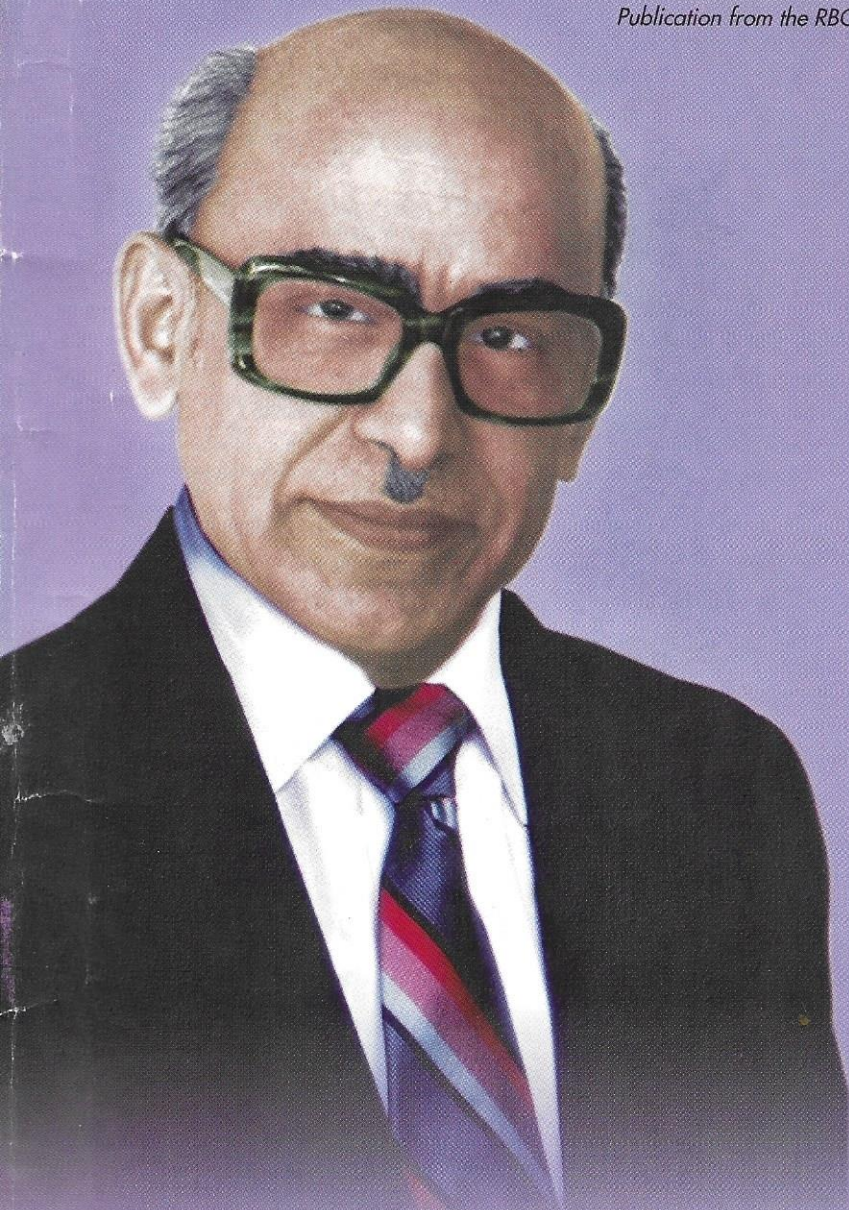


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HIGHLIGHTS THIS MONTH

- ★ Going for an interview
 - ★ Pulsating Poland
 - ★ All about Attitude
 - ★ Magic Cure for Heart Disease
 - ★ Survive & Protect
 - ★ Commonly asked queries
 - ★ Hot Destination-Estonia
- & many more.....*

PERSONALITY OF THE MONTH

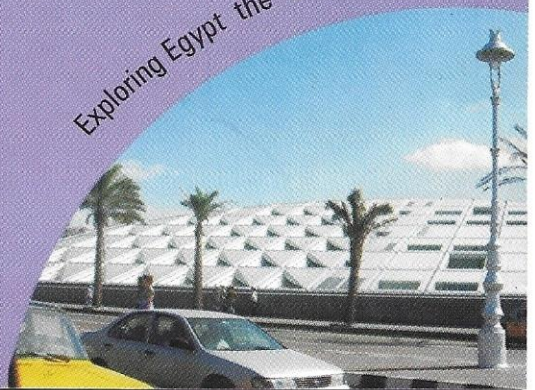
N. H. Atthreya

A pioneer of modern management movement in India,
speaks about our rich human potential

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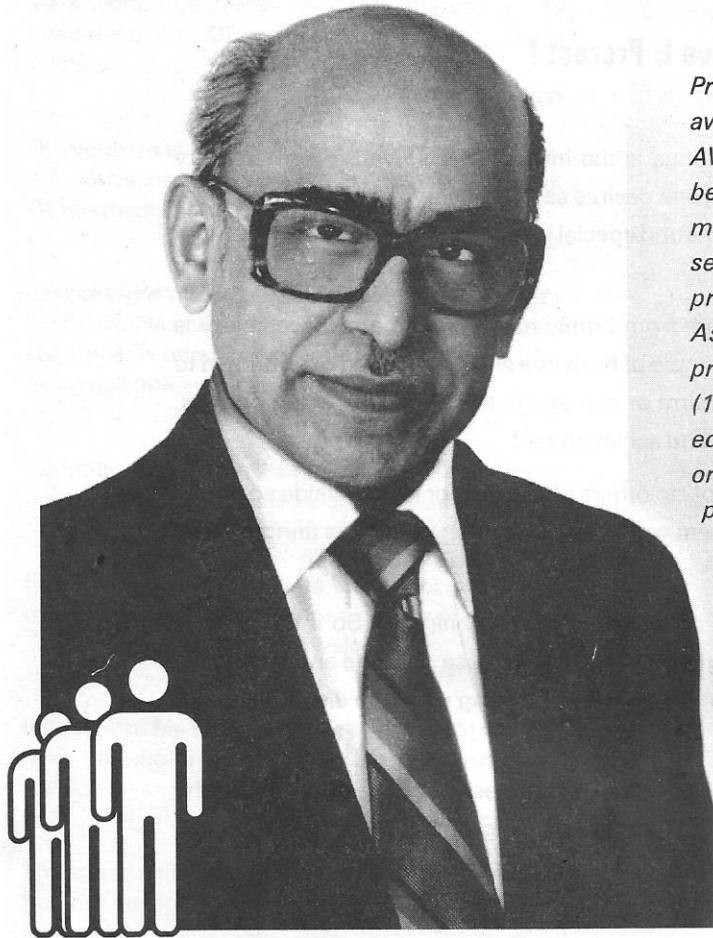
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Exploring Egypt the "Compact way"



Interview with **Professor Dr. N.H. Atthreya** A pioneer of modern management movement in India.

Interview



Professor Dr. N.H. Atthreya was recently awarded the HR LIFE TIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD and we interviewed him for the benefit of our readers. A pioneer of modern management movement in India, Dr. Atthreya set up the Management Study Group (the precursor to the Bombay Management Association) in 1952. He is the first professional management consultant of India (1954), first to organize continuing educational programmes (1955), first to organize a residential Top Management programme (1956), first to organize the visits of foreign management experts to India (1960), first to offer executive selection (1960), first to publish Management books for the Indian context (1965), first to publish a management monthly (1963), first to start the Human Excellence movement in the country (1967) and besides many more firsts to his credit.

You were given a HR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD- tell us about your work in this direction.

My focus has been to reduce waste in any form or degree and especially human waste. One thrust of my work has been, therefore, to help the relevant people bridge the gap between the potential and the actual. Our human potential is of a high order. Our human reality is not. The gap is wide and in good part controllable.

The credit for my achievement goes in a large part to the time I was born. You know somebody has to start

and I happened to be that somebody. The credit also goes to the many who made it possible - to my mentors, to my family members, to my co-workers, to my colleagues in the profession and most importantly to my client public. Without the support of the relevant public, one cannot achieve much.

What makes you think that our human potential is of a high order?

In 1959, I was a faculty member of the Administrative Staff College, Hyderabad. A senior British executive of the Imperial Tobacco Company was a participant in

of their Top Management course. At one of the formal meetings, he observed: "I was in the Royal Air Force before I joined this company. I was posted to an Air Force workshop. I noted the working crew was mostly taken from the jungle and given training to do fairly sophisticated work. In six months time, recruits became class one craftsmen. In the rest of the world, it would take the trainees at least two years before they develop this competence. I was amazed at the human potential in your country". This life experience of a foreigner speaks volumes about the potential of our people. And this is just one example of the hundreds of cases I have heard of in our country.

Do you think we in this country have a special advantage in respect of human resources, people.

So and every thinking person will think so. To think of our population, as a resource is being unfair. Our people are an untapped or partially tapped asset.

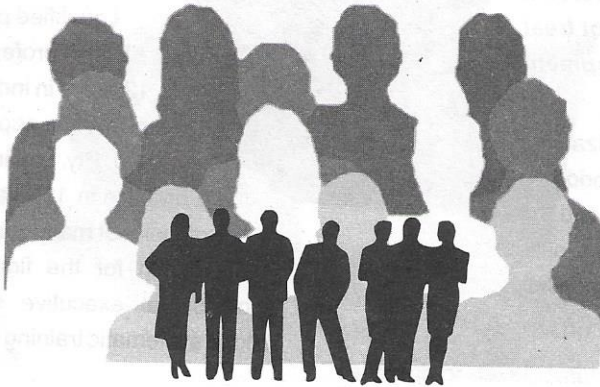
Do you say this is so at every level?

So and that is why I narrated the story the executive officer told me. Once this reality has been accepted, the rest will be easy.

Do you think about the efforts of the government in giving special career support to the disadvantaged section of the population?

The approach taken is a political patronage approach and not a professional preparation approach. Here is an example. Recently, I went to the State Bank of India to open an account. The officer in charge, who had probably been promoted to the in-charge position because of the governmental policy of favouring the disadvantaged section of the

population. I handed him the photocopy of a document. He asked me for the original of the document. I showed it to him- "Ye theek nahi hai," (which means it isn't correct) he said. The fact was that he could not read English and he could not admit the fact. And, when I say this, I do not fault him for this. I fault the system. The system places people in responsible positions without properly preparing them for the elevated, responsible position. This is why I call this political patronage. I actually felt sorry for the gentleman. I guessed he felt uncomfortable because of his lack of competence for his work so often, such promotees use their native cleverness, and save the situation by driving away customers. That way, every body becomes a loser.



What is the remedy?

Air India found a remedy some years back. A government order said that 35 percent of the air hostesses should be SC/ST. The person in charge did not say: How can I implement this policy without prejudice

to my business of serving my prestigious public? Instead, he made the training period three months for these people as against the usual one month. The one month was okay for the people coming from the upper middle class but not for this socially disadvantaged group. And the trainees rose to the occasion and they were systematically helped to do so.

I can also recall what my college did for students who came from the mother tongue medium. Since the medium of instruction would be English, these students were given a few months intensive coaching in English before the term started.

Thus the gaps in skills and the like should be systematically and creatively filled before people are assigned to jobs. This way you can be fair to them and fair to the public. THIS FAIRNESS IS YET TO COME. And everybody suffers.

Can the gap be filled by the concerned disadvantaged individual?

Yes and no. Yes, in the sense - man development is self development. Others can help and others can guide but in the final analysis the individual has to take the responsibility. However people need competent help, thoughtful help. Many do not know how to go about it. Even if they do, they cannot afford the cost. Of late, every such training has become five star!

Since the employing organizations benefit from the competent service of its people, should they not treat this training and development work as an investment?

They should and some organizations do take the responsibility of bridging the gap between the needed and the actual in terms of knowledge, skill, attitudes and value. But many do not.

How do you explain that?

Those who don't do argue thus. "These people may go away and our investment will be a waste".

On the contrary, don't you think the well-trained people will feel grateful and would like to grow in the same organization?

You are right. I only wish employers think of the longer and large picture and not their immediate one.

And even if people move out, they will move with goodwill. Also, they are not lost to the society. In fact, some of them may even like to come back! Unlike other creations, man's potential becomes a reality only when it is conceded, developed and recognized.

How did you choose this calling or profession?

Early in my life, I realized that my profession is an emerging profession and I should systematically



prepare myself for it. As in the case of medicine or law, I should take a few steps. I should expose myself to organized knowledge on the subject and get approved by a competent body. I should apprentice myself to a senior to know the intangibles that go with practising a profession. To be fair to my clients, I should observe a self-imposed code of ethics in my practice. To be fair to my profession, I should do continuous learning and work for excellence.

How did you go about it?

I qualified myself in management from British professional bodies. I worked for 12 years in industry and commerce. I took a one year apprenticeship with WD Scott and Co. Pty. Ltd. in Sydney, Australia. I set up a practice in 1955 and I am told I was the first professional management consultant in India. In 1960, again for the first time I became the first professional executive selection consultant, after taking systematic training in Australia.

What were some of the problems you faced?

Some of them were historical and they may not be relevant now. One item worth mentioning is the professional code of ethics, a self imposed code. Part of ethics is that I do not solicit business, that I have to say 'no' when the job requirement is not my area of competence, and that I should not compromise with the interests of the client.

You might have had some tough times since the profession was an unknown one when you started off.

Yes, I had tough moments and proud moments. For example, a public sector corporation manager approached me saying that his company has a fair sized assignment going and he can "arrange it" for me and he added "I should be covered". "Thank you," I

said and walked out. He said, "realise what you are foregoing". He reminded me, "everybody does it". I told him, "I am not an 'everybody'." I shared this experience with the members of my family. They said in one voice: "We are proud of you!"

Earlier in my professional career, I had periods when I did not have enough income to pay my rent. At one time, I had to sell my collection of precious books to raise the needed funds. Fortunately, such incidents left only a scratch and not a scar in my memory.

I hear you have published over 30 books on various aspects of management. What inspired you to do it?

Writing has been one of my hobbies even in my college days. Also, I enjoy sharing knowledge, information and insight. It is for this reason, I edited a management digest by the name **MANAGEMENT IDEAS** for nearly forty years.

Any suggestions for the newcomers to the profession?

There is plenty of room at the top. There is so much to be done in so many areas. I would be glad to assist any of your interested readers in any way I can. I will deem it a privilege.

I learn you are in your eighties. What are your succession plans?

I had the privilege of training over 20 professionals. Except three of them, all moved to the corporate or academic world here or abroad. The three chose to be on their own and they are in close touch with me.

Your son or daughter is likely to continue your work?

My daughter has chosen to be a lawyer in the field of intellectual properties patents, copyright, and

trademark. She does personality workshops for teenagers but only as a hobby.

What do you propose to do with the learning resources you have assiduously collected over almost fifty years?

I have several options. I have selectively collected material in scores of areas and topics - books, manuals, monographs, instruments, tests, games, audios, videos, films, clippings, etc. for junior, middle and top levels of management regardless of their area of operation. I can dispose them off in one of many ways. One is to give all or part to interested corporates. Another is to give them to individuals.

The third option is to help set up a public organization - a learning resource centre. I prefer the third option. And you know why will it help hundreds? Such a centre will be useful to the professionals who want a facility for continuous or selective learning, either for problem solving or applied

research or development in soft skill areas. Such a learning resource does not exist now in the public domain, at least in India. The centre will be unique in the sense that it will serve the needs of the active learning professional who will like to take a yearly retreat either for a specific project or for general updating. This centre need NOT be a charitable proposition, though it will not be a high profit proposition.

Have you found the patron?

I wish I have. Who knows one of our readers may have the heart and the resources to sponsor such a **POST EXPERIENCE SELF LEARNING CENTRE!**

We too wish you get one so that the fortunate can have the additional advantage of your personal guidance based on your rich foresight, hindsight and insight!

