Lecture cum Discussion on

Transforming Academic Institutions

My experiments with a human touch

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If academic institutions desire to function with much greater *effectiveness* what should they do? And if they wish to have an environment of *cooperation* and *harmony*, how would such an environment be created? These are the questions this talk tries to answer based on real life experiences.

The talk is about managing and leading academic institutions by connecting with people, being sensitive, gaining confidence by one's behaviour and actions, and taking people along through dialogue and understanding. It would be of general interest because the situations occur in every day life.

There are many different interests and groups within the institution, coming from different strata of society, more than ever before. The talk presents an approach for bringing them together, in a spirit of cooperation.

There is much talk about the use of technology today. Technology improves functioning and also brings in *transparency*. But, on the other hand, technology also has the power to spread *false* ideas and *fake* events. Add to it the conflict among groups. To deal with all this, *dialogue* and *democracy* is the way out. The talk describes how it can be done systematically in an environment of *mutual trust*.

There are three layers in an institution: (1) Systems, (2) Culture, and (3) Values. The first layer which connects with offices and processes is the most visible, whereas the latter two are less so. As a result, most of the time, work gets done on the former, whereas the latter two are ignored. This talk addresses all the three layers and describes how they can be aligned.

The talk is based on the experiments and experiences of the author when he was the Director of IIT(BHU) at Varanasi, and where he also held the charge of Vice Chancellor of BHU for a few months. He brings with him the knowledge and insights gained earlier by being Director IIIT Hyderabad, and Professor IIT Kanpur. He is a researcher in AI and language translation.

The book written by the author, with the same title as the talk, tells many interesting stories – all from real life.