

Business Research	<p>Political Branding – Trust In The Era Of Mistrust <i>Dr.Garima Malik, Asst. Professor, Amity Business School, Noida.</i></p> <p>A Study on Performance Management System among Two Multi-National Companies from Different Industries <i>Duraiarasi Balasundaram, Coordinator, Little Mountain School Trust, Coimbatore</i></p> <p>A Study on Occupational Stress Level of Employees with Special Reference to Coimbatore District <i>Dr.R.Karthikeyan, Assistant Professor, Karpagam University.</i> <i>Mrs. P.Kowsalya, Assistant Professor, VIMS, Coimbatore</i></p>
Contemporary Management Thoughts	<p>Designing Performance Management Systems (PMS) In Health Care Institutions <i>Dr.R.Chandrasekhar, Dean-Management Studies, Kalasalingam University Krishnankoil TN</i> <i>Dr.S.Uma maheswari, Associate professor, VIMS, Coimbatore, TN</i></p>
Case Studies	<p>Go Green: Issues And Challenges - A Case Study On Banking Industry <i>Dr. A.Valarmathi, Director, VIMS, Coimbatore</i></p>
Book Reviews	<p>Management Wisdom In Tamil Ethical Literature (Authors: Dr.V.Kulandaiswamy and Dr. Rupa Gunaseelan) <i>Mr N.Sundarapandiyan, Associate Professor, VIMS, Coimbatore</i></p>
Management Practices	<p>Wellness As A Way Of Business: Using Technology To Create India's Most Successful Diagnostics Business - <i>A Success Story of Dr. A. Velumani, CEO, Thyrocare</i></p>
Revisiting Native Wisdom	<p>Ten Manifestations , அறிவுப் பத்து <i>Dr.V.Kulandaiswamy, Secretary and Correspondent, VIMS, Coimbatore</i></p>

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Management Wisdom in Tamil Ethical Literature

(Authors: Dr.V.Kulandaiswamy and Dr. Rupa Gunaseelan)

Mr N.Sundarapandian, Associate Professor, VIMS, Coimbatore

BOOK REVIEW

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This book is an effort to bring out the Tamil ethical literature and thoughts into the management application. The authors have put in lot of efforts and their long years of experience in the field are clearly seen from the way it is systemized and presented. It is designed to revisit the classical literatures and research the rich content with new perspectives and this needs special skills and in depth insight in both the fields; namely the Tamil classical literature and contemporary management principles and practices.

The text of the book is in bilingual form. The substance in the book reveals the native thoughts in the framework of management functions; management wisdom in ancient times in planning, goal setting, a systematic and logical effort is clearly brought out in the book and translated in understandable form. Effective implementation of decisions in one such thing which is hard to understand, while implementing the planned activities involving people in every business process needs special people management skills and efforts. This book simply clarifies that the purpose of any plan is to achieve results through a strong leadership. The authors' have quoted from *Thirukkural* and other Tamil texts to draw valuable insights on Management. For instance *Thirukkural* portrays four qualities of leadership namely, love, knowledge, clarity of thought and absence of greed.

Managing one's own self is essential to become a leader, who is to develop trust and faith among people in any organization. Positive faith or trust is one basic requirement to achieve success in any tasks. In an organization, the employer should have positive faith on the people employed. The authors brought a review from *Thirukkural* that fortune will leave an employer who suspects the intentions and loyalty of the employee, to whom important duty is assigned.

Peter Drucker advocated the need to rediscover the traditional management wisdom: 'one of the basic challenges managers in a developing country face is to find and identify those parts of their own tradition, history and culture that can be used as management building blocks'.

The book under review is a sincere attempt to implement this lofty ideal. A few highlights from the book will reveal its relevance. One such is on planning and decision making. As quoted in precise and in two lines from '*Kural (467)*' "think before commencement of any action and initiating action without forethought will bring disrepute". The next important point which deserves attention is on leadership. It is stated in the book referring to *Thiruvalluar* that while making decision factors such as Nature of the job, capacity of the individual, strength of competitive forces, and strength of the supporters ('*Kural 471*'), and timeliness ('*Kural 484*') have to be taken into consideration. On empowerment and delegation, this book highlights the reference from the reputed ethical treatise '*Naanmanikkadigai*' that the wise thing is to divide the job into specific tasks and delegate them among the deserving subordinators with needful power for them to perform so as to complete their tasks. The latest practice is making people enterprising; and entrepreneurship is that which creates borderless and boundaryless organizational structures. This book speaks about the person, their qualities and not other attributes like their birth, religious or social aspects. There are lot more on communication, conflict avoidance, social responsibility and etc., through the real core references from various ancient poems and classical literatures.

The most quoted references in this book certainly reveal that the moral and ethical aspects and practices of business management are fundamental. To relate with the recent findings of Quality Assurance

Agency (UK), the most businesses today in the world are successful because of their strong ethical practices. Such important aspects are well discussed and chronicled in this book. Concepts and references on Entrepreneurship, Communication and Social Responsibility are the other important aspects that give the wholesome knowledge of the old world perspectives of the fundamentals of Management Science rooted in Tamil literature. This unique effort by the authors and the invaluable emotional bondage they have towards Tamil Language and its rich tradition is reflected in the book. From this review, we find this book as an essential reference to all the management graduates and management practitioners, whatever may be the field of specialization.