



BOOK REVIEW: **“7 Dreams to Reality: Transforming Indian Manufacturing”**, by Prof. Shoji Shiba

A book review by Sudhir Patwardhan - Director, PAT Consulting

Padmashree Prof. Shoji Shiba, a Deming Prize ⁽¹⁾ winner, takes us through a wonderful, 210 page journey of seven success stories, indicating that a new Indian way of manufacturing is emerging.

The purpose of the book is to inspire Indian organizations and managers to adopt the principles of Breakthrough Management to meet the future challenges posed by the world experiencing 10X changes. Prof. Shiba wishes *“to ignite a passion about manufacturing in the country”*, and uses the word “manufacturing” in a far wider context.

The purpose is achieved extremely well. I am sure the readers will enjoy the book as much as I did.

The stories in the book are unfolded just the same way as the philosophy it emphasizes: using the Breakthrough Management “70-30 Rule”: *70% Practice & 30 % knowledge*, and “Learning by Doing”. The description of how exactly the Godrej & Boyce Team and Sona Koyo Team developed and marketed innovative products “Chotukool” and “EPM” respectively is very interesting and educative. Likewise, how the teams *“dived into fishbowl”* rather than *“observing the fish from outside”* to reach target customer by identifying their needs, adopting emerging technology and innovative distribution systems through breakthrough ideas is fascinating. Prof. Shiba explains the seven factors of organizational change, and illustrates how an organization can be transformed using the example of Godrej’s Shirwal Factory. The book then takes you outside the four walls of the organization to interact with the organization’s profit-critical stakeholder: the Supplier. Creation of trust based relationship, painstakingly nurtured, leading to win-win advantage has been lucidly explained using the example of Gabriel India and two of their suppliers - Vinsar Elastomers, and Hosur Steel. The point that strikes you the most is that of *“Do and then Demonstrate”*. The author explains how to design and establish three critical flows: *Procurement > Production > Delivery*, and the business benefits that follow. The case of business transformation of Paragon, a single-source supplier of Sona Koyo is indeed outstanding. It has been described in detail so that the reader can really understand (*and learn how to apply*) the four stages of business transformation – from “mind-set change” to “gaining tangible and intangible business results”.

The book is rich in concepts and principles underlying Breakthrough Management. Sample these: *“Success is the first step towards failure”* emphasizes need to destroy current success, or *“Start at the periphery... snow always melts at the periphery”* reminds us that revolutionary changes always begin at the edge of chaos! The book also has some sharp and direct observations about Indian managers. For example: Indian managers talk, talk and talk (TTT)... so the author recommends a slogan: “Listen, Listen, Listen”. *So very true!* But Prof. Shiba also gives credit to Indian thinking when he refers to VLMi⁽²⁾, a community learning initiative, as *“quintessentially Indian approach.. something I had not thought about and, frankly, is completely out of my ability to do”*. He goes on to explain that community learning works best when suppliers have a common goal, are co-located, and work in a non-threatening environment. However, the book’s narration would have been livelier and the purpose reinforced, had the author included a few pictures of people, products or processes. Perhaps the author had his own reasons for it.

One of the striking features of the book is *three eyes of the Buddha*, beautifully illustrated using a simple sketch (*copied here for quick reference*). The third eye represents a quantum leap in thinking and application. To my mind the third eye (*like the Lord Shiva’s*) also represents destroying the present so that the Innovative Future is born!



Emphasizing integration of thinking and doing *at all levels of hierarchy*, the book is an excellent read for the *thinking doers* of Indian Industry.

(1): Prof. Shiba was awarded The Deming Prize for individuals in 2002, for his outstanding contribution to Quality Management methods.

(2): VLMi = Visionary Laghu-Udyog Mitra-Mandal (Small industry friend group)