for most of the people in developed countries are pretty good. But many still don't have happy and fulfilling lives; many children, even there, still go to bed hungry. Boosting productivity through innovation is a key ingredient for making progress in that regard. And if less developed nations are going to be raised up to even a minimally tolerable standard

of living, we need innovations that will help them, and we need innovations that will make us wealthy enough that we can afford to be substantially more generous toward them than we currently are. Some innovations are plainly good: they make human lives better in concrete ways. Penicillin was a very good innovation. So was the birth control pill. So was the advent of the Smartphone. Other innovations are less good: nuclear experiments led to weapons which are used for destruction; but nuclear energy could be used for constructive purposes. The problem, of course, is that innovation brings risks. Some of those risks are of course borne by the innovator, by the entrepreneur. Others are borne by society. For one thing, we often don't fully understand which category a particular innovation will end up in until years later. But ethical evaluation doesn't just apply to individual innovations: systems of innovation bring a mix of risks and benefits. If you give your tech company's R&D department free scope for work, someone may invent the next 'killer app,' and someone else may simply crash your server. Hence the recent interest is not just in innovation, but in managing innovation. The notion of managing innovation reflects the fact that innovation can be fostered — doing so is an obligation of ethical leadership — and is an activity rooted in creativity. So for practical purposes, the ethics of innovation ends up being a branch of the ethics of management and leadership. Organizations, from small teams to nations, face a range of ethical questions as a result. They need to figure out how much to spend on encouraging innovation, as compared to spending on existing programs. They need to figure out how much autonomy to give potential innovators, how much freedom to experiment. And finally, they need to figure out how to spread the risk of innovation, in order to make sure that risks and benefits are shared fairly, and to make sure that fear of risk doesn't hamper our innovation.

#### **Ethical Frameworks for Innovation:**

Several ethical frameworks have been suggested to guide the development and implementation of an innovation and to ensure that it will not be harmful. As each framework contains major strengths and serious flaws, it is



important to consider both and avoid narrowly committing to one over the other.

**Strengths as an Ethical Guide**

- Encourages efficiency and productivity.
- Parallels profit maximization.
- Encourages looking beyond the individual to assess impact of decisions on all constituencies.
- Protects the individual from injury and establishes spheres of freedom.
- Establishes standards of social behavior that are independent of outcomes.

**Weaknesses as an Ethical Guide**

- Virtually impossible to quantify all important variables.
- Can result in abridging some people's rights to achieve the utilitarian outcome.
- Can encourage individualistic, selfish behavior that interferes with order and cooperation.
- Establishes personal prerogatives that may present obstacles to productivity and efficiency.

**Conclusion:**

In today's competitive world innovation is very important for all the organizations. For innovators, ethics may be a distraction that decreases the likelihood of innovation. But ethics also creates its own space for innovation, precisely because so many people do value ethical behavior. Ethical innovations are possible and have much more value to sustain themselves in the future.

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