

BOOK REVIEW :**“Institution building in India – Some Experiences” - Prof. J Philip***By Mr. P R Dasgupta I.A.S (Retd.)**Former Education Secretary, Government of India*

Prof. J Philip's memoirs on "Institution Building in India" are a highly readable account of a motivated person who was trained to be a lawyer, but went on to become one of the pioneers of management education in India. Necessarily anecdotal, the book outlines the journey of Prof. Philip from XLRI, Jamshedpur to XIME, Bangalore. In between, he had stints with Steel Authority of India Ltd., (SAIL), Oberoi Hotels and Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore. He also took the lead in the formation of Association of Indian Management Schools and played an active role in the Indian Society for Training and Development. "Institution Building in India – Some Experiences" records in first person the evolution of a keen and young rookie to an acknowledged institution-builder with remarkable candour and insight. The tone of his memoirs is intimate, and almost conversational without any pedantic pretensions. He acknowledges with gratitude the contributions of all those who helped him in becoming what he is today with engaging simplicity and without any arrogance which is the trademark of the so-called "I – Specialists."

As one travels with Prof. Philip along his path, one can clearly see why he succeeded in almost everything he took up on his hand. He was – and is – not only keen to learn, but also keen to do and practice what he preached. He left his academic life in XLRI to join SAIL and, later on, the Oberoi Group because he realized that he lacked labour and industrial experience and expertise which is so essential to teach and practice management. The experience he gathered at all these institutions was put to use in dealing with an explosive labour situation in the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore. An essentially mild-mannered man, he staunchly opposed anything which appeared unprincipled to him and took decisions which had grave risk-potential. He could tolerate pin-pricks to a certain extent (e.g., his experiences at XLRI when he was appointed as the Dean), but was totally opposed to indiscipline (e.g., his experience at IIM, Bangalore). The single-minded devotion with which he went about to build up XIME right from the drawing board stage comes out vividly in this book. What I found most interesting in this book was his delineation of the painstaking manner in which he built up system management in the institutions where he worked.

It would be wrong to give the details of this unputdownable book in this review. There are nuggets of wisdom and valuable insights tucked in between the pages which institution-builders would find of great use. You must read it and share the journey of this deeply religious iconoclast who enjoys networking and continues to dream.

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