

**Establishing a Japanese transplant company in the Indian
automobile industry: a qualitative study of cultural
disrespect**

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the award of the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

from

SWINBURNE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
(Faculty of Business and Enterprise)

by

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2011

Abstract

This thesis analyses the operations of Toyota Kirloskar Motors (TKM) in India during the period 1997-2010. TKM is the Indian arm of Toyota's production operations in India formed as a result of a joint venture between the company and the Kirloskar group of companies in India. Whereas Toyota has generally enjoyed harmonious industrial relations within its transplanted companies around the world it has experienced severe industrial unrest in India and has failed to achieve its ambitious production and market share forecasts in the country. Accordingly, this thesis sets out to answer the research question '*why has TKM experienced such a tumultuous journey since its establishment in 1999?*'

The thesis employs a qualitative methodology using the technique of conceptual ordering. Data has been obtained from personal interviews, document analysis, and observation. Several trips were undertaken to India to gather data.

The thesis argues that disrespect shown towards traditional Indian cultural and social practices underlies the explanation for the industrial unrest during the period until 2006. During this period various types of disrespect have been identified as occurring in a continuous flow and overlaying each other in a sedimentary-type manner. This dynamic sedimentation of disrespect over a longitudinal time period was reacted to by various forms of retaliation from TKM workers creating a cause-consequence cycle of detrimental actions. It is also argued that TKM misunderstood the nature of protest in India and over-reacted to worker unrest on several occasions.

This scenario changed drastically from 2007 when TKM introduced a new policy of reconciliation aimed at changing perceptions within the company. This attempt to salvage respect included a range of actions aimed at removing the causes of the ongoing unrest and which by their nature were directed at ensuring more respectful relationships within the plant. The research has implications for the manner in which multinational companies conduct their operations in host countries, especially when a pervasive alien corporate culture is introduced into a host nation with strong social and cultural sensitivities.

Acknowledgements

I sincerely thank all people who have inspired and helped me during my doctoral study.

I specially want to thank Professor Robert Jones, my Principal Supervisor for his guidance, constant support and inspiration. More than a supervisor he is now a role model for me in my academic pursuit. His accessibility, wisdom and the ability to incorporate theory into practical aspects have always inspired and encouraged me. Without his expert and emotional support this thesis would not have been accomplished within the prescribed time limit. Speaking from an Indian point of view, I have developed, in a span of three years, a paternal relationship with Professor Robert Jones. I extend my deep and sincere gratitude to Professor Robert Jones.

I was also delighted with my Associate Supervisor Dr. James Latham, for his moral support and critical questioning at every point of my research. I sincerely thank Dr. Latham for all the extended support and encouragement in my research.

My deepest gratitude goes to my lovely wife Jiji who set aside all her personal comforts to support and help me throughout this research study. Words are not enough to thank her as I know the amount and degree of hardships she smilingly suffered for this humble husband. She has proved her expertise in running a home with limited resources, and bringing up our kids, Hosanna and Hans.

I would also like to thank my parents, brothers and sisters for their love and continuous support. I miss my dad, Late Kunju Kunju Mathew who always inspired me to study and gain the maximum of knowledge. Even though I can not physically show him my accomplishment I am sure his soul is full of joy in seeing his son successfully climbing this ladder.

Another person I miss is my spiritual father Dr. Stephanos Mar Theodosius of blessed memory. It was five years ago (July 2005) when he blessed and sent me to this Far East country. His natural and unforgettable smile albeit with a heavy heart and his words “finish your studies and come back as soon as possible” still resonates in my ears. I must admit I now realise that the basic tenets of business and management in the Indian context were already inherent in Mar Theodosius. His economic outlook for a prosperous India was one of the most inspirational ideas that I could ever learn from a divine personality. I sincerely thank Mar Theodosius for his blessings and intercession.

Last but not least, I thank all my colleagues, friends and well wishers, including the University, members from the faculty of Business and Enterprise and all those who have directly and indirectly supported and helped me during the course of my research.

Declaration

I, Sagi Kunju Kunju Mathew, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy from the Faculty of Business and Enterprise, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia:

1. Contains no material which has been accepted for the award to myself of any other degree or diploma, except where due reference is made in the text of this thesis;
2. To the best of my knowledge contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of this thesis.

Ethics Approval

This thesis has been approved by the Swinburne University Human Research Ethics Committee in terms of **SUHREC Project 2009/126**

I certify that all conditions pertaining to this ethics clearance have been properly met and that annual reports and a final report have been submitted.

Signed

Sagi Kunju Kunju Mathew

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Chapter 1

Purpose, Significance, and Context of the Study

This introductory chapter examines the background of the thesis relating to the purpose, scope, significance, and context of the research. An analysis is undertaken of the essential elements of the Toyota system of lean production as well as an examination of the context within which the research is located in the form of a brief history of India and the essential characteristics of the city of Bangalore where the Toyota plant is located.

Purpose and scope of the thesis

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse the reasons behind the extreme industrial unrest experienced during the first seven years of Toyota's operations in India. Toyota Motor Corporation (TMC) commenced operations in India in late 1999 in the southern city of Bangalore. The immense potential of the large Indian market was an obvious drawcard for TMC and a major component of its long-term world-wide growth aspirations. However, TMC was a late entrant into the Indian market, most noticeably trailing behind Suzuki which had established itself in India many years earlier and had captured a large market share in the passenger car segment (Bhargava and Seetha, 2010). India was also a late entrant for TMC in terms of its own global expansion, having already established a major presence in North America, South America, Europe, Australia, and Asia. Not that TMC was a stranger to India. It had launched a previous foray into the country during the 1980s but this venture had not proved a success and the company withdrew after a few years.

TMC established its presence in 1999 in the form of a joint venture with the local Kirloskar group of companies, already well known in India for manufacturing a range of engineering and agricultural products. TMC was the driving force in the joint venture, known as Toyota Kirloskar Motors (TKM), with Kirloskar providing the benefit of its local knowledge and influence. At the time TMC had earned an enviable reputation in the automobile industry for the quality and reliability of its vehicles (Bremner and Dawson, 2003). It had its eyes firmly on the prize of becoming the

largest automobile producer in the world, an achievement eventually reached in 2007. The concepts of lean manufacturing, the Toyota Way, and the Toyota Production System (TPS) were well-known across the automobile industry and had been copied and implemented by all major producers. Outside a band of critical theorists within academia, TMC was generally viewed with esteem (Fang and Kleiner, 2003). It was a prestigious company with a glowing reputation.

TMC had always pursued a philosophy of developing a family environment, with a strong unitarist culture, and a reputation for industrial harmony. Such harmony was evident even in its transplant companies in countries which had traditionally been renowned for industrial warfare in the automobile industry, such as the USA and the UK. However, TKM proved to be a rare exception to this trend in the traditional world of Toyota's harmonious industrial relations. Almost from the start of operations TKM experienced industrial unrest. This gradually escalated over a number of years, eventually culminating in violent unrest in 2006 when TKM management was forced to institute a lockout to quell worker agitation. Hence, this thesis proposes the following research question: *'why has TKM experienced such a tumultuous journey since its establishment in 1999?'*

Significance of the thesis

The purpose of the thesis and the proposed research question are significant because industrial unrest is a rarely observed phenomenon in TMC operations across the globe especially when such unrest persists over many years and gradually escalates in intensity. TMC endorses a philosophy of respect for people as a central element of the Toyota Way. It is contended by the company that its approach crosses national boundaries and cultures by 'transcending language and nationality' (Toyota Way, 2001: 3). Over many decades and across many countries this claim has been shown to hold veracity. Therefore, the adverse events in India appear to represent an enigma that is in need of analysis and explanation.

The literature is largely unhelpful in providing in-depth academic analysis of TKM and its operations since 1999. This is a critical omission given the significant role that TKM plays in Toyota's strategic global plans. The academic literature is fragmented

and analytically thin. Other than a few descriptive case studies (Majumdar, 2006; Mikkilineni, 2006; Ray and Roy, 2006) and some book chapters (Mooij, 2005; Das and George, 2006) there is a need for a comprehensive analysis of TKM's operations over the period from 1999 to the present day. This thesis hopes to go some way to filling this gap in the literature.

Toyota Motor Corporation and lean production

Toyota is a multi-national motor vehicle manufacturer that has enjoyed unprecedented success since its formation in Japan prior to World War 2. In 2007 it became the world's largest motor vehicle producer, overtaking General Motors. Outside Japan the company has a total of 52 overseas manufacturing companies in 26 countries. In 2006 it employed 350,000 people worldwide and produced over 8 million vehicles. It is widely regarded as the originator of the lean production system which has been copied by all leading motor vehicle producers. However, in 2008-9 Toyota made its first loss since 1950 and market share stagnated due to a succession of vehicle recalls due to quality defects. Accordingly, Toyota lost its crown to Volkswagen in 2009 as the world's largest motor vehicle manufacturer. The term lean production was not devised by Toyota but rather by the International Motor Vehicle Program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and published in the book *The Machine that Changed the World* (Womack, Jones, and Roos, 1990). The principles of lean production include teamwork, communication, continuous improvement, efficient use of resources, and elimination of waste. Womack, Jones, and Roos (1990: 13) describe the concept in the following way:

'Lean production is lean because it uses less of everything compared with mass production – half the human effort in the factory, half the manufacturing space, half the investment in tools, half the engineering hours, to develop a new product in half the time. Also, it requires keeping far less than half the needed inventory on site, results in many fewer defects, and produces a greater and ever-growing variety of products'.

The driving force behind lean production is a constant quest to eliminate *waste*. Anything that does not produce value can be classified as waste. Ohno (1988) has

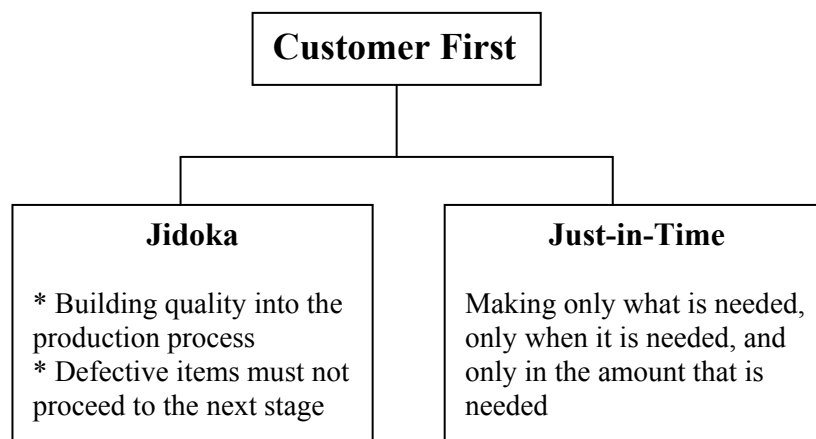
identified that waste can result from seven main sources: over-production, inventory, waiting, processing, motion, conveyancing, and correcting. A panoply of tools and techniques exist that collectively combine to reduce waste in lean production systems. Preece and Jones (2010) – quoting the studies of Forrester (1995), Oliver, Delbridge, and Lowe (1996), Karlsson and Ahlstrom (1996), and Worley and Doolen (2006) – summarise a lean system as encompassing the following elements: 5S (sort, straighten, shine, standardize, and sustain); customer pull production system; kaizen – continuous improvement; just-in-time production; kanban; minimal inventories; quick changeovers; value stream mapping; small lot production; quick set-up times; standardised work; takt time; production leveling; total preventative maintenance; visual control systems; zero defects; right-first-time; andon cord; general purpose machines; greater product variety; and more niche and customized products.

Preece and Jones (2010) also advance the argument that any successful transition towards a lean system involves a substantial change in direction as compared with more traditional work systems. They emphasise that HR-related developments under lean production include: integration of conception and execution of tasks within flexible cell-based production areas; devolved responsibilities and empowerment to multifunctional team-based direct workers on the workshop floor who take on many of the responsibilities that are the prerogative of specialist support functions in traditional mass production (maintenance, simple repairs, quality, indirect services); automation (automation with a human touch – stopping the machines when there is a defect); all workers multi-skilled and multi-tasked; job rotation; reduction in job classifications; fewer functional specialists; investment in the development of people; continuous improvement and learning processes through quality circles and suggestion schemes; group-based problem identification, resolution, and implementation; more lateral communication across functional boundaries; multi-directional information systems; high trust; high commitment and sense of obligation to the company (Forrester, 1995; Oliver, Delbridge, and Lowe, 1996; MacDuffie and Pil, 1997; Delbridge, 2003; Genaidy and Karwowski, 2003; Worley and Doolen, 2006).

The Toyota system of lean production is embraced by two overarching approaches which together provide the technical, human, and philosophical basis for the system –

the *Toyota Production System* (Ohno, 1988, 1990) and the *Toyota Way* (Toyota Way, 2001). As shown in figure 1.1, the *Toyota Production System* places the customer as the dominant force in the process which is facilitated by the twin operations of *jidoka* and *just-in-time*.

Figure 1.1
Toyota Production System



Source: *Toyota Quality Revolution* (Toyota Quality Revolution, Sept 2008, p. 6)

The Toyota Way (2001: 3) is described as ‘an ideal, a standard and a guiding beacon for the people of the global Toyota organization. It expresses the beliefs and values shared by all of us’. Thus stated, the Toyota Way is seen as an acultural, prescriptive, one-best-way approach to doing business. The concepts that make up this core set of values, beliefs, and behaviours ‘transcend language and nationality, finding application in every land and society’ (ibid). The Toyota Way is represented by two pillars – *continuous improvement* and *respect for people*. The first pillar rests on three foundations (challenge, kaizen, and Genchi Genbutsu), whilst the second pillar rests on two foundations (respect and teamwork).

Continuous improvement: We are never satisfied with where we are and always improve our business by putting forth our best ideas and efforts

- *Challenge*: We form a long-term vision, meeting challenges with courage and creativity to realize our dreams
- *Kaizen*: We improve our business operations continuously, always striving for innovation and evolution
- *Genchi Genbutsu*: We go to the source to find the facts to make correct decisions, build consensus, and achieve goals at our best speed

Respect for people: We respect all people touched by Toyota including employees, customers, investors, suppliers, dealers, the communities in which Toyota has operations, and society at large.

- *Respect*: We respect others, make every effort to understand each other, take responsibility, and do our best to build mutual trust
- *Teamwork*: We stimulate personal and professional growth, share the opportunities of development, and maximize individual and team performance

Following Liker (2004), Liu (2009) has condensed the Toyota Way into fourteen principles, categorized under four main headings. These are reproduced in Box 1.1.

<p>Box 1.1 14 principles of the Toyota Way (Liker, 2004)</p> <p>Long-Term Philosophy</p> <p>1. Base management decisions on a long-term philosophy, even at the expense of short-term financial goals</p> <p>The Right Process Will Produce the Right Results</p> <p>2. Create continuous process flow to bring problems to the surface 3. Use 'pull' systems to avoid overproduction 4. Level out the workload 5. Build a culture of stopping to fix problems, to get quality right the first time 6. Standardized tasks are the foundation for continuous improvement and employee empowerment 7. Use visual controls so no problems are hidden 8. Use only reliable, thoroughly tested technology that serves your people and processes</p> <p>Add Value to the Organization by Developing Your People and Partners</p> <p>9. Grow leaders who thoroughly understand the work, live the philosophy, and teach it to others 10. Develop exceptional people and teams who follow your company's philosophy 11. Respect your extended network of partners and suppliers by challenging them and helping them improve</p> <p>Continually Solving Root Problems Drives Organizational Learning</p> <p>12. Go and see for yourself to thoroughly understand the situation 13. Make decisions slowly by consensus, thoroughly considering all options; implement decisions rapidly 14. Become a learning organization through relentless reflection and continuous improvement</p>

Without wishing to detract from the significance of the analysis undertaken later in the thesis, the main research finding is that the protracted industrial unrest experienced at TKM resulted from host country perceptions of *disrespect* towards Indian cultural values and practices as exhibited by Japanese managers whilst attempting to implement the Toyota Production System. Little more will be discussed about this argument at this stage. A literature review of the concept of disrespect in theory and practice is undertaken in chapter 2.

Having identified disrespect as the concept of importance in this thesis it is instructive to observe that the literature on ‘disrespect in Toyota’ is noticeable by its relative absence. This is not to detract from the literature on ‘Toyota the company’ which is voluminous and represents a mixture of academic, technical, practitioner, and consultant approaches. In this thesis I have not attempted to analyse this entire literature on the grounds that its main concentration is largely irrelevant for the purposes of the thesis. Instead I will merely identify and document the main themes and divisions occurring within the literature. Although it is difficult to generalise, a broad demarcation between ‘apologist’ and ‘critical’ approaches can be discerned as constituting the extant literature. The apologist literature tends to adopt the viewpoint that Toyota has devised a near-perfect system that can be replicated as a one-best-way approach across manufacturing, automobile, and even non-manufacturing sectors (Liker, 2004). In contrast, the critical literature sees major problems within the Toyota system as being exploitative and merely an attempt to establish a more sophisticated version of Taylorism and scientific management (Parker and Slaughter, 1994; Mehri, 2006). Within these two broad veins, my own literature search has documented a seven-fold division of the Toyota literature into separate segments. This is shown in table 1.1.

Table 1.1

Literature on Toyota and transplanted Japanese methods

<p style="text-align: center;">General publications about Toyota</p> <p>Kamata, 1983; Liker, 2004; Mehri, 2005; Liker and Meier, 2007; Magee, 2007; Liker and Hoseus, 2008; Osono, Shimizu, and Takeuchi, 2008; Sato, 2008; Rother, 2010</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Transfer of the Toyota Production System and Toyota transplants overseas</p> <p>USA (Wilms, Hardcastle, and Zell, 1994; Besser, 1996; Shook, 1998) UK (Winfield, 1994; Pardi, 2005) China (Liu and Brookfield, 2006) Thailand (Petison and Johri, 2006) Turkey and Czech Republic (Kumon, 2007)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Toyota in India</p> <p>Das and George (2006); Majumdar (2006); Mikkilineni (2006); Nair (2006); Ray and Roy (2006); Basu, Miroshnik, and Uchida (2008)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Japanese automobile plants overseas</p> <p>USA (Cole and Deskins, 1988; Florida and Kenney, 1991; Florida and Kenney, 1991a; Graham, 1995) North America (Mair, Florida, and Kenney, 1988; Pil and MacDuffie, 1999; Pil and MacDuffie, 1999a) Canada (Rinehart, Huxley, and Robertson, 1997) Poland (Majek, 2002) Western Europe (Jones and North, 1991) India (Becker-Ritterspach, 2009)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Transfer of Japanese management policies and transplants overseas</p> <p>USA (Young, 1992; Abo, 1994; Watanabe, 1998; Liker, Fruin, and Adler, 1999) UK (Reitsperger, 1986) Thailand (Taira, 1980; Swierczek and Onishi, 2003; Onishi, 2006; Shibata, 2008) Singapore (Rodgers and Wong, 1996; Gill and Wong, 1998) Malaysia (Rose and Kumar, 2007) Turkey (Wasti, 1998) Australia (Purcell, Nicholas, Merrett, and Whitwell, 1999) China and Taiwan (Takeuchi and Ziguang, 2001) Brazil and Mexico (Sparkes and Miyake, 2000)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Japanese techniques in India</p> <p>Jain (1987); Kumar and Sankaran (2007); Farooquie and Mohapatra (2009)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Japanese techniques in the Indian automotive sector</p> <p>Okada (2004); Becker-Ritterspach (2007: 2009); Gupta (2008); Khanna and Shankar (2008); Raina and Pillania (2008); Prabhushankar, Devadasan, and Shalij (2009); Bhargava and Seetha (2010)</p>

There is little doubt within the literature that Toyota has enjoyed wide success in transferring its system to different countries. Most host nations actively embrace Japanese techniques in manufacturing and are eager to attract Japanese transplants, especially in the motor vehicle assembly industry. Australia and Brazil were two early countries to attract Toyota transplants during the 1960s, but development of this trend expanded considerably once Toyota had entered the United States in 1984 in the form of its NUMMI plant, a joint venture with General Motors. Despite the critical nature of some debate about Toyota and its production methods, especially in the academic literature, the company tends to enjoy a settled industrial relations climate in its plants worldwide. Although not unknown, strikes, lockouts, and industrial unrest have been relatively rare events. However, one exception to this general state of affairs occurs in the case of India. Toyota commenced production in India in 1999 in the form of Toyota Kirloskar Motors (TKM), a joint venture with a long-established Indian manufacturing company. Since then its performance with regards to industrial relations and production targets has been very patchy. Toyota entered India with high aspirations of capturing a major share of this important developing market. This has never materialised. Market share has remained stubbornly fixed between 2-3%. Strikes and lockouts have been experienced on a regular basis and the company has now recognised an external trade union with open links to the Indian Communist Party. TKM's annual production and market share since 2000 is shown in table 1.2.

Table 1.2
Toyota Kirloskar Motors
Annual production and market share: 2000-2009

Year	Production (thousands of vehicles)	Market (thousands of vehicles)	Market Share (%)
2000	21.8	n/a	n/a
2001	28.4	827	3.4
2002	25.2	883	2.9
2003	37.7	1096	3.4
2004	47.6	1387	3.4
2005	44.5	1462	3.0
2006	44.3	1776	2.5
2007	52.2	2030	2.6
2008	54.3	1996	2.7
2009	51.2	2274	2.3

Source: Toyota in the World (Toyota Motor Corporation, various years)

An obvious research question presents itself at this stage: *why has TKM experienced such a tumultuous journey since its establishment in 1999?* This question forms the basis of this thesis. Obviously, any comprehensive analysis of this question would have to encompass an examination of the environmental context within which TKM operates. India is a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-linguistic country with an extremely long history. Chapter 3 analyses the cultures, values, and religious makeup of the country in some depth. For the purposes of this introductory chapter I will confine myself to a brief analysis of the history of India and an examination of the characteristics of the city within which TKM is located, Bangalore (now re-named Bengaluru).

India: a brief history

The name *India* is derived from the Sanskrit word *Sindhu*, the name of a river. It was in 326 BC that Alexander the Great crossed the Sindhu River from Afghanistan and invaded India (McCrinkle, 2004). Alexander called it the River Indus and the people living on the other side as Indus – later modified to India. The ancient Chinese knew India as Shin-du and later, when Buddhism was introduced to China from India, India was known to the Chinese people as Tien-du and Tien-chu (Banerjee, 2008).

India has been famous for its riches from ancient times. The extensive commercial and trade relations with the Phoenicians, Greeks, Arabs, and Romans are evidence of India's riches (Kumar and Sethi, 2005). Historical evidence dates India's trade relations as far back as 950 BC when King Solomon's trading ships regularly visited the Port of Crangannore (present-day Kerala, a state in Southern India) (Pirenne, 1962). The widespread trade relations of India with different civilizations across the world also could account for its cross-cultural interactions.

The Indus Valley civilization of India can be traced back to 5000 BC, making it one of the oldest civilizations in the world. Various technologies and architecture used during the Indus Valley civilization are believed to be at par with some of the modern day civilizations (Kulke and Rothermund, 2004). It is widely believed that Dravidians were the inhabitants of Western and North-Western India during the time of the Indus Valley civilization (Kulke, 1993). Archaeological evidence suggests that the Indus

Valley civilization was destroyed by the Aryan invasion (1500 BC), a tribe which is believed to have its origin in the Central and Eastern European and Central Asian regions (Kulke and Rothermund, 2004). The advent of Aryans is further believed to have forced the Dravidians towards the southern regions of India while the invaders occupied most of the northern region (Dharmaraj, 2006).

The history of India can be broadly divided into three stages according to its political development and its direct and indirect influence in the evolution of culture: (i) the period until the Islamic invasion of the 12th century AD (ii) the period of Islamic rule (Sultanate and Mughal rule) from the 12th century until the 17th century, and (iii) the period of British rule in India. This broad categorisation suffices to give an understanding of the cultural formation of modern India, although the division is not watertight as each period overlaps the other. Each of these periods is briefly discussed below.

The pre-Islamic period

The Pre-Islamic period from the beginning of the first century AD comprises many dynasties that ruled the Indian sub-continent in parts (kingdoms) and whose rulers were called *Maharajahs*. The first dynasty to attain prominence was the Maurya dynasty which ruled most of the northern regions of India during the late BC and early AD era, of which Chandra Gupta Maurya and Ashoka were famous. It was Chanakya, the Prime Minister of Chandragupta of the Maurya dynasty who drafted and implemented a range of management and governance practices (Dasgupta, 1993). Some HRM practices are especially noteworthy. In Chanakya's (also called Kautilya) famous treatise *Arthashastra* (Science of Sustenance) there are clear guidelines for HRM practices, comprising recruitment guidelines, pay structures, and other compensation regulations (Chamola, 2007). For example, the *Arthashastra* is said to have contained instructions regarding performance benchmarking, feedback on performance, and the training of staff (Chamola, 2007).

King Ashoka the Great was perhaps the most famous of all the Maurya rulers. Subsequent to the bloody battle of Kalinga he underwent a change of mind and later accepted Buddhism. After the Kalinga war he abandoned the policy of armed conquest and started preaching and practicing the policy of conquering the hearts of

the people by means of benevolent activities (Bhatta, 2000). Soon his focus was on spreading the teachings of *Dharma* for which he entrusted his officers as missionaries to travel inside and outside the country (Bhandarkar, 2000). Ashoka's rule saw a cultural deviation by way of the practice of equality. His *dharma* concept focused on kindness, generosity, and proper behaviour towards employees and servants (Bhandarkar, 2000). Delegation and empowerment became core to his governance and management practices. Accordingly, once a job was assigned he preferred not to interfere but leave the employee to execute it, and for the same, the workers had the liberty to make their own decisions and use whatever resources were required (Bhatta, 2000). At the same time, Ashoka exhorted his officers that all the people should be treated as his own children, thereby advocating a hierarchical structure of relationship.

After the fall of the Maurya dynasty, the Gupta dynasty attained prominence and ruled most of the northern parts of India from 200 to 550 AD (Mookerji, 1973). It is reported that during the Gupta period, besides Hinduism returning as a dominant religion, there were huge advances in the field of science such as medicine, astronomy, geometry, and logic (Schur, 1997). The support gained by Hinduism from the rulers caused a slowdown in the spread of Buddhism. This period also marks the re-emergence of the caste system which had been otherwise overshadowed by Buddhist ideologies for a long time (Shaw, 2000). The generosity bestowed towards the Brahmins (the uppermost caste) by the Gupta kings is evidence of the reinstatement of the caste system during the Gupta period (Majumdar and Altekar, 1986). However, some Gupta kings patronised Buddhism as well. Nalanda University (a centre of Buddhist learning) was established during the Gupta period (Tripathi, 1967).

From the 6th century until the Islamic invasion of the early 11th century, North India was fragmented into many small kingdoms. The socio-cultural front during this period was dominated by the caste system which affected productivity as well as contacts with the outside world thereby affecting the economic structure (Kumar and Sethi, 2005). This fragmentation also led to the Islamic invasion, first led by the Afghan Turk Sultan Mahmud Ghazni, and eventually a strong Sultanate was established in Delhi. In contrast, South India during this period was ruled by the Chola kings advanced in trade with commercial relationships with the outside world (Kumar and Sethi, 2005).

The Islamic period

The Islamic period can be divided into two phases, the first being the rule of the Sultans and later the rule of the Mughals. The Islamic invasion led to a new chapter in the socio-cultural development of India. The country, which was already experiencing multiculturalism through close interaction between Hinduism and other home-based religions such as Jainism and Buddhism, was now exposed to a new form of culture with the advent of Islam. Different forms of arts, architecture, political ideologies and practices, and warfare techniques were introduced into India (Asher and Talbot, 2007). Above all, Islam as a religion was propagated fiercely across India, even crossing the mountains to reach South India, and simultaneously the boundary of the Delhi Sultanate was also expanded (Asher and Talbot, 2007). The rule of Sultans and Mughals comprised aggression with harmony. While many small kingdoms were annexed and the Islamic way of life was forced upon them, there were moderates like the *sufi saints* who led an ascetic and saintly life while preaching equality and love. It is claimed that the teachings of the *sufis* gained considerable acceptance by the people who were frustrated with the alienation caused by the caste system (Metcalf and Metcalf, 2002). It is important to note that in line with Islamic *sufi* teachings, there evolved in India a movement called *Bhakti* which also taught equality and love. The prominent *bhakti* leaders during this period included Guru Nanak (the founder of Sikhism), along with Mirabai, Dadu, Tukaram, and Chaitanya (Metcalf and Metcalf, 2002).

Even though Islam taught equality, the notion of hierarchy was still prevalent in the society. For instance, non-Muslims were given protection by the rulers against the payment of levies and the social order was divided into four broader categories (Seth, 2008).

The Indo-European rule and British raj (rule)

European rule in India started from the 15th century AD with the arrival of the Portuguese who established their headquarters in Goa. Until this time, Indian spices and ornaments had been traded in western markets (Venice and Genoa) by Arab traders (Kumar and Sethi, 2005). Following the Portuguese conquest, this trade fell into the hands of Portuguese traders who controlled it until the end of the 16th century.

This monopoly over Indian markets and trade was later challenged by the Dutch East India Company (Prakash, 2005). With the Portuguese traders arrived the Jesuit missionaries in India in line with the contract agreement between the Pope and Portuguese rulers, called *pedroado* (Zupanov, 2005). The Jesuits were successful in converting many locals to the Catholic faith especially the people who lived by the coastal area, as most of the ports were under their control (Kumar and Sethi, 2005). However, the aggressive missionary campaign by the Jesuits created conflict between them and the Hindu, Muslim, and Jewish populations (Zupanov, 2005). Besides, the Jesuits aided and supported by the Portuguese rulers entered into direct conflict with the indigenous Christians of South India as well (Frykenberg, 2008).

The Portuguese were followed by the Dutch in the 17th century who established their base in the port city of Cochin in Kerala, South India. The trade was controlled by the Dutch East India Company that established factories in many parts of India (Kumar and Sethi, 2005).

By the second half of the 18th century, India came under the control of the British Raj. The impact of British rule in India has two sides. First, the exploitation and plundering of Indian wealth by Britain led to a nationalist awakening in India (Kumar and Sethi, 2005). The existing caste differences in the country were capitalised upon as a divide-and-rule policy, and on top of this the British system of governance also introduced class differences into Indian society (Cain and Harrison, 2001). Kumar and Sethi (2005) point out that the fear sowed in the minds of Indians by various invaders and especially by British aggression has led to a cautious approach to foreigners. The policies of self reliance and autonomy advocated by the post-independence governments after 1947 also reflect this fear factor. Second, on the other side, British rule led to a revolution in the Indian education sector, with English gaining prominence. The number of schools and colleges (universities) established in India during British rule aroused a new awakening in the social strata of India. For instance, Raja Ram Mohan Roy supported the spread of English education in the country and advocated many reforms in Hinduism (Hatcher, 2006). It was during British rule that many protestant missionaries arrived in India, including William Carey who established a Christian University, named Serampore University, near Calcutta.

These various forms of rule in India from the first to the 20th century, encompassing scattered kingdoms to a unified India, act to highlight the cultural formation of the country. Regular interaction between Indians and foreigners over many centuries has helped to shape a unique culture. At the same time, it is evident that Indian culture is not a fossilized form but rather one that has undergone metamorphosis by a process of adjustment and accommodation with frequent foreign interaction. It could also be argued that the collectivism and paternalism (power distance) (Hofstede, 2001) exhibited by the Indian people results from long exposure to various forms of aggression as well as subjection to monarchic and colonial rule.

The attractiveness of modern India

India has experienced unprecedented economic growth since the trade and economic liberalisation of 1991. Ever since, India has attracted substantial foreign investment (Budhwar, 2004). Economic forecasts project India to become the fourth largest economy in the world in the next 10-15 years (Kapur and Ramamurti, 2006). Data shows that there are more than 20,000 foreign firms operating in India (Bjorkman and Budhwar, 2007). This in turn has opened up immense opportunities for MNCs to set up subsidiaries in India. According to the World Investment Prospects Survey 2010-2012 by UNCTAD (2009), India is ranked second in global foreign direct investments in 2010 and will continue to remain among the top five attractive destinations.

Apart from the service sector such as financial services and information technology which is still maintaining its lead in terms of FDI attraction, an increasing number of MNCs are investing in highly sophisticated functions, technology, and research and development tapping the vast pool of educated and skilled personnel (Nilekani and Heyward, 2008). In short, India is increasingly becoming a favourite destination for foreign investors (Laudicina and Pau, 2008). Further, it is reported that MNCs are extensively making use of India's location-specific advantages including the large pool of skilled labour (Davis et al, 2006). For instance, the growth of the BPO industry in India since the mid 1990s serves as a good example for location advantage (Dossani and Kenney 2003) whereby the competitive factors such as human skills, knowledge, an English speaking workforce, along with low wages have made India an attractive location for foreign investments (Ranganathan and Kuruvilla 2008). Besides the human capital, there are other factors as well which make India an attractive

investment location. For instance, a recent research conducted by Flores and Aguilera (2007) suggests that American MNCs are more likely to invest in such locations where the wages are low, has an identical political system, and a large market size. All these three factors are observed in India as the country has a huge base of skilled but internationally competitive human capital; it is the world's largest democracy, and is the eighth biggest global market (IBEF, 2008). India's population is approximately 1.3 billion (Census of India, 2003) which is second only to China (Saini & Budhwar, 2004). The literacy rate of the country is approximately 65 percent (NIC, 2005). Since the economic liberalization of 1991 the Indian literacy rate has registered a remarkable increase of 13.17 percentage points during the period 1991 to 2001, the highest increase in any one decade (Govinda & Biswal, 2005).

Ever since India attained independence from British colonial rule, the country has emerged and sustained itself as the largest democracy in the world (Barnes, 1999). Unlike its immediate neighbours, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Myanmar which have seen severe political turmoil, India's democratic institutions have proved successful until now. The stability in its polity has helped the country to achieve sustainable economic growth (Brunetti et al, 1998). Political stability is a major determinant factor in the economic growth of a nation, especially for foreign direct investment (Younis et al, 2008).

The total workforce of the country is estimated to be more than 500 million and is the world's second largest (CIA, 2008); out of which 60 percent work in the agriculture sector, 17 percent in industry, and 23 percent in the service sector (India Country Review, 2008). According to the *World Population Prospect* published by the United Nations, the Indian population will surpass that of China in less than 10 years (Statistical Abstract of India, 2006). The country is enjoying a demographic dividend (Kelkar, 2004) with an increasing number of younger generation workers. With a median age of 25 years, India ranks among the world's four youngest nations and is expected to stay the youngest among the BRIC nations (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) (Investment Commission of India, 2008) which provides another attraction for foreign companies. A recent study conducted by McKinsey Global Institute (MGI) of 28 countries has ranked India as the largest of all with an estimated 14 million young

university graduates (Farrell, Kaka, and Sturze, 2007), which is 1.5 times the size of China and double that of the United States.

India has a huge English speaking population (Arora & Athreye, 2002) which makes communication easier for multinational companies to establish in India. The growth and success of the Indian software and service sector is an example of the competitive advantage of Indian linguistic skills in English. The software and services segment of the Indian Information and Communication (ICT) sector has grown to US \$ 8.8 billion worth of output in 2003-2004 from US \$ 170 million in 1991-1992 (Heeks & Nicholson, 2004). In terms of the skills advantage of the Indian workforce it is noteworthy that India has the second largest pool of scientists and engineers in the world and an estimated 2.5 million graduates are added every year to the workforce which includes 300,000 engineers and 150,000 IT professionals (Investment Commission of India, 2008).

Bangalore: an overview

Toyota Kirloskar Motors was established in Bangalore in 1997 and commenced production in 1999. In 2001 Bangalore had a population of 5.7 million people which included a workforce of 2.2 million within an area of 560 square kilometres (Census of India, 2001). Bangalore is the capital of the State of Karnataka in South India. It is one of the fastest growing cities in India and is branded as the 'Silicon Valley of India' (Shah, 2006). In addition, Bangalore enjoys other titles such as the back office capital of the world and the fashion capital of India. One of the major reasons for establishing its plant in Bangalore would have been the city's reputation for industrial harmony. Karnataka has a reputation of maintaining industrial peace and a tradition of stable and strong internal trade union leadership, a lesser number of unions, low trade union rivalry, and limited political affiliation (Ramaswamy, 1988). Another significant reason for industrial harmony in Karnataka is that successive governments have not typically favoured any union leaders or unions affiliated to any political parties (Candland, 2001).

However, industrial harmony was not the only tempting factor for Toyota. Bangalore was one of the first cities in India to benefit from the process of economic liberalization in the early 1990s (Benjamin, 2000). The rise of Bangalore as a

landmark of globalization in India could be attributed to various factors such as the number of prestigious learning centres, the presence of a number of elite public sector enterprises, the accommodating nature of the local population, the moderate climate, and the entrepreneurial nature of Kannadigas (Kannada is the language spoken in Karnataka) (Balatchandrirane, 2007).

Historically, Bangalore is depicted as a city ruled by many ancient South Indian kingdoms. Later it was the capital of Tipu Sultan, the Muslim ruler of South India. It has also been impacted by Western colonisation including those by the Portuguese, Dutch, French, and British (More, 2003). The post-independence era attracted many migrants from different parts of the state to Bangalore in search of better opportunities. However, it also started to attract people from other states as well when many defence establishments and major public sector enterprises were established during the 1970s (Sudhira, Ramachandra, and Subrahmanya, 2007).

Bangalore is renowned for hosting a range of premier learning centres, such as the Indian Institute of Science, National Institute of Advanced Studies, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research, Indian Space Research Organization, National Aerospace Laboratories, Defence Research and Development Organization, Indian Institute of Management, Indian Institute of Social and Economic Change, Indian Institute of Information Technology, Indian Institute of Technologies, and several professional institutions including Engineering and Medical Colleges (Balatchandrirane, 2007). General Electric has invested more than \$US100 million in Bangalore to establish its largest research and development laboratory in the world, employing 2,600 scientists that include more than 300 PhDs (Kapur and Ramamurthi, 2006). Of the 77 multinational corporation research and development centres, 44 are located in Bangalore (Basant, 2006).

Besides its global fame for information and communication technology (ICT) industries, the economic fabric of the city is characterised by textile, automobile, machine tool, aviation, space, defence, and biotechnology industries (Sudhira, Ramachandra and Subrahmanya, 2007). Foreign multinational corporations had established themselves in Bangalore well before the era of economic liberalisation. For example, Texas Instruments and IBM had established their operations in Bangalore during the 1970s (Blatchandrirane, 2007). The modern automobile industry

of Bangalore is more than 40 years old. The first automobile industry with foreign collaboration was established in 1961 to manufacture Yezdi motorcycles with technical collaboration from Czechoslovakia (www.yezdi.com). Previously MICO had been established in 1951 to manufacture automotive components such as fuel injection pumps, spark plugs, and other automotive accessories. This company later entered into collaboration with the German company Bosch and today is known as Bosch India Limited (Kobitzsch, Rombach, and Feldmann, 2001). Other automobile manufacturing industries in Bangalore include Reva, manufacturers of electric cars, and TVS that manufactures two, three, and four-wheeler automobiles in two separate plants. Additionally, VST Tillers (a joint venture with Mitsubishi of Japan) manufactures tillers, diesel engines, and tractors. Volvo of Sweden also has a production plant in Bangalore to manufacture trucks and buses.

The State and Federal Governments have significantly contributed to the promotion of industries in Bangalore. For instance, the Federal Government declared a tax holiday for Indian software industries in 1993 until 2010, and the State government of Karnataka offered special treatment on land allocation, power supply, and other infrastructure support to businesses (Balachandirane, 2007). With the flourishing IT industry, assisted by knowledge support from learning and research institutions, Bangalore has proved to be ideal for multinational corporations' investments in terms of its location advantage (Dunning, 2001).

Bangalore has attracted many young people from other parts of the country in search of a career, especially from the neighbouring states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh which suffer from weak economic infrastructure. For instance, the neighbouring State of Kerala, although it is the only one hundred percent literate State in India, has no major industries because of its unsettled political situation. Until recently, the scarcity of professional colleges in Kerala attracted a large number of students to Bangalore. The growth of Bangalore has also contributed to the formation of a cosmopolitan culture which has further attracted youngsters to the city. Shah (2006) points out that the high income and frequent interaction with foreigners has evolved a cosmopolitan culture among the youth of Bangalore, who now enjoy many facets of a Western style of life including pubs, night clubs, Hollywood movies, and socialisation. Over 51 percent of Bangalore's population comprises people from other

States of India, and more recently expatriates from abroad as well (Shah, 2006). The economic liberalization which helped Bangalore to become an IT hub has promoted the emergence of an upwardly mobile class of educated professionals who otherwise migrated abroad for jobs (Radhakrishnan, 2008).

All these factors have combined to create a new form of collectivism. Shah (2006) argues that many individualistic traits in contrast to the overall collective traits (Hofstede, 2001) are found among the young generation of Bangalore as a result of living away from parents and families. However, studies conducted by Radhakrishnan (2008) show that there exists a comfortable balance between individualism and collectivism among the newer generation, with collective orientation such as family relations and community responsibility given due recognition. Saldanha (2002) notices that the modernity exhibited by the young generation of Bangalore is neither iconoclastic nor a blind aping of the West, but is unique in the sense that the modern generation draws an identity somewhere between the two, but still definitely 'Indian'. It is suggested that the structure of friendship in Bangalore consists of firstly colleagues and secondly relatives and friends; and frequent interactions and get-togethers are a common phenomenon found in the city (Nisbet, 2007).

Structure of the thesis

The thesis is divided into 9 chapters.

Chapter 1 - purpose, significance, and context of the study. This chapter includes an introduction to the nature of the research topic and research question; the concept of lean production within the Toyota Motor Corporation; and a brief contextual background history of India and the host city, Bangalore.

Chapter 2 – disrespect in theory and practice. This chapter encompasses a literature review of the concept of disrespect paying attention to: the definition of disrespect, the causes and consequences of disrespect, and the emotions and actions flowing from experiencing disrespect.

Chapter 3 – culture, values, and religion in India. This chapter analyses various dimensions of India's cultural, religious, and values-based context using three major

instruments: Hofstede's cultural dimensions, Kluckhohn-Strodtbeck framework, and the GLOBE project.

Chapter 4 – human resource management in India. This chapter encompasses a wide-ranging analysis of the nature of human resource management in India using the four major functional headings of: recruitment and selection; training and development; industrial relations and trade unions; and performance management and rewards.

Chapter 5 – development of the Indian automobile industry within its historical context. This chapter traces the historical development of the Indian automobile industry divided into three major historical periods: import substitution phase (1950-1981); Maruti-Suzuki era (1982-1991); and the post-liberalisation period (1991-date).

Chapter 6 – methodology, data collection, and analysis. This chapter presents a justification for the chosen qualitative methodology of conceptual ordering; the emergent nature of the data collection and analysis; and an audit trail of the 30 interviewees for the study together with an explanation of how significant concepts emerged at key points of the collection and analysis of the data.

Chapter 7 – chronological developments at Toyota Kirloskar Motors. This chapter traces chronological developments at TKM paying attention to significant events and turning-points in the period from 1997 to 2010.

Chapter 8 – disrespect at TKM. This chapter provides the findings of the thesis in regard to the experiences of disrespect at TKM. The nature of disrespect is analysed under 5 main headings: pre-production disrespect; post-production disrespect; strike-inducing disrespect; strike-perpetuating disrespect; salvaging respect. This categorisation is presented in a processual form as a sedimentary-type flow of disrespectful actions and attitudes which cumulatively impact each other over a sequential period.

Chapter 9 – conclusion: uniqueness, significance, and implications. This chapter draws together the significant findings of the thesis and the contribution made to the literature.

Chapter 2

Disrespect in Theory and Practice

This chapter encompasses a literature review of the concept of ‘disrespect’. It is analysed under six headings paying attention to the concept and definition of disrespect, the causes and consequences of disrespect, and the emotions and actions flowing from experiencing disrespect. However, the nature of the discussion means that these sections are not absolute and some overlap does occur between the various analyses.

The concept of disrespect

The concepts of respect and disrespect differ between collective and individualistic cultures. An act of respect in one culture may be conceived as that of disrespect in an opposite society. Thus, disrespect is to be understood in terms of the culture within which individuals and groups operate (Shwalb and Shwalb, 2006). A person who commits a disrespectful act may simply not be aware of, or possess sufficient knowledge or understanding of, this historical acquisition and nature of the society. For example, in an individualistic society a person’s views and beliefs (and their right to express them) are likely to be tolerated irrespective of whether another person likes them or not. On the contrary in a collective society an elder or superior has the right to correct the ‘wrong’ views of a subordinate or young person. In this example, outright denial by telling a person that they are wrong, or openly denegrating a person for their opinions, is more likely to be perceived as a disrespectful act in an individualistic society, whereas in a collective society it is the societal expectation that elders should always guide and bring up the youngsters in the proper and right direction.

India is a collective society (Hofstede, 2001) and hence is hierarchical in nature. The power distance between subordinates and superordinates ascribes a superior status to superordinates, either in terms of age, experience, or status. Therefore, criticising or questioning them is viewed as an act of disrespect. For example, Rai, Singh, and Chourasia (2007) report that that in India freedom of expression by students is suppressed and criticism or the expression of an alternative view from the student is treated as an act of disrespect and defiance. In contrast, students in individualistic

societies are encouraged to express their own opinions, critique established works, and openly debate issues with their teachers.

In collective cultures it is a common phenomenon to observe that respect is often more commanded than earned. Superordinates are sensitive to any act of disrespect from subordinates and would resort to suppressive techniques to prevent this occurring. In order to command respect various means can be used such as wearing uniforms, tough talking, rude behaviour, instant answers to any questions, and a strong opinion on any issue under the sun. All these acts are self-enhancing in character. It could be argued that respect is commanded by inflicting harm on others by making use of the dominant status of the respected person (Shwalb and Shwalb, 2006). Therefore, in a collective society respect is often earned through various acts which could be regarded as disrespectful in individualistic cultures. This interpretation is often disregarded in collective societies because it is used as a tool to ensure that people value established institutions and traditions (Shwalb and Shwalb, 2006).

Definition of disrespect

The concept of respect comes with various definitions, for example: ‘deferential esteem’, ‘an attitude of admiration’, ‘treat with consideration’, and ‘courteous regard for people’s feelings’ (www.onelook.com). Honneth (1992) defines disrespect as an act of humiliation, degradation, insult, or physical abuse that inflicts injury to positive self-understanding acquired through historical social interaction. Within this context disrespect could be understood as an act that hinders or denies due recognition to an individual or group. Disrespect can be viewed as an experience of impairment of ‘moral experiences’ and a ‘violation of identity claims acquired in socialisation’ (Honneth, 2007: 70). This seems to be particularly true in a collective society in which every individual’s self-being is constructed by various strands of social structure and experiences. These experiences subsequently add to the social capital they already possess, inherited by birth. For example, in India a person is born into a caste which constitutes his/her social capital inheritance. The education they gain and the social acknowledgement they accumulate through interaction in the society adds up to his/her social status in which s/he leads a life of comfort and mental satisfaction.

Any intrusion into this territory of comfort by way of insult, humiliation, or by any other similar misdemeanour constitutes an act of disrespect.

Engel (2003) argues that social control and social deviance increases with social stratification. India is a socially stratified society in terms of social hierarchy, and hence may be perceived as one that needs tight control. 'Face' is an individual's self-image approved and agreed by the society (Goffman, 1972). It is defined as something which makes it possible for people to preserve their self-respect and maintain their honour and dignity (Storti, 2007). Face is a social construct an individual develops through social interaction over a span of time. Face-saving is a sensitive issue and cultures conscious of face would always try to save it. The GLOBE study on culture, leadership, and organisations has ranked India as highly sensitive to face-saving, revealing the country's extreme outlook towards social sensitivity (Brodbeck, Chhokar, and House, 2004). Storti (2007) identifies that harmony and face-saving go hand-in-hand in India and this is achieved by deference to seniors, avoiding public disagreements, and not embarrassing anyone in front of the group. Thus, disrespect in the Indian context would be regarded as an act that results in a loss of face, thereby causing the diminution of hard-earned social status.

Causes of disrespect

As alluded to above, it could be argued that one of the principal causes of disrespect flows from the demands that a society makes upon its individuals and groups. Tedeschi and Felson (1994) suggest that disrespect is caused by a person's need to establish or protect his/her social identity. For example, superordinates may resort to a coercive act so as to self-assure that their status in society is preserved and maintained, thereby upholding the norms and conventions of the society. Again, superordinates may respond aggressively to an act of a subordinate by which they feel or perceive a threat to their authority. An ethnographic study conducted by Worden, Shepard and Mastrofski (1996) on the relationship between white police officers and black suspects in the USA suggests that perceived acts of disrespect from black suspects were responded to by the officers as an affront to their authority. Therefore, it could be suspected that perceptions of disrespect may occur because of a lack of confidence

in oneself, or a feeling that a person's identity is at stake because of an inferiority complex related to social status and lack of recognition (Honneth, 2007).

Anderson (1999) explains disrespect as a phenomenon found in people alienated from the mainstream of society, in his 'code-of-the-street' thesis. He claims that many social pressures (such as social ills) and lack of trust prompts affected individuals to adopt a street code which emphasises toughness and retribution, commanded and forced upon others (Stewart, Schreck, and Simons, 2006). They demand respect. From Anderson's (1999) point of view the main cause of disrespect is the continuous ill experience such individuals endure from society and the resultant lack of trust in the system to which they belong.

Coercion is a goal-oriented behaviour in which the motivating factors are righting a perceived wrong and restoring the self-image (Tedeschi and Felson, 1994). These authors argue that coercive actions are intended to impose either physical or social harm on the subject. Coercion often results from emotions of fear and anger. Angry or fearful people are more likely to behave in a disrespectful manner during episodes of social exchange (Tedeschi and Felson, 1994). Anger stems from intolerance (Harrington, 2005), a concept for which the Toyota Production System is renowned. TPS is a prescriptive, one-best-way, approach intolerant towards waste. Intolerance, fear, and anger are often linked to ethnocentrism, an attitude whereby societal members believe their culture to be superior to that of others (Brewer, 1979). Feelings of superiority tend to make in-group members suspicious and mistrustful of others outside the culture, leading them to label out-group members as inferior or sub-human (LeVine and Campbell, 1972). Out-group members tend to be de-humanised and delegitimised by discursive placement into extremely negative social categories, thereby excluding them from the realm of acceptable norms and values (Bar-Tal, 1990). Negative traits associated with such discursive categorisation can include such labels as evil, weak, disloyal, unintelligent, parasites, untrustworthy, and trouble-makers (Janis, 1982). The feeling of threat posed by people in such categories leads in-group members to feel justified in their moralising behaviour and coercive actions aimed at protecting their superior way-of-life. An overall atmosphere of disrespect can lead to manipulative and exploitative acts to be committed against the out-group (Watkins and Liu, 1996). Research conducted by Huff and Kelley (2003) has found that the

degree of trust within collective cultures is high when compared with individualistic cultures. However, trust exhibited towards out-group members is an opposite story. Yamagishi (1994) and Hayashi et al (1982) found that the Japanese sample in their research exhibited a lower level of trust in other people in comparison with their individualist samples - the Americans.

Consequences of disrespect

Disrespect can alienate workers from the workplace. A congenial workplace climate tends to have a positive effect on workers' psyche. Okimoto (2009) states that failures by decision-makers to respect group members with fair procedures can result in a lowering of the status of individuals in an intra-group setting. Singh-Sengupta (1999), reported in his survey that Indian workers were generally satisfied with the nature of their work, although their work conditions made them withdrawn. This would imply that an immediate consequence of disrespect is the withdrawal of mind and body from active participation. Social status is a matter of pride and prestige in Indian society and any acts that challenge an individual's standing injure that person by pushing them out of the group to which they belong.

Procedural justice is important in building cooperation in groups (Tyler and Bladder, 2003). These authors argue that an important function of groups is to enable people to construct a social identity. They conclude that 'people who feel respected by others in their groups are predicted to become highly committed to the group and voluntarily motivated to act in ways that make use of distinctive qualities and abilities' (p. 360). Similarly Kahn (1990: 694) defines personal engagement as 'the harnessing of organisation members' self to their work roles...in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, or emotionally during role performance'.

Toyota's actions and focus historically have been on building up a separate self based on the Toyota Way and the Toyota Production System. Such indoctrination rejects other systems and treats them as inferior. This attitude reflects a Japanese cultural outlook which 'encourages commitment to an organisation and discourages relationships outside the group' (Huff and Kelley 2003: 83). Critically interpreted, such social and organisational discourses create the capacity to produce one-

dimensional man and one-dimensional society (Ogbor, 2001). Dominant power holders within such cultures enjoy the privileged status of being able to manipulate the systems of communication to propagate their ideas and control and suppress alternative norms and values (Ting-Toomey, 2010). Therefore, in-group members will resort to acts of suppression when their identity and integrity are challenged by the dissident traditions and conventions of an out-group. However, out-group members should not be expected to passively accept such suppressive behaviours. Critical theorists stress the liberating influence of free thinking to uncover the motives of power holders within any culture and to identify their true interests. Critical cognition processes can help individuals to free themselves from any sort of coercive acts that would arrest their freedom of thought and action (Payne and Barbera, 2010). This sort of analysis is applicable to the establishment of Japanese TPS systems in India and the reaction of the host nation to such an imposition.

Honneth (1992) states that disrespect in the form of physical maltreatment can inflict serious damage to a subject's self-confidence especially when acquired at an early stage. Rich and Grey (2005) postulated the concept of 'being a sucker' arising from their research amongst young black men in the USA who had been physically abused by the police. From the point of view of the participants, any person who does not retaliate after being disrespected is a 'sucker', 'chump', or a 'punk' (p. 818). Once a person has been so branded they are themselves in danger of further physical harm as well as damaged identity. In this case, it could be seen that retaliation is a consequence of disrespect with two intentions: first, to avoid repeated disrespect and second, to uphold one's social and personal identity.

Another important finding of Rich and Grey's (2005) study relates to the practice of racial profiling. They argued that U.S. police practiced a bias in their actions by stopping and searching more black men than white. Warren (2008) also reports that being African-American increases the likelihood of perceiving disrespect by the police. This disrespect has a consequential effect of eroding the confidence in police from African-American men, resulting in them resorting to more self-protective and defensive measures. One conclusion from this research is that a consequence of disrespect is a loss of faith in the legitimacy of social institutions. Lack of faith in the system often leads to individuals adopting self-protective attitudes and mechanisms in

the society. For example, Anderson's (1999) code-of-the-street theory claims that a street code is adopted by individuals as a means of survival and protection against victimization. This code is found to have originated out of disrespect witnessed and experienced in the neighbourhood.

Schorr et al (2010) claim that the motivation to maintain face often becomes stronger than the motivation to engage in productive outcomes. Affected members try to invest more time and resources in the enhancement of self-identity at the cost of job productivity when caught up in disrespectful environments.

Disrespectful actions aimed at organisational members who report instances of earlier disrespect, or who protest at the same, could lead to organisational breakdown in some cases. For example, workers who complain about disrespectful actions from managers might find themselves isolated and victimised when they air their grievances. Such alleged vengeful reactions could constitute further rounds of disrespect in their own right. Thus, reporting grievances, expressing unhappiness, or protesting against unjust actions could set in train a process of ongoing disrespectful actions in a cause-consequence cycle. Every act of disrespect acts as a centrifugal force that distances workers from the organisation and its system. In such an environment of antibiosis (where one element of the system is harmful to the existence of other elements), harmony within the system is compromised. Functions and inter-relations are jeopardised, acting contrary to the symbiosis of the overall system. A study conducted by Blanchard and Lurie (2004) on the perceptions of disrespect in the U.S healthcare system found that minority groups such as Asians, Africans, and Hispanics were treated with disrespect by many health service staff. When they reported these incidents they were further victimised by being sidelined from accessing routine physical examinations. The study further reveals that minority groups who perceive disrespect or believe they are treated unfairly in the health system because of their race are more likely to ignore the advice of doctors and put off care when medically needed. Such a relationship collapse may jeopardise the credibility of an entire institution, putting both patients and the system at risk.

A study conducted by Kuehn and Al-Busaidi (2002) among public and private sector employees in the Sultanate of Oman suggested that various contextual factors can

create high degrees of frustration among workers thereby affecting organisational citizenship. 'Organisation citizenship behaviour' is defined as behaviour that promotes the effective functioning of the organisation (Organ, 1988). A meta-analysis of the attitudinal and dispositional correlates of organisation citizenship behaviour has identified that it is linked to leadership supportiveness in an organisation (Organ and Ryan, 1995). Therefore, it could be argued that the role of leaders is to induce a sense of belongingness amongst workers towards the organisation, thereby contributing to and encouraging organisation citizenship behaviour among the workers. Smith, Organ and Near (1983) argue that pro-social behaviour of supervisors and leaders is in itself an organisation citizenship behaviour, as well as enabling others to embrace such behaviour. In contrast, anti-social behaviour on the part of supervisors or leaders may inflict damage on the symbiotic nature of the organisation, thus preventing organisation citizenship behaviour amongst workers. Disrespect of any form can distance co-workers from their organisation, impairing organisational effectiveness.

'Counterproductive work behaviour' can also be regarded as another consequence of disrespect. This concept, also termed 'employee deviance' is defined as 'voluntary behaviour that violates significant organisational norms and in so doing threatens the well-being of the organisation, its members, or both' (Robinson and Bennett, 1995: 556). Spector and Fox (2002) explain counterproductive work behaviour as a passive-aggressive act of individuals when they feel mistreated by their supervisor. While initially the retaliation is targeted against the supervisor, counterproductive work behaviour could target the organisation if the grievance of the worker does not achieve its expected or satisfactory outcome.

Aggressive behaviour could also be considered to be another consequence of disrespect. Dodge (1986) proposes that contrary processing of social information to social situations may lead to aggressive behaviour. In order to avoid conflict social processing should occur in the appropriate sequence by way of correct encoding, representing the encoded information accurately, specifying the interaction goal, generating and evaluating the response alternatives, and finally selecting and enacting the response alternative. This seemingly lengthy process can be summarised into three segments - communication, interaction, and actions. Different perceptions on the part

of individuals can result in either motivation or provocation. Leaf (2009) explains that social information is decoded on the basis of an individual's culture.

Furthermore, individual attitudinal responses are influenced by the way an action is perceived and analysed in its social context (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978). Therefore, it could be perceived that any hindrances to social information processing could question the social status of an individual. Anderson's (1999) 'street code' theory emphasises that actors in this particular social setting are extremely sensitive of their social status, and violence is often adopted as a means of enforcing and commanding respect. Additionally, respect becomes a highly sensitive issue in a social setting where people have to be content with limited social resources (Edgar, Martin, and O'Donnell, 2002). Their research on prison aggression concluded that a considerable amount of violence in prison was due to a perceived threat to one's status. This feeling of threat becomes more real when the subjects are in a setting where they feel alienated and particularly when they fail to trust the system (Anderson, 1999).

Emotions experienced due to disrespect

Emotions are the messages received by individuals based on their experience as well as from the experience of others (Van Daalen Smith, 2008). Emotions can be positive or negative depending on the nature of the message conveyed to the self from interaction with the environment. Hence it could be argued that emotions contribute to the make-up of self. Positive emotions acknowledge the worthiness of an individual whereas negative emotions may force individuals to believe that they are not living up to social expectations (Heine et al, 1999). In individualist cultures emotions depend on the good feeling of the self, whereas in collective cultures they depend on the overall adherence to group norms (Triandis, 2001).

The concept of self in Japanese culture is contrary to Western culture. Whilst in Western culture an individual's wellbeing is expressed and highlighted by way of happiness, this tends to be suppressed in Japanese culture (Kitayama and Markus, 2000). Happiness is a temporary phenomenon: there is always room for improvement and one ought to strive for enhancement to that level rather than being content or immersed in current happiness. In the Japanese context, being exceptionally happy is

perceived as ignoring the scope for self-improvement and forgetting the environment and social context (Suh, 2007). Minami (1971) relates this to the principle rooted in Buddhist philosophy of the transience of all things, including positive feelings. Lewis (1995) reports that Japanese teachers tend to encourage children to focus on their drawbacks and failures rather than on their talents and achievements. A comparative study conducted by Heine et al (1999) found that Japanese students were motivated to work hard when they were given negative feedback whereas their Canadian counterparts were motivated to work hard when they were given positive feedback. Persistent hard work is core to Japanese culture. The concept of *gambarimasu* refers to self-insistence, a belief in never giving up and to continually keep on fighting. To have free time is considered a waste (Davies and Ikeno, 2002). Advocates of total quality management (TQM) praise it as a technique that can achieve increased work outcomes during what was previously known as 'idle time' (Imai, 1986). However, in the Indian context such time is not perceived as idle. Indians value any time spent on maintaining and accelerating social relationships as productive, non-allowance of which may be viewed as an attempt to colonise even the idle time. Indians adore the concept of work-life balance and emphasise a devotion to their family. Whilst the Japanese context may tend to override the quest for current happiness in the pursuit of more, which may glue the individual to the concept of work, Indians are content with whatever they have achieved and further improvements will not be pursued at the cost of family and societal obligations.

Disrespectful acts can seriously impact on an individual's feeling of job satisfaction. Locke (1976: 1300) has defined job satisfaction as a 'pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences'. Satisfaction in one's job is a psychological experience which relates not only to individual performance but is also linked to one's environment, job context, and relationships with colleagues. Honneth (1992: 189) argues that acts of disrespect arrest the positive understanding of self, 'an understanding acquired by intersubjective means'. An associated concept is that of self-esteem, defined as the perception of an individual about his/her worth depending on the quality of their experiences in life (Battle, 1990). The way people feel about themselves varies across different situations (Heine et al, 1999). This definition also points to the fact that perception of self is directly linked to situations and interactions that take place in various contexts. Smith,

Murphy, and Coats (1999) suggest that an individual's self-esteem is challenged when exclusion from his/her group is experienced. Social interaction theory emphasises that the presence of an audience or a third party during an interaction can influence the action of the subject. For example, in the context of police-suspect interaction, Tedeschi and Felson (1994) point out that suspects often resort to acts of disrespect so as to maintain their social status. In such a context, the presence of a third party can restrain the subject from obsequious behaviour due to strong feelings of self and the fear of losing face.

However, Tedeschi and Felson (1994) believe that such acts by subjects (subordinates), simultaneously perceived as disrespect by the actors (superiors), can come at a cost. Here we need to analyse the cost-benefit balance in terms of an act of disrespect in a situation where a third-party presence has an influence upon the behavioural response of the subject. Heine et al (1999) argue that in a Western context, self-understanding is the outcome of a self-evaluation by which people assess their worth by examining their performance, capacities, and attributes; whereas in an Asian context this is assessed based on the worthiness of the action within the contextual culture. It is part of Japanese custom that subordinates should bow in front of their superiors in a particularly prescribed manner. This is an expected act of respect. However, undue bowing, especially in front of a foreigner, is a practice that may put at stake the self-esteem of an Indian worker. In the presence of a third party this would certainly question one's identity and allegiance to their culture. On the other side, Japanese superiors may interpret such an omission as an act of disrespect, prompting retaliatory actions and sanctions.

Analysing this situation from a cost-benefit point of view, the emotions attached to this situation are contingently based. There probably occurs a tug of war between the cost and benefit of an obsequious action. Such an act may cost an individual their social standing whilst at the same time gaining appreciation from their superiors. Conversely, not performing such an act may enhance one's social standing at the cost of the potential wrath of one's superiors. The wrath of the superior may be expressed in the form of further acts of disrespect, such as shouting or physical abuse, which again plunges the subject into an emotional state where one's understanding of self is impaired (Honneth, 1992).

The above situation leads to a unique concept, the status of an individual in a collective society. The individual is a key factor in collectivism. Every individual has a role in the collective set up of the society. This role involves personal contributions, their duties to the society, as well as the benefit in the form of support and status from the society. Gecas and Burke (1995: 42) describe this as the ‘social location’ of a person in a society based upon the characterisation one makes about oneself as well as those attributed by the society. This phenomenon of *individuation* is defined as a ‘process by which individual beings are formed and differentiated’ (Jung cited in Jacoby, 1985: 94). This formation amounts to a process of self-realisation of a practical identity which reassures oneself of recognition achieved through communication (Honneth, 1992). Recognition enables individuals to assert their identity as well as discover new features of the same (Deranty, 2010). Hence, encouraging communication can boost the identity of self. In a workplace situation this positive realisation of self identity may enable workers to contribute effectively to work processes. In contrast, denying recognition and communication can be perceived as disrespectful acts that may discourage a person from building up their self-identity.

Communication channels play an important role. Channels of communication such as spoken words, written words, and gestures bear the intentions of the sender and the success of any communication depends on the degree of ‘intentional unification’ of the subject of communication (Pilotta and Mickunas, 1990: 3). By intentional unification both the receiver and sender of a message understand its intentions in the right manner, the success of which could be perceived in the clarity of the channel of communication. Because the channel of communication through which a message is processed is populated by cultural strands, it could be argued that encoding and decoding a message is influenced by the culture of the sender and receiver respectively. Nabi (2002) argues that the emotional response to a message depends upon the motivation either to attend to, or to avoid, the emotion-inducing stimulus. Clyne (1994) believe that a failure in the sharing of communication rules may lead to wrong inferences. In short, what one person believes to be an honest communication intention may be inferred by another person as a disrespectful communication to the subject who belongs to another culture. Again, the success of any communication depends on the credibility of the source (sender of the message). The credibility of a

source depends on the degree of trust the receiver has in the sender (Kreuter and McClure, 2004). This credibility may be preconceived on the basis of historical factors. Such credibility conception may reflect an 'adaptive response to past life experiences of actual threat, such as physical abuse and peer victimisation' (Dodge, 2003: 256). Honneth (1992: 190) describes this as a 'psychological injury' caused to a subject due to acts of disrespect leading to lasting damage to the subject's confidence, acquired at an early stage. Siegel (1999) terms this a mental dysfunction, a sense of paralysis in which the normal mental processes are halted or corrupted. Such loss of confidence can arrest intersubjective interaction, even at a physical level.

Ellul (1992) focuses on the role of individuals in a social process and exhorts a return to small communities where one can regain self-realisation. Societal processes become beneficial to members only when individuals realise the significance of their role in the process. It could be argued that respect induces in the subjects an emotion of psychic expansion where an individual makes use of the opportunity to accept and learn new things. This expansion may be a slow process of advancement, with every step involving an emotional response to the quality of interaction. The shaping of the individual mind through the development of new psychic states occurs within the context of quality interpersonal relationships (Siegel, 1999). Emotional responses to respect would involve an expansion to the psychic frame of an individual. If members of a group perceive that they are respected by other group members then that would engage them to identify with, contribute to, or invest in, group activities (Simon and Sturmer, 2003; Tyler and Blader, 2003). In contrast, disrespect can be expected to induce negative emotional responses whereby the individual's psychic boundary becomes restrained. The failure of inclusiveness could lead to psychological withdrawal. Members who are excluded may disengage themselves from the process (Schmader, Major, and Gramzow, 2001). This can adversely impact organisational outcomes in terms of lower productivity (Harter, Schmidt and Hayes, 2002), and prompt members to adopt various physical, cognitive, and emotional defence mechanisms (Kahn, 1990).

Schmader, Major, and Gramzow, (2001) identify two major elements of psychological disengagement - devaluation of the domain, and discounting the validity of feedback. By devaluation, affected persons disregard the value of the

domain from where they are excluded (Crocker and Major, 1989), often inducing the subject to feel distressed and anxious (Sleeboos, Ellemers, and de Gilder, 2006). Additionally, Major and Crocker (1993) argue that in an attempt to buffer the prejudice of disrespect members of socially stigmatised groups or minorities tend to discount the value of the feedback they receive. In the case of African-American suspects, Anderson (1999) argued that their prejudice towards the police often made them deny the potential consequences of their actions. Similarly, Banks et al (1977) observed that African-American participants in their study often ignored negative feedback about their performance given to them by European-American evaluators, whereas feedback from an evaluator of the same ethnic background was treated as worthy. This analysis would seem to suggest that the process of disengagement acts as an escape mechanism to protect self-esteem from perceived threats of disrespect.

The maintenance of a sense of dignity is another feeling that individuals can nurture in the self. Dignity could be defined as an individual's moral right not to be humiliated (Jaber, 2000). It refers to a sense of self-worth and self-respect and the appreciation of the same qualities in others (Hodson, 2001), the practice of treating others with respect and acknowledging their sovereignty (Richardson, 2009). This respect for others implies that individuals should not be treated as instruments or tools of the will of others. Rather human dignity entails a 'high priority to be ascribed to the beliefs, ways of life, and attitude' of others (Schachter, 1983: 849). In this respect dignity is a cohesive force that bonds interpersonal relationships. Any attempt to question or challenge an individual's dignity could be perceived as an attempt to fracture their interpersonal bond, thereby weakening social cohesion (Brown and Pedder, 1991). In a collective society in particular, human dignity is identified in terms of the degree of acceptability of an individual in this bond structure. Any attempt to remove an individual from this interconnectedness would be viewed as a challenge to an individual's dignity. Jaber (2000: 34) argues that 'an infringement of human dignity is seen primarily as disrespect for the high status or intrinsic value of human beings'. Haddock (1996) suggests that the environmental culture and context where such interactions take place should be cordial so as to maintain dignity. Creation of such a cordial environment enhances and reinforces a person's dignity and thereby facilitating more successful endeavours (Skinner, 1968).

Viewed from a more philosophical perspective, Franck (2006) has defined individual dignity as the knowledge of an individual about the fact that s/he is constituted as an intelligent being, and has the ability to conform to the norms of the being. In this definition there exists an extremely sensitive inner self that forms the nucleus of an individual as a whole. In this sense, dignity forms the core constitutional factor in every individual (Haugen, 2010). With dignity as an internal realisation, every external understanding and subsequent action occurs at the direction of the inner self which processes every external action directed towards the individual, in terms of the norms of the self. Hence dignity could be perceived as the person inside a person (Haddock, 1996). Such a personal approach helps to identify and honour various qualities of an individual and forms the basis of a broad reaching humanitarian approach. In a workplace situation this approach would be extremely beneficial in terms of creating a cordial organisational atmosphere which would be more personal than formal, an idea much more appealing in the Indian context. India is a country deeply rooted in familial relationships. The feeling of closeness and the sense of dignity created out of that closeness helps individuals to cooperate and contribute. In order to achieve that closeness the primary requirement is to acknowledge people as they are or as they believe themselves to be, which constitutes individual dignity. Hence, any attempt to view or define an individual in a different manner could constitute disrespect. It may be perceived as an attempt to replace the self with an artificial dignity (Meredith, 2009). Such a scenario is pertinent within the context of the extremely unitarist culture of Toyota which attempts to transform every worker into a Toyota person. Instead of using the tag of 'made in China' or 'made in Tokyo', the company prefers to use the slogan 'made by Toyota' (www.economictimes.indiatimes.com, 2010). This extreme subjectification of the individual to the needs of the corporate entity could be regarded as a form of disrespect by way of de-dignifying the individual.

Social dignity, on the other side could be defined as the sense of identity one attaches to his/her culture, values, and tradition - transgression of which would be viewed as disrespect (Montiel and Belo, 2008). Social dignity is generated as a result of the interaction between individuals, groups, and the society. The outcome of such an interaction would be the valuation of self-worth and the ascription and interpretation of the same, based on the values and traditions of that society (Jacobson, 2009). In

the social dignity phenomenon, therefore, interpretation is the decisive factor which enables conclusions of respect or disrespect to be reached. For example, an approach regarded as 'honest' (candid or blunt) in some cultural contexts would be interpreted as an act of disrespect in other cultures. Additionally, the audience factor (Tedeschi and Felson, 1994) may enhance perceptions of disrespect and hurt the dignity of an individual more when such candidness is displayed in the presence of a third party. A hurt inflicted in public affects not only his/her self, but their social standing as well, causing damage to both personal and social dignity. In such a situation, it could be assumed that one's social identity and persona is limited by others, including the society (Child, 2009). This is more of a phenomenon of collective societies where every word spoken and every act performed is governed by the perceived forecast of its outcome. Whilst actors who are familiar with the culture are aware of the possible outcome of their action, unfamiliar and unaware actors can often end up disrespecting the subjects.

Therefore, in a collective society dignity is relational and may be more important than personal dignity. Human dignity is a form of social dignity and hence needs a social status (Habermas, 2010). In such cultures the dependency factor also would weigh more heavily as individuals are inherently dependent on elders, superiors, peers, and society as a whole to construct their social dignity. Environment plays an important role in facilitating individuals to acquire and maintain social dignity. For example, in a hostile or limited environment some individuals may find it difficult to advance or maintain their social dignity whereas in a resourceful and cordial environment there exists more cooperation, interaction, and understanding facilitating social dignity (Pleschberger, 2007). Therefore, the core deciding factor is the society and/or the audience which is witness to an interaction. Thence, it could be concluded that an individual's dignity is shaped by the society s/he belongs to and the acknowledgement of dignity is linked to the way the society and environment interacts with him/her.

Honneth (1997) argues that disrespect to one's personal integrity transforms an action into a moral injury. Personal integrity can be defined as the moral composition obtained by individuals when they are able to act according to their practical reasoning based on personal commitment (Walton, 1986). Personal integrity is a basic need of human beings rooted in human nature and human relationships which

provides an inward peace (Baurmann, 1996). A person suffering from moral injury undergoes an emotional state in which their own social standing is devalued. The term *moral* is derived from the Latin word *mores* which means customs and traditions (Bergmann, 1998). Therefore, it could be argued that moral injury is inflicted due to acts of disrespect which the subject feels as a threat to their personal self, rooted in age-old customs and traditions. For example, when comparing Japanese and Indian culture the concept of ‘apology’ carries different connotations. In Japan apology is core to the society’s social behaviour and in the Japanese legal system no defendant is allowed to leave the courtroom without offering an apology (Renteln, 2008). However, in the Indian context an apology is expressed either by a guilty smile, or by standing with a bowed head, or by offering an immediate rectification act. Madan (1985) discusses the habit of using figurative language by Indians which is a difficult process to decode correctly if unfamiliar with the context. Indians in general do not express apology by words unless it is very essential. For example, if an Indian accidentally touches another person with his/her feet, then an apology is immediately offered by touching the affected person with their fingers and bringing those fingers to the eyes or chest of the self (Vimalananda and Krishnakumar, 2008). In this example an apology is rendered by action and not by words.

In any situation where an individual or group of individuals feel disrespected it is likely that they undergo a feeling of emotional turbulence. Within organisational settings emotions are relational because they are the resources through which ‘organisational relationships are created, interpreted, and altered’ (Waldron, 2000: 65). Positive emotions are likely to enable cohesion, better cooperation and more understanding whereas negative emotions would distance individuals from close interaction and cooperation, thereby affecting the work process and organisational climate. Relational emotions can therefore act as a contributory factor to the sense of belonging or self identity (Tyler and Blader, 2003). Emotional turbulence may surface either in the form of an aggressive reaction or a withdrawal from the hostile environment. Aggressive reactions result from perceived unapologetic behaviour which provokes the individual who feels offended or insulted (Schwartz, Davidson, and Goleman, 1978). This aggressive nature may also be linked to the presence of an audience or third-party which provokes the actor to ensure that his/her self-esteem is maintained (Miller, 2001).

Retzinger and Scheff (2000) argue that the emotion underlying anger is 'hurt'. Hurt represents a devaluation of self by which a person feels that s/he is not considered worthy to maintain a relation (Leary et al, 1998). The acts of disrespect would prompt the subject to believe that s/he is no longer wanted in the group or is not fit to be a member of the group. This devaluation of self can result in a loss of self-confidence and a distancing of the individual from the person or group responsible for the offence. Eventually, hurt may accelerate feelings of insecurity in an individual, a precursor to hate, anger, and eventually aggression or violence (Craig, 2002). Hate has been identified as both a cause and consequence of disrespect. It represents a sentiment of not liking something or someone, which in due course can take the form of anger and aggression (Shaver et al, 1987; Smith-Lovin, 1995). This state of emotion is often triggered by humiliation or other forms of disrespect and is reported to be associated with people who are at the receiving end and those who are unable to retaliate instantly (Fitness and Fletcher, 1993). Hate is a non-viewable emotion, the continuance of which can surface in the form of anger and become visible by action. And, it could be perceived that the longer the hatred remains submerged the more intense the resultant anger would be and the lower the chance of a successful resolution (Fitness, 2000). Simultaneously, the issue of conflict remains submerged in an emotional world, where it cannot be resolved to any level of satisfaction (Retzinger and Scheff, 2000).

Within the cultural context of a collective society, with its aspects of hierarchy and high power-distance, subordinates may not consider it safe to retaliate instantly. For example, Wang, Lawler, and Shi (2010) report from their study conducted among Indian and Chinese workers that employees are less likely to express their dissatisfaction towards their supervisors as they prefer to maintain harmony in the group. Therefore, it could be assumed that when a negative emotion is suppressed and remains unaddressed and unresolved, it can turn into hate and aggression at a later stage when an individual or group is less adequately prepared to control the thrust of the motivational force. And collectivism helps individuals to garner enough numbers so that it becomes a large group activity. Craig (2002) identifies this group nature as that which gives the perpetrators enough courage for aggression, which one is less likely to do individually for fear of social and material cost.

Ensuing actions due to disrespect

Honneth (1992: 195) argues that acts of ‘recognition’ establish the ‘formal requirements for conditions of interaction within which human beings can feel assured of their dignity or integrity’. He argues that the moral attitudes of subjects are influenced by the way that the recognition process is exercised. Non-recognition of the legitimate claims of individuals or groups for love, rights, and solidarity can cause a moral injury for those affected. Non-recognition represents disrespect because it blocks one’s participation in society (Honneth, 1997). The individual becomes devalued and not considered worthy to be a productive part of the system and play an active role (Bernstein, 2005). This implies that morality is associated with the process of recognition of fellow beings, a mutual obligation to secure personal integrity. Acts of denial to exercise such moral obligations constitute disrespect which can induce those affected to fight back in kind. Honneth (1997) argues that individuals resort to struggle as a means to recover basic social conditions that are essential to them.

People who are subject to acts of disrespect will often feel the need to retaliate in a number of ways. Retaliation can be invoked by the need to seek revenge or even-the-score with a person or group perceived to have acted disrespectfully. Miller (2001) has identified two main goals that prompt those affected to retaliate, first to restore one’s self-esteem, and second to educate the offender. The presence of a third party may also accelerate the need to restore self-esteem as failing to do so may affect the subject’s social standing in the group or society (Reisig et al, 2004). Failing to retaliate to disrespect may also be regarded as adding insult to injury.

Disrespect can cause employee dissatisfaction which can be expressed in several different ways. Rusbult and Lowery (1985) distinguish between passive and active actions and between destructive and constructive actions. ‘Exit’ is defined as an active-destructive behaviour directed towards leaving the organisation, for example by resigning or looking for a new position. ‘Neglect’ is defined as a passive-destructive behaviour directed towards allowing conditions to deteriorate, for example through absenteeism, lateness, reduced effort, and increased error rate (ibid).

Negative emotions prompted by disrespect can result in two types of reactions – attack or escape (Frederickson, 2001). Attack is induced by feelings of anger whilst escape is induced by feelings of fearfulness. People who exhibit an escape mode often display withdrawal behaviour. They avoid any form of confrontation and prefer to stay silent. There is sometimes a power-play involved in this type of situation in the sense that power-holders are more likely to display confrontational actions whereas less powerful people in society are more likely to remain silent and withdraw, at least in the short-term. Those on the receiving end of power, such as subordinates within a workplace, are usually unable to express anger for fear of punishment, and hence tend to suppress such emotions. Papps and O’Carroll (1998) suggest that such suppression can result in feelings of sadness. The subject experiences a sense of loss which induces inaction and a withdrawal into the self (Lazarus, 1991). Firestone and Catlett, (2009: 74) argue that blocking out anger limits one’s experience of positive emotions. In such a situation the subject is termed inactive because he/she withdraws or disengages from social interaction and finds solace in the self. Disrespect can thus decouple the link between positive emotions and their emphasis on social interaction and cooperation (Honneth, 2007). The process of familiarisation and socialisation is negatively affected by disrespect. The subject can withdraw inwardly into a form of hibernation. In contrast, anger is reported to be the most common way of responding to disrespect (Mikula, 1993). Anger is associated with a heightened state of mind with the affected feeling energised to attack either verbally or non-verbally (Averill, 1982). It invariably occurs in reaction to perceptions of unfair treatment or unjust behaviour in social interaction (Smith and Ellsworth, 1985). Anger in the workplace is often caused by incivility on the part of supervisors or co-workers (Frone, 2000). Lind (2001) is of the opinion that strong feelings of injustice are required to force people to justify their aggressive reaction.

This analysis would suggest that negative emotions resulting from disrespect can be transformed into either action or inaction. However, it could be argued that inaction represents an action in itself which can negatively affect the environment and the productivity of a workplace. For example, such ‘inactive’ behaviours as dumb insolence, passive resistance, civil disobedience, and working-to-rule all involve attempts to withdraw co-operation within the workplace. In this sense both action and inaction have impacts on cost through arresting the smooth flow of work processes. In

similar vein, the distinction between confrontation and withdrawal is not always useful. Even in a withdrawn state those affected may not keep silent. Research suggests that, even in such a state where no direct confrontation takes place, workers can retaliate by other means such as theft or sabotage (Skarlicki and Folger, 1997).

Tit-for-tat processes can become endemic in disrespectful situations where subjects and objects can trade reprisals as two sides of the same coin. For example, such processes may be observed in the form of vendettas or amongst vigilantes who take the law into their own hands to extract vengeance on criminals. Such reactionary acts of coercion usually represent the culmination of a series of ill experiences which have not met with any satisfactory conclusion. Muir (1977) discusses the example of a private security service provider who takes the law in his own hands by employing various coercive measures against alleged offenders as a form of retaliation to extract benefits for his customers. In this case Muir (1977: 75) argues that an 'unholy alliance' was struck between the police, local businessmen, and a hoodlum in an attempt to 'keep the peace' in the neighbourhood. The hoodlum was paid by the businessmen who benefited from his services. This situation arose because the affected subjects were forced to conclude that there was nothing to lose by resorting to retaliatory measures when no alternative avenue was available to them. Similar arguments are found in Anderson's (1999) code-of-the-street theory where perpetrators justify self-protective mechanisms due to lack of faith in the police and the judicial system. Rich and Grey (2005) similarly report that young black male victims of violence do not rely on police when threatened but prefer to handle the issue themselves.

Continuous disrespect can force subjects to emerge from a withdrawn state and take on an active confrontational posture. Suppressed emotions which have been kept contained over a long period of time can come to the surface, especially in the presence of like-minded companions when subjects become more emboldened to become active. Group membership assures individuals of identity benefits (Hogg and Abrams, 1988) and because of these benefits members can become intrinsically motivated to contribute to the group's goal and processes (Tyler and Bladder, 2000).

The struggle for recognition also encompasses the dimension of a struggle for the institutionalisation of claims (Deranty, 2010). Institutionalisation encompasses the 'institution of a form of organisation, creating rules, rights and obligations, imposing discipline in regard to the institution which then takes on the appearance of a given fact for each individual agent or group, through which behaviour and strategy are gradually adapted' (Boyer and Saillard, 2002: 340). This could be considered as a contributory factor to the positive view of the self, a legal recognition received from others prompting the subject to be morally accountable (Honneth, 1992). Any struggle for recognition that involves demands for institutionalisation could be perceived as involving a potential meeting point where various social strands such as customs, beliefs, and practices are accepted and incorporated. In this respect, institutionalisation could be seen as a dilution of the system to accommodate the demands of the subjects and ensure adaptation to the environmental context. Struggle itself could be described as an outward expression of an innate desire for the preservation of the self as well as a desire to grow (Moore, 2003). From this definition, it could be conceived that there is a mutual recognition process at work, a process in which fundamental social principles are preserved and at the same time compromises are made paving the way for growth as an essential need for survival. This process of give and take represents a form of de-traditionalisation, a re-construction of traditional belief system to form a new system in which both the old and the new co-exist (Heelas, 1996).

Chapter 3

Culture, Values, and Religion in India

This chapter analyses various dimensions of India's cultural, religious, and values-based context. It commences with a brief analysis of the caste system and the concepts of dharma, karma, moksha, and ashrama before discussing the significant cultural and value-based aspects of Indian society using three major instruments: Hofstede's cultural dimensions, Kluckhohn-Strodtbeck framework, and the GLOBE project.

India is a multi-religious, multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, and multi-political land characterised by diversity and contrast (Engfer, 2003). The religious make up of India comprises 80 percent Hindus, 10 percent Muslims, and the rest Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, and other minor religions (CIA, 2008). India is the birth place of three of the world's major religions: Hinduism (about 7000 years BC), Buddhism (487 BC), and Sikhism (1699 AD) (Budhwar and Debrah, 2001).

Religion plays a major role in all walks of Indian life (Sahay and Walsham, 1997). Being the ancient and majority religion, Hinduism exerts a significant influence in the lives of Indians, and is regarded as a way of life rather than a precise religion (Dhruvarajan, 1993). The root of the collective orientation of Indian society could be traced to Hindu philosophy that defines man as a composition of his immediate family as well as the society to which he belongs (Radhakrishnan, 1922). Hindu philosophy defines a perfect man as one who realises God through *dharma*, by practicing eternal virtues such as self-denial, humility, fraternal love, and purity (Radhakrishnan, 1922).

The caste system

The most important aspect of Hindu religion is its caste system. Accordingly every Hindu is born into one of the four castes, Brahmin (priestly class), Kshatriya (the warriors), Vysya (the business class), or Sudra (the menial workers). The caste system has a hierarchical structure with Brahmins at the top and Sudras at the bottom. Besides, hierarchy, the caste system also serves as a form of in-group collectivism in which members of the same caste are *apna* (in-group) whereas others are *paraya* (out-

group) (Sinha and Kanungo, 1997). Within a specific caste, the basic form of in-group is the family (Sinha and Verma 1987).

Dharma

Dharma refers to the expected code of behaviour from every individual. Each caste has its own *dharma* and people are expected to perform their duties in line with the caste. For instance, the *dharma* of a Brahmin is to perform priestly duties and that of a *Kshatriya* involves killing others in battle (Firth, 2005). The *dharma* is also linked to one's moral duty towards his family, society, and environment. Accordingly, there are four types of *dharma*: *swa-dharma*, duties towards one's immediate family members and relatives; *jati-dharma*, social code of conduct; *sanatan-dharma*, universally desirable duties towards self and others; and *apad-dharma* which is a required code of conduct during emergency situations (Sinha and Kanungo, 1997).

Karma

The concept of *karma* is closely related to *dharma*. *Karma* (works/destiny) is the result of *dharma*. Therefore, performance of right duty and moral obligations are accounted to a person's life even after death. Hence, one's fate in the present life is directly linked to his actions of the past. Good actions reap good fruit and the miseries of the present life are due to the evil actions in the past life (Bhattacharya, 2001).

Moksha

The process of *karma* which is described as a cycle of births and rebirths due to one's deeds could be escaped by right *dharma*. This freeing of one's life from *karma* is called *Moksha*. In short, *Moksha* is the liberation of the soul from the pangs of taking repeated births in this material world, and resting in heavenly abode. Some Hindu scholars interpret *moksha* as the stage at which an individual attains self-realization (Morgan and Sarma, 1987).

Ashrama

According to Hindu philosophy, one's life comprises four distinct stages: *Brahmacharya* (student life); *Grahashthashrama* (household); *Vana prastha* (forest

dwelling); and finally Sanyas (total renunciation). The word *ashrama* means resting or halting place. This also points to the belief that there are different stages in one's life and one should not concentrate on the material aspects of life but always should aim for eternity (*moksha*), when one becomes unified to the Supreme Being (Bhattacharya, 2001).

As mentioned above, *brahmacharya* is the student life. In olden days, India had a *gurukul* (seat of the master) system of education whereby children at an early age left their parents and lived with gurus (teachers) until the completion of their education (Wolpert, 2005). During this time, a student was expected to live as a celibate fully focused on gathering knowledge. The term *brahmachary* means celibate, and during this stage one's *dharma* was to gain maximum knowledge and live in full obedience to the guru.

The stage that follows *brahmacharya* is *grahasthashrama* (*graha* = home), a stage that starts when one completes his education and returns to his parents who will find a suitable wife for him and thus help him to settle down. During this stage, one's *dharma* is to take care of his wife, beget children, and look after the household affairs (Rinehart, 2004).

The third stage is called *Vanaprastha* (departure to the forests). This is similar to the modern-day retirement life. This stage of life comprises transferring full responsibility to one's children and the husband and wife leave home for ever to dwell in forests leading a semi ascetic life (Rosen, 2006). For instance, a business man will hand over the responsibility and possession of all his business and assets to his son/children, and an employee will find his son a suitable job (until recently it was at the same workplace). Even though the *vanaprastha* concept has practically ceased in its literal sense, Indians still exhibit the trait by metaphorically withdrawing into seclusion by detaching themselves from material and emotional concerns (Firth, 2005).

The final stage is *Sanyas* (complete renunciation). During this stage, individuals completely renounce everything (Pankajam, 2005) and embark on a lonely journey in search of *moksha*, wandering along, praying, conducting pilgrimages, and finally breathing his last if possible at the bosom of Mother Ganga (Ganga is a sacred river for Hindus) (see Wolpert, 2005). Again, although the concept has diminished

significantly in modern days, it is still observed amongst people of old age who renounce everything and live a life engaged in prayers, some in charity works, and others engaged in pilgrimages.

HRM, Indian culture, and lean manufacturing

As previously stated, the culture of India revolves around its religious values and the societal system as a whole is directly linked to its culture (Sahay and Walsham, 1997). It is argued that the adoption of socialism after independence in 1947 was to preserve values and practices based on Hindu virtues of contentment, absence of desire, and stability as opposed to capitalist perspectives of striving for success and unlimited consumption (Saha, 1992). It is also argued that Indian industry has inherited the features of Indian society (Venkata-Ratnam and Chandra, 1996), with strong values attached to traditional beliefs, customs, and practices (Jain, 1991). The traits of religion are reflected in the nature and attitude of Indian work force. For example, a Hindu upper caste may be offended if he is asked to do a menial job at the workplace. A Muslim would take breaks for prayer even at the peak of his work. In the politically volatile situation prevalent in India, even a simple offence has the potential to flare up into a communal riot. Considering these challenges, Davis, Chatterjee, and Heuer (2006) have cautioned that the country is by no means an easy management system. Therefore, India being a land of varied complexities, there exist considerable challenges for Western MNCs in terms of managing the Indian workforce (Rao, 2007).

Hofstede's cultural dimensions, Indian culture, and lean manufacturing

Hofstede's (1980) research on cultural dimensions would serve as a basic guideline to understand the cultural characteristics of the Indian workforce. A brief description about each dimension of culture is given below which should help to understand the basic characteristics of the workforce. However, it would be remiss to not point out at this stage that Hofstede's five cultural dimensions model has been severely criticised by scholars. For instance, McSweeney (2002) critically analysed Hofstede's (1980) findings and concluded that the research samples were confined to employees of a single MNC (IBM) spread across sixty six countries. The validity of the data which were collected in the late 1960s and early 1970s has also been questioned (Magnusson et al, 2008). The methodology has also been questioned as the cultural dimension list

drawn by Hofstede (1980) is more speculative rather than the actual points mentioned in the data (Tayyeb, 2000; Fang, 2003). Kirkman, Lowe, and Gibson (2006) wonder how culture could be overly simplified and reduced to only four or five dimensions. Sivakumar and Nakata (2001) highlight the fundamental concern about country selection ignoring multiple cultures, in the application of Hofstede's theory. The above two arguments are particularly significant and relevant in the Indian context as the country has been identified as a complex cultural domain with different cultures and sub-cultures. Besides, it is also argued that culture, and hence cross-national differences, are not static (Oyserman and Lee, 2008). Instead, it is continuously evolving in response to various external and internal factors.

Power distance

According to Hofstede (2001) *power distance* is the acceptance of inequality in terms of power between the powerful and less powerful members of organizations and institutions such as families. Indian society ranks high on power distance (Hofstede, 2008) which denotes that managers and subordinates are comfortable with their relative positions in the organizational hierarchy (Baruch and Budhwar, 2006). Subordinates view their leaders in line with the paternalistic and family-oriented nature of Indian society where members often depend on elders for guidance and advice (Kakar et al, 2006). As a result of high power distance Indian society exhibits a hierarchical structure in its interpersonal relationships. The underlying current of high power distance in Indian society is represented by its caste system in which the majority Hindu religion categorizes people into four major castes: Brahmin (the priestly class), Kshatriya (the warriors), Vysya (the business class), and Shudra (the low caste who are supposed to do menial jobs only).

Due to the high power distance nature of Indian society, hierarchy and inequality are common features (Jain and Venkata Ratnam 1994). Additionally, the strong family orientation and respect for elders also cater to the hierarchical nature of Indian society (Johnson and Johnson, 2001; Kakar et al, 2006). Therefore, in such a society dependence of members on elders is a common feature. In terms of HRM, this means that employee performance and appraisal have a direct influence of subordinate-supervisor relationships (Varma, Pichler, and Srinivas, 2005). In a society such as India subordinates rely on supervisors and managers for all work-related matters. An

inherent trait found among the Indian workforce is its identification with familiarity, respect for the personality of the leader, and respect and submission to authority (Jain 1991). However, these traits cannot be taken as granted when drafting HR policies. As Indian society is long-term oriented, changes are accepted at a slow pace. It is necessary to win the confidence of the workforce before any change can be effected. This is a complicating factor and at first glance might be seen as contradictory to the traits of power distance where subordinates submit to the authority of bosses. However, the examples given below should help to clear the confusion:

Venkata-Ratnam and Chandra (1996) cite two incidents related to this contradictory trait. In the first incident, the son of an owner of a company combined the canteens of managers and workers after returning from a Western Management School. The workers viewed this act as an intrusion into their privacy by alleging that lunch time is the only time when they have an opportunity to interact and this is being denied by allowing agents of management to encroach and pry on them. The second incident occurred in a government company which was previously American owned. The new management agreed to the request of managers to have a separate canteen thereby breaking the practice of the previous management (American). In this case, the workers of the company complained that whereas the white officers did not mind having lunch with them Indian managers exhibited traits of superiority.

These two contradictory traits exhibited within Indian society highlight the importance of the familiarity factor, or the interpersonal relationship factor, embedded in the nature of the power distance dimension of the workforce. In both cases interpersonal relationships were adversely affected whereby subordinates felt that they were being ignored and not taken care of (as is expected in the traditional high power distance Indian workplace). A similar feeling of isolation was also experienced by workers at Hyundai Motors in India where the Korean managers used to communicate in their native language (Lansbury, Kwon, and Suh, 2006).

Sinha (2004) points out another aspect of power distance in an Indo-Japanese joint venture situated in North India. The employees of this joint venture were caught by surprise when they saw their superiors wearing the same uniform, standing with them in the same queue for food in the same canteen, and doing exercises with them. The ultimate result was that employees lost respect for their bosses believing that the

superiors had no power or authority over them (Sinha, 2004). This was because, according to Indian culture, superiors and elders are attributed a special status in the group or society and they are expected by the value system to exhibit a behaviour that matches the status they achieve. Hence, stepping down to the level of employees is seen as an act irresponsible to the position of a superior.

High power distance also could mean restricted flow of communication and or interaction between managers and subordinates. Hence, it is mostly one-way communication where the instructions are given by the boss to the subordinates rather than making joint decisions through consultation. One study found that both Indian private and public sector organizations shared less information related to both strategy and financial performance with their blue collar staff in comparison to managerial staff (Budhwar and Boyne, 2004). This is due to various reasons. Sparrow and Budhwar (1997) point to the lack of trust or faith of top management in their subordinates. However, it is widely seen that the power distance factor within Indian society induces a managerial preference for centralized decision-making, exercising strict control over subordinates, and a dislike for delegation of authority (Tayeb, 1994). Another study conducted in India, China, and Mexico also reported that human resource dimensions of employee involvement and participation were comparatively less encouraged or practiced in total quality management programmes (Rao and Raghunathan, 1999). In the case of India it may be the power distance factor which restricts employee participation.

Power distance and lean management

The lean management system initially practiced by Toyota of Japan, in contrast to the Fordist mass production system adopts a bottom-up approach. One of the main features of a lean production system is that it entrusts responsibilities and empowers teams on the shop floor (Preece and Jones, 2010). Hence lean systems represent a fundamental shift away from the vertical structure found in mass production systems where decisions are promulgated from above by managers. Lean structures ostensibly give more freedom to shop floor workers in work related issues. Linking this to the concept of power distance, such systems contradict the basic nature of Indian society where there exists a gap between managers and workers. For instance, a case study conducted by Ramaswamy and Schiphorst (2000) found that an experimental

adaptation to shop floor empowerment by a German MNC subsidiary failed due to the negative attitude of managers to the whole concept. In the same study, which also covered a large public sector company in India, it was reported that managers were unwilling to yield their powers by allowing employee participation in decision making processes (Ramaswamy and Schiphorst, 2000).

Collectivism

According to Hofstede (2008), collectivism (and its opposite individualism) refers to the degree of integration of individuals to groups. Hofstede (2008) ranks India as a high collectivist country. While individualism represents the independence of individuals who are expected to take care of themselves, collectivism exhibits the characteristic of interdependence (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). Therefore, whilst an individualistic society stresses loose interpersonal bonds, a collective society on the other hand prefers a close association among individuals (Hofstede, 2001).

The collectivist culture of the Indian workforce is found to be contradictory to some of the standardized HR functions. For instance, a study conducted by Aycan (2005) on performance appraisal reports that loyalty to the in-group weighed heavily over productivity. It is also found that high performance employees who stand out in the group are disliked by other members in the group as they are believed to cause disharmony in the group (Kovach, 1995). Social and relational criteria are weighed more heavily in a collectivist culture (Aycan, 2005) in which good human nature, harmonious inter-personal relationships, respectful attitudes, loyalty to superiors, gratitude, and contribution and conformity to group maintenance are counted as significant factors (Sinha, 2004). A study conducted by Jackson (2001) on cultural values and management ethics notes that the relationship between an individual and his/her peer group at work is based on obligatory commitment so that the group as a collective entity is promoted.

The collectivist character of Indian culture is reflected in the society's value attributes to family relationships. A family in India consists of spouse and children, and often elderly family members who depend on the earnings of members of the family for care and support. The philosophical value system of India imposes family relations and the welfare of family members as a primary duty of individual members.

Therefore, Indian work ethics revolve around family and family relations (Jain, 1991). This is evident from a couple of examples: For instance, a study conducted on the transferability of Japanese HRM into Indian subsidiaries and joint ventures found the existence of conflict in work ethics (Jain, 1987). Indian employees working for a subsidiary of the Bank of Tokyo complained that Japanese officials attached more importance to work than family and friends, whilst Japanese officials perceived it as a question of loyalty towards their work and organization. The same family-versus-work conflict was also reflected in the Indian subsidiary of the Hyundai Motor Corporation. In this case Korean managers complained about the lack of a work ethic among Indian employees while the workers complained about the Koreans' unsympathetic attitude towards Indian customs and practices (Lansbury, Kwon, and Suh, 2006).

Collectivism and lean management

Lean tools which could cause dissonance within Indian collectivism relate to public displays of individualistic factors such as performance and absenteeism (Preece and Jones, 2010). As mentioned above, in Indian culture members are just part of a group and do not have an individual existence. In return, the shortcomings of individual members are not highlighted but considered in a sympathetic aura of cooperation. Therefore, highlighting individual flaws outside the group is treated as an issue affecting the whole group and not the individual alone. Whilst within individualist cultures self endeavours and pursuits are important, a collective society projects and promotes cooperation among members of a group. Indians prefer cooperation to competition and it is widely believed that only weak people compete whereas strong people always cooperate (Jain et al, 2006). It is argued that cultures evolve over time as a result of their adaptation to the immediate environment, and collectivism is a result of such evolution from the people's realization that cooperation is vital for their survival (Javidan and House, 2001).

It is interesting to note that Japan and India rank very close in terms of individualism in Hofstede's (2008) cultural dimension chart. However, the collectivism found in Japanese and Indian culture shows indications of contradiction. Or, to be precise there appears some conflict in the understanding of collectivism as advocated by lean management systems and Indian culture. For instance, let us take the example of one

of the main principles of a lean system, that of waste elimination (*muda* in Japanese). *Muda* means to achieve maximum productivity by way of eliminating all non-value-added activities (Arnheiter and Maleyeff, 2005). In terms of HRM practices *muda* has various implications ranging from re-assignments, to re-training, to layoffs (Emiliani 2001). Re-assignment may involve removing a member from one group and putting him/her in another group where the company feels a better fit could be achieved. Even though this may help the organization to avoid waste, in terms of Indian culture it means detaching a person from his group. This may upset the balance of the group whereby not only the person who is detached will be unhappy but the group as a whole. The same attitude also applies to layoffs.

Another impact of *muda* is that it keeps workers firmly disciplined and focused only on their work with no time to be wasted. However, as mentioned above, relationships and family ties are central to Indian culture. This would invoke a conflict which would ultimately lead to role stress as the priorities of the organization do not align with those of the workers (Peterson et al, 1995). For instance, Indians try to keep in contact with their immediate family even at work. Besides, Indian workers have a tendency for chatting and social loafing at the workplace (Sinha, 2004) which contravenes the *muda* concept where time is valued as precious. Mixing personal issues with work issues is a common phenomenon in Indian culture. Therefore, caring for group members and sharing joy and grievances with group members are common practices in the workplace. Such affective interaction is claimed to have a positive relationship with the performance and productivity of the group (Barsade and Gibson, 2007). Therefore, an issue for critical evaluation is whether the lean management principle of *muda* perceives individual team members as 'potatoes in a sack' or views the team as a 'sack of potatoes' (Chandra, 2008).

The concept of team formation for the execution of work rhymes well within both Indian and Japanese culture. However, India is deeply rooted in its own traditions, values, and faiths and harmony among members of a group is vital to the performance of the team. Therefore, proper alignment of members based on societal and cultural factors must be ensured in team formation for the required outcome to be achieved (Tan and Khoo, 2002). Sinha (2004) reports that one factor that led to violent unrest

in an Indo-Japanese joint venture in India was because upper caste workers were forced to obey supervisors who belonged to lower castes.

Masculine versus feminine

Hofstede (1980: 46) describes masculinity as “the extent to which the dominant values in society are ‘masculine’, that is assertiveness, the acquisition of money and things, and not caring for others or the quality of life of people”. Therefore, while feminine goals attach more importance to social frames such as interpersonal relationships, helping others, and one’s immediate physical environment, masculine traits attach significance to personal goals, career advancement, and monetary benefits (Hofstede, 2001). India ranks low in masculinity in Hofstede’s (2008) chart. India is inclined more towards feminine traits which admire less assertiveness and more care and compassion for fellow beings. This is further evident from the discussion held above on the collective nature of Indian society where in-group harmony weighs more heavily over individual achievements. Whilst a masculine society accepts assertiveness and merit-based reward practices, a feminine society finds solace in the quality of work life and interpersonal relationship (Heuer, 2006).

It is argued that a strong masculine culture such as Japan exhibits traits of desire for personal achievements and advancement due to a culture of ambition, assertiveness, and dominance and hence emphasises individual competition and high performance (McNutt and Batho, 2005).

Masculine versus feminine and lean management

Some of the important policies that a lean management system aggressively follows are: striving for continuous improvement (*kaizen*); elimination of all non-value-adding activities; improving quality by exposing the truth; and raising the bar to unreachable heights (Magee, 2007). While each one has its own merit from the Japanese cultural point of view, it is questionable how these approaches align with Indian cultural values.

Striving for continuous improvement in a lean system relies on eliminating waste, exposing flaws, and aggressively raising goals. As mentioned above, Indian culture

embraces a spirit of cooperation among individuals (Jain et al, 2006) and therefore it is expected that one member's shortcoming is absorbed by other members in the group as in a family. While the concept of achieving perfection as propagated by the advocates of lean management systems superficially rhymes with Hindu ethos, a deeper analysis of Hindu philosophy would show disagreement with the way perfection is pursued. For instance, according to Hindu faith, a person's life cycle ends only when he attains *moksha* (liberation) from it, which is possible only when a person is fully free from worldly needs and desires (Bhatta, 2002). There are two dimensions to this philosophy. First, it indicates the shedding of all desires for worldly needs such as wealth, power, and status (*artha*) which are related to a masculine nature (Hofstde 2001). Second, it advocates perfection in one's life. Unlike the aggressive pursuit for perfection as found in a lean management system (a masculine trait), the Hindu way of perfection is feminine in the sense that it is a positive action arising from one's self-conscious nature when a person becomes aware not only about his needs but also those of others (Bhatta, 2002). In short, it means he cannot pursue goals with a selfish motive by ignoring his colleagues but should exercise harmony in all his acts.

While *artha* (worldly success) is acknowledged by Hinduism, it also cautions that worldly gains like wealth, power, and status are transient and could leave humanity hopelessly addicted to material gratification (Bowen and Reid-Bowen, 1997). Further, it is believed that an aggressive pursuit of *artha* (a masculine trait) would spoil a person and leave him in distress. In the Hindu ancient scripture called *Taittiriya Upanishad* there is an exhortation that says that the core of being human is not about the fact that we eat or breathe or think but that we have the capacity of *ananda* (enjoyment) (Rao, 2008). Therefore, relaxation during working hours is a common feature among the Indian workforce. Sinha (1985) points out that there exists a culture of *aram* (rest and relaxation) without being preceded by hard and exhausting work. On the contrary, masculine aggressiveness never has time to relax as the goal is always set higher and higher without any visible end. A desire to achieve and gain more and more is a characteristic feature of a masculine culture.

It is worth noting here that the fundamental teaching of Buddhism also says that desire is the cause of human suffering (Tilakaratne, 2008). Indian cultural tradition

also follows the belief system that desire is never satisfied by the enjoyment of goals achieved but it keeps on growing like adding fuel to fire (Bhatta, 2002). Based on the above assessment of Indian culture, since lean management systems pursue a level of perfection which is never achievable as it keeps on raising the bar (Magee, 2007), it is worth enquiring how Toyota in India manages its human resources in terms of Hindu fundamental beliefs.

Uncertainty avoidance

Hofstede's fourth dimension of culture, uncertainty avoidance, defines the degree of tolerance to ambiguous situations. In other words, it indicates how a society reacts to unstructured situations that are novel, unknown, surprising, and unusual (Hofstede, 1994). Therefore, in a high uncertainty avoidance culture, people try to overcome ambiguity in life situation with strict laws, codes of behaviour, formal rules, and providing career stability (Sinha, 1990). On the other side, uncertainty accepting cultures are tolerant to ambiguity, more willing to take risks, and believe in harmony rather than strict rules and guidelines (Harris, Brewster and Sparrow, 2003).

While organizations and individuals in high uncertainty avoiding cultures value stability and certainty and prefer highly organized and specialised structures, the opposite cultures are comfortable with risks and are ready to move forward without knowing the final outcome (Friedman, 2007). Further, it is argued that people who are tolerant of ambiguities perceive challenging situations as desirable and interesting (Caramelli and Briole, 2007).

India ranks low in uncertainty avoidance (40 against the world average of 65) in Hofstede's (2008) chart. This means Indian people are tolerant to new ideas and opinions (Hofstede, 2008). It also means that Indian people believe that life situations are inherent with uncertainties and one should take each day as it comes (Budhwar, 2000). While Budhwar (2000) links the Indian culture of uncertainty acceptance to poverty, unemployment, corruption, the caste system, and various other negative factors, the under-flowing current actually may be the dominant Indian philosophical view which teaches that one should worry only about *karm* (work) and need not have to worry about *fal* (fruit or outcome) (Mukerji and Sundararajan, 2003). In other words, it is called *nishkama karma* which means doing one's duty without selfish

motives and at the same time should maintain high moral and ethical values in his work (Bhattacharya, 2001). At the same time the Hindu belief system also cautions about wrong outcomes of work which often happen as a result of selfish motives. This might be a reason why Indians are reluctant to take responsibilities (Budhwar, 2000). Another aspect of *karma* is that everything is pre-ordained in the human life cycle and no one except God can change it (Virmani, 2007). Besides, Heuer (2006) reports that work is not simply related to accomplishment in Indian culture but it is the enjoyment of work through personalised relationship and harmonious activities that matters.

Uncertainty avoidance and lean management

Hofstede's (2008) culture dimensions chart shows that Japan ranks very high in terms of uncertainty avoidance (90) compared to that of India (40). From the above discussion on the nature of uncertainty avoidance, the practices found in lean management are justifiable. For instance, the Japanese style of management reflects the quest for uncertainty avoidance through various practices such as employee empowerment and high work ethics (Jain, 1987). In a lean system, all workers are expected to be multi-skilled and multi-tasked with job rotation, thus reducing the number of job classifications (Preece and Jones, 2010). A practice to be noted, especially on the shop floor, is that a worker is expected to be responsible for his own machinery and must keep it clean and ready after work (Magee, 2007). Hofstede and Hofstede, GJ (2005) point out that while people belonging to a high uncertainty avoidance culture prefer to do even menial jobs on their own (for example, cleaning jobs at home or in the workplace), those from a low uncertainty avoidance culture prefer to have it performed by others. To add up, in the case of India, the high power distance, ego, and above all caste factors contribute to the workers' indifference to jobs other than what they are entitled to do. For example, an Indian employee belonging to an upper caste will not accept a menial job such as cleaning which is expected to be done only by a lower caste worker. The Hindu scripture *Bhagavadgita* exhorts, "To die in one's duty is life; to live in another's is death" (Sahay and Walsham, 1997). Therefore, it is difficult to get another piece of work performed by an Indian employee.

Another aspect of the Japanese system is high discipline within the workplace. The high uncertainty avoidance may be the reason why Japanese management always

expects high loyalty towards the organization (Jain, 1987). The high discipline imposed on employees (Sinha, 2004) comprises of early morning meetings, singing the company theme song, exercises, and a full focus on work is mostly unacceptable in collective cultures characterised by uncertainty acceptance (Jain, 1987).

A study conducted on the transferability of Japanese style HRM to subsidiaries in Malaysia found that the Japanese system was too rigid with 'dos' and 'do not's' and in order to enforce strict discipline management preferred to recruit a middle-aged former police officer or soldier as the HR manager (Rose and Kumar, 2007). Two instances of opposition to strict discipline imposed upon workers have been reported, one from Canada and another from India. In Canada, the employees of Panasonic Co., Ltd., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Matsushita of Japan refused to sing the company song or recite the parent company's code of ethics (Jain, 1987). During the 2006 strike at Toyota India, which occurred as a result of the dismissal of three employees, the workers alleged that their colleagues were dismissed on flimsy grounds such as non participation in warm-up exercises before work and strict discipline at the workplace (Shetty, 2006).

Long-term orientation (LTO)

Hofstede (2008) defines long-term orientation as the value ascribed by a society to persistence and thrift, and short-term orientation as that of valuing "face" and respect to tradition. Since LTO culture is sensitive to social relationships, employees are selected based on their personal and educational skills compatible to the firm, whereas STO cultures follow a recruitment policy focused on immediate usability of skills (Cullen and Parboteeah, 2008). LTO societies prefer a long term and close relationship in interpersonal affairs and value reliability, responsiveness, and empathy (Furrer, Liu and Sudharshan, 2000). This is in contrast to STO cultures where formal assurances and tangible evidence are required in business dealings. In STO cultures business relationships are not mixed with personal relationship as is found in LTO cultures.

India is a LTO society, according to Hofstede's (2008) chart, (61 as against the world average of 48). The long-term orientation of Indian society reflects the society's perseverant approach and a sense of obedience and duty towards the larger good

(Heuer, 2006). Kumar and Sethi (2005: 65) call the perseverance of Indian society 'cognitive flexibility'. Hence, they argue that due to this quality, Indians concentrate on this focus wholeheartedly until a desired result is achieved. In a short-term culture, such perseverance is absent as the focus is on achieving immediate results, failing which one might abandon the work. While STO cultures struggle to tolerate failures and setbacks, Indian culture is famous for its high level of tolerance. This is because classical Hinduism preaches the significance of tolerance to failures and hurdles whereby one can reach the ultimate goal through constant devotion (Chowgule, 2000).

Another aspect of short-term culture is the adherence to absolute truth which accepts only one truth, the opposite of which is 'not true' or false (Hofstede, 1994). However, Indian religious and philosophical teachings exhort that while one's faith is true, the other's also is true. Dr. Radhakrishnan, the famous Hindu philosopher argues that since no individual is perfect, it should be admitted that others are also true as we are (Kirloskar-Steinbach, 2002). This ideology is in tune with Hofstede's (1994) description on the characteristics of long-term orientation.

Long-term versus short-term orientation and lean management

The LTO culture of Japan ranks even higher than India's - 80 as opposed to 61 (Hofstede, 2008). Hofstede (2008) characterises the nature of LTO societies as persistent and thrift-oriented. These two attributes are found in the lean management principles in a commercialised manner. Persistence is found by way of the lean approach towards continuous improvement, whereby employees are exhorted to reach the next point, a principle which Magee (2007) calls 'raising the bar'. Secondly, the 'thrift' characteristic of LTO culture is applied by way of its insistence on 'waste elimination' whereby no single items of work resources should be wasted. Let us see how this affects the mentality of the Indian workforce.

An attitude commonly found among Indians in line with tolerance is known as 'chalta hai' which means 'it goes on' or 'it is OK' (Sinha and Tripathi, 2003). Therefore, mistakes are expected to be tolerated and failures are viewed as stepping stones towards greater success. While the lean system pursues a policy of perseverance based on thrift which means from perfection 1 to perfection 2 and forward, the Indian culture of perseverance tolerates imperfection on the way to perfection. While the

Japanese system may not tolerate imperfection, which is treated as waste in a lean system, the Indian attitude of *chalta hai* tolerates waste. Furthermore, while the thrift concept within a lean system cautions against waste, the Indian perseverance approach enables an approach of ‘try and try again boys; you will win at last’. Therefore, if a lean system tries to eliminate waste by way of lay offs it might face resistance in India. However, if a regular training pathway is adapted, then it would probably see more acceptances among the Indian workforce.

The Kluckhon Strodbeck framework

The Kluckhon Strodbeck model identifies the contrasts in value orientation in different cultures. It tries to identify the value ascribed to different factors of life by asking the following questions (Wild et al, 2007):

1. What is the people’s understanding of the environment?
2. To what aspect do people ascribe their actions?
3. How much trust can we bestow on others?
4. What types of lives do people desire?
5. What is the importance of interpersonal relationships in life?
6. How do people like to perform their activities?

Based on the above questions, Kluckohn and Strodbeck identified six major factors that influence our understanding of culture, and are discussed below.

Relationship to the environment

The model tries to answer the question ‘to what extent are people subjugated to their environment?’ Do they try to dominate it or do they try to live in harmony with the environment (Robbins et al, 1998)? In high mastery cultures, people believe that they can control and conquer nature by their skills and attributes (Darley and Blankson, 2008). While a high mastery culture tries to exploit the environment for self-interest, the harmonious culture tries to preserve the environment (Munene, Shwartz and Smith, 2000). For example, people in some cultures, such as in the Middle East and Africa, live in complete subjugation to their environment (Robbins et al, 1998; Darley and Blankson, 2008).

In terms of human resource management, the various approaches towards nature mean different things. For instance, those who try to dominate it would ignore the destiny factor and aggressively pursue the achievement of goals, whereas some cultures that submit everything to supernatural powers would have a 'take it easy' approach (Robbins et al, 1998). Therefore, in an aggressive culture, achievement of goals is expected to be taken very seriously and people in such cultures will be seriously worried about the attainment of goals (Shwartz and Melech, 2000).

Indian culture is rooted in the value of harmony with nature and is pre-disposed to an external locus of culture, which is supernatural in principle (Gopalan and Stahl, 2006). Therefore, the Indian way of thinking is that man is basically helpless as he is controlled by fate and supernatural forces (Tripathi, 1988). Such an attitude may have an adverse effect on goal setting and aggressive persuasion for individual growth measured by standardized performance tools. Therefore, while societies more inclined to individual pursuits and goals are motivated by the rewards promised in modern systems such as lean management, how effective those tools are in India needs extensive research. Shwartz and Melech (2000) point to two types of worries related to harmonious and aggressive culture - micro-worries and macro-worries. While micro-worries are related to in-group tendencies, macro-worries are issues that pertain to the broader world. They point out that harmonious cultures have less micro-worries and more macro-worries. Aggressive cultures are more worried about goals of the in-group and their achievements. Such cultures are less bothered about the effect of their actions on the environment, society, or others. Therefore, individualistic and masculine societies (Hofstede, 2001) are micro-worrisome societies.

A lean management system involves processes which continuously try to identify and eliminate waste (Shinkle, Gooding and Smith, 2004). Therefore, the underlying assumption would be constant improvement by exploiting all means to achieve the desired results. Further, Magee (2007) highlights the lean system philosophy as 'raising the bar to unreachable heights'. So, does this imply defying fundamental belief systems and values and focusing solely on achieving the goal? Secondly, it is the motivational tools that prompt individual achievements and success. However, Indian collectivist culture relies on group harmony above individual scores. So does a

lean system challenge the interpersonal harmony commonly found in the collectivist Indian culture?

Again, in the lean system the changes are forced upon the workers. For instance, workers are forced to adapt to a system and process dictated upon them by their management superiors. For example, the lean management system has a diagram documenting the responsibilities, task schedules, control processes, and communication methodology within the workplace (Shinkle, Gooding and Smith, 2004). All these processes appear to be specific functions to be strictly followed to achieve the best result. Therefore, this would imply that the system challenges values and beliefs outside the organizational culture.

Time orientation

Cultures vary according to their orientation towards time, in terms of its focus on past, present, and future (Robbins et al, 1998). Some cultures value time as precious and insist on the maximum utilization of the present (Gopalan and Stahl, 2006) whereas there are other cultures such as Indian culture where the traditional value system discourages a sense of urgency and promptness (Gopalan and Dixon, 1996). While the 'just-in-time' concept has lately become a buzzword in modern production and management systems, the Indian concept of time orientation is notorious for its understanding of IST (Indian Standard Time) as 'Indian Stretchable Time' (Kumar and Sethi, 2005). For instance, a person waiting at any Indian railway station is expected to treat a train arriving half-an-hour late as still 'on time'. Often an announcement of a late arrival of a train is made only if it goes beyond 30 minutes.

Time is the core of strategic management initiatives in Western management systems, as evident from the formation of time tables and goal settings (Collins and Montgomery, 1997). Societies placing high value on time consider its improper and inefficient usage as wastage (Gopalan and Stahl, 2006). On the contrary, Indian society views time as cyclic which has always been there and will never cease to exist (Saha, 1992). As a result, Indian society has a relaxed attitude towards time which is converse to the Western approach (Gopalan and Stahl, 2006). Laungani (2001: 158) describes Indian understanding of time as one viewed as a "quiet motionless ocean"

or a “vast expanse of sky”. The Indian word, *kal* for time stands for both past and future and hence Indian attitudes towards time are very casual (Laungani, 2001).

Truch (2006) argues that time styles influence people’s behaviour as individuals. Therefore, those who constantly think about the future are very cautious of time management, whereas others may prefer nostalgia, spontaneous actions, and socially oriented events. While Western culture would be time conscious, various factors mentioned by Truch (2006) seem true with the Indian attitude to time.

Another important aspect found in Indian culture is that their approach towards time is strongly influenced by astrological calculations which divide time into auspicious and adverse (Gopalan and Dixon, 1996). Accordingly, Indians follow the time pattern for each and every activity including starting new ventures, planning weddings, travel, and other activities. Even daily routines are planned and followed according to the astrological calculations. For instance, one will not set out from home during the period called *rahukala*. *Rahukala* is associated with a mythical planet called *Rahu* and it is believed that no activity is good during the *rahu* period of the day (Kumar and Sethi, 2005).

Grihault (2003) links time with relationships for Indians. While Indians do not take time keeping very seriously, they do utilise time to build up relationships. Therefore, in terms of building relationships, Indians would be discouraged or disappointed if a time limit or time constrain is set for relationship affairs. For example, if an activity is set as a weeks programme, and the other party reduces it to two days, then this would invite disappointment. Therefore, time is an investment for most Indians as it helps in building relationships which ultimately would pay off later (Grihault, 2003). Such attitudes towards time may affect managers in such activities as drafting strategies for motivating employees and handling deadlines.

Saunders, Slyke and Vogel (2004) analyse four types of time visions held by different cultures: Clock, Event, Timeless, and Harmony.

Clock type is found in American, Anglo-Saxon, Germanic, and Scandinavian cultures which hold time as valuable. Ancona, Okhuysen and Perlow (2001) link the commercial approach to time as a significant contributor to the development of the

Industrial Revolution. They argue that in a 'clock time' culture, time is viewed as a resource that can be standardised, used, bought, and sold. This concept of time led to the mass production approach whereby a sequential approach to time is pursued, in which the entire schedule is jeopardized if any one stage lags behind (Hampten-Turner and Trompenaars, (1994).

Event type is found in Japanese culture that views time as cyclical, continuous, and epochal. A cyclical view of time implies its abundance rather than its scarcity. However, emphasis is placed on quickly moving ahead from one phase of an activity to another (Saunders, Slyke and Vogel, 2004). Therefore, activities are compartmentalized in terms of time and this links to the lean production system where entire shopfloor activities are compartmentalised. In short, the compartmentalisation of time places the society into a short term orientation.

Timeless type is found in the Hindu and Buddhist view of time. Accordingly, the passage of time is insignificant as the world is timeless. Therefore, Indians have a long-term orientation towards time. Similarly, the Buddhist tradition also views that time is cyclical and processes keep recurring from time to time. Hence one need not have to worry about time lost because opportunities keep on coming in (Saunders, Slyke and Vogel, 2004). These traditions also lay emphasis on 'the later the better' because experience makes man wiser. Mainemelis (2001) argues that at the heightened stage of experience a person withdraws from the thoughts and worries about self and time leading to a timeless state. Mainemelis (2001) further argues that in such a state a person becomes highly creative in thought and action.

As mentioned above, a lean production system reflects the Japanese attitude towards time. The fast movement of various shopfloor functions and 'just-in-time' principles are close fits with the Japanese culture. However, from the above discussion on timeless cultures, compartmentalisation may prove to be a mundane activity where workers are expected to persevere with monotonous actions. Such monotonous routine leads to boredom wherein workers continuously watch the clock as opposed to those activities to which workers are devoted, where time is forgotten since workers fully identify with the work environment (see Poppel, 1988).

Harmonic type of time promotes a harmonious approach whereby the long term approach to time, while valued, also emphasises the view that time is precious (Saunders, Slyke and Vogel, 2004). Such cultures would be approaching a non-conflict attitude towards work-nature relationships.

Nature of people

The third dimension in Kluckhohn Strodtbeck framework relates to the question of whether a culture intrinsically regards people as good, bad, or a mix of both (Robbins et al, 1998). This could be linked to how managers view their employees and the type of strategies they adopt in managing human resources. Therefore, the issue of whether human nature can be changed in this lifetime attracts significance in management philosophy (Gopalan and Stahl, 2006).

Western societies believe that human nature can be changed by appropriate training, education, and exposure (Gopalan and Stahl, 2006). Therefore, investment in training and development forms part of standardised human resource practices with the belief that employees can be reshaped to fit well in the organizational structure (Adler, 1997). The under-flowing current beneath this attitude of change could be linked to the Christian belief that no matter how sinful one is, redemption is possible if sought (Gopalan and Stahl, 2006). Besides, according to Christian belief, all human beings are born as sinners, as is mentioned in the 51st chapter of Psalms (a book of the Bible). Again, as mentioned above, man has the opportunity to be redeemed by salvation through Jesus Christ (see Moreland and Rae, 2000).

The Indian philosophy of *karma* links the present life to the actions of the past life. Accordingly, Hindus believe that their present status is the result of their *karmas* (actions) in the past life and hence cannot be changed until the next life. Simultaneously, the system also exhorts that every action in the present life decides the fate of life after death. For instance, evil deeds in the present life will lead to rebirth in the same world of suffering, whereas noble deeds would help *moksha* (liberation) from the painful cycle of rebirths, or attain *nirvana* (eternal salvation) as taught in Buddhism (Yandell, 1999). The Hindu system also believes that every human action is controlled by a supernatural force and hence what is destined cannot be altered by human choice, hard work, or effective management (Srivastava 2003).

Despite these fundamental beliefs in the system of *karma*, research indicates that standard HRM practices such as training and development are being practiced in domestic as well as foreign multinational companies. However, the effects of these practices, especially whether they have enabled a change in view about life away from the *karma* philosophy, needs further research.

Robbins et al (1998) point out that in a culture that views people as good, the management style will be participative in nature, whereas in the opposite where people are viewed as evil, the management style would be autocratic. Again, in a mixed view culture, both participation and close supervision may be observed simultaneously. Therefore, which system is more adapted to Indian society is a matter for further research, taking into consideration other cultural facets as well.

Scholars view lean production as a system that gives significant respect to workers (Treville and Antonakis, 2005). For instance, Milkman (1997) argues that workers in lean systems can earn more money than in other locally available jobs. They are taken care of through the provision of training and supplying all necessary equipment (Adler, 1993), and by grouping workers into self-managing teams to ensure a certain degree of freedom and the maintenance of quality (Treville and Antonakis, 2005). All the above factors are considered as a mark of respect in a lean system. Besides, the transfer of authority from higher levels to lower levels (Boyer, 1996) and recognition of workers as team members, lays an emphasis on close employee-management relationships (Graham, 1995) which can be viewed as a further mark of respect ascribed to workers by management.

In contrast, critics of lean management regard it as a system which treats workers as commodities. For instance, workers are forced to take additional responsibility for absentees in the name of team work, assembly line workers who are responsible for quality often have to face the wrath of supervisors for stopping production, and managers often treat workers as passive objects upon which dictates are forced (Babson, 1995).

Douglas McGregor identified two contrasting assumptions about human nature which he named Theory X and Theory Y. The assumption under Theory X is that workers need close supervision and managerial control in the form of extrinsic motivation to

achieve organizational goals, whereas Theory Y believes that employees could be intrinsically motivated by trusting them and providing necessary support (McGregor, 2006). Therefore, Theory X assumptions depict people as basically lazy and uncreative who require strict discipline and rewards for achieving appropriate results, whereas Theory Y assumptions depict people as capable of showing drive and initiative (Zhao et al, 2003). It is argued that a focus on individual worker goals, careful selection, and planning are associated with Theory X, whereas Theory Y is linked to the theories of commitment and motivation (Guest, 1987).

Based on this argument, many lean management practices seem to be closely related to Theory X, because team work in lean production systems is focused on individual pursuits (see Rinehart, Huxley and Robertson, 1997) whereby one is expected to follow a strict and disciplined routine incompatible with individual needs (Peterson et al, 1995).

Activity orientation

This dimension of culture is closely linked to the human nature orientation discussed above. Activity orientation in aggressive cultures believes in enjoying material life and seeking immediate fulfilment and satisfaction of desires, whereas non-aggressive cultures focus on controlling desires and teach a detachment from objects (Robbins et al, 1998). While much Western culture could be linked to the aggressive view on life, Indian culture influenced by Hinduism and Buddhism follows a soft approach towards life. Therefore, Western societies may look for immediate results for their actions while Indian culture is patient towards rewards. The Indian thought process is based on the *nishkamakarma* (selfless work) concept that exhorts a person to focus only on work rather than the outcome. The Indian philosophy links the fruits of work to God, who dictates the reward.

The Kluckhohn Strodtbeck description of activity orientation could be linked to the masculinity versus femininity dimension of Hofstede's cultural dimension (Sparrow and Wu, 1998). A masculine society will be aggressively activity oriented with a focus on personal achievements and comforts. In contrast, a feminine society like India would pursue actions in a relaxed manner and may not be aggressive towards goal attainment. Besides, such societies exhibit strong harmony among in-group

members and would prefer not to hurt anyone while pursuing goals. The Hindu teachings of *dharma* (moral duty) and *ahimsa* (non-violence) strongly influence a person's attitude towards the persuasiveness of goals. Besides, Buddhism teaches that desire is the cause of suffering in human life. Activity orientation is also linked to how people view work and leisure and how they make decisions related to work (Robbins et al, 1998). Accordingly, aggressive cultures would work for self-satisfaction and adopt various approaches for self-development where the focus is on competitiveness and a need for achievement (Ferraro, 1990).

In contrast to aggressive cultures, the Indian approach to work is not self-centred but is family-oriented where an individual works towards meeting the needs of the family (Sinha and Sinha, 1994). Therefore, the focus of activity orientation in an Indian worker's life would shift away from work as soon as familial needs such as children's education, their marriage, and repayment of mortgage and loans had been accomplished (Gopalan and Stahl, 2006).

Lean systems encompass a life closely identified with work. For instance, the Japanese system rates work above personal life. Sinha (2004) highlights the conflict in a Japanese subsidiary in India where Indian workers placed family priorities over work causing Japanese management to be annoyed at this attitude of Indian workers.

Focus of responsibility

The Kluckhohn Strodtbeck model classifies cultures on the basis of the responsibility for the welfare of others (Robbins et al, 1998). According to their framework cultures are divided into individualistic and collectivistic. This division and the descriptions of individualism and collectivism are similar to Hofstede's (2001) culture dimension framework. While in many of the Western cultures an individual is responsible for his/her actions, collectivist cultures entrust all responsibilities to the group to which an individual belongs. Therefore, management by objective (MBO) practices where subordinates and superiors can sit together for negotiations, joint subordinate-superior management processes, and a minimized hierarchy are found to be successful in individualistic society (Gopalan and Stahl, 2006). However, further research needs to be conducted about the applicability of the individual responsibility dimension in collectivist cultures such as India.

Conception of space

This relates to the ownership of space and how cultures view space utilisation. For instance, Japanese culture views space as an open concept and prefers to use it in public. Therefore, they have only public workplaces where superiors and subordinates use common space. On the contrary, many Western countries including the U.S and Australia have private offices as a show of status (Robbins et al, 1998).

In relation to Indian culture, more research needs to be conducted as to how the concept of space works among the people. There are many theories for and against the differentiation of space within the workplace. For instance, Lefebvre (1991) argues that capitalism has created differential space by way of forming separate regions or blocks with the aim of controlling the labour force. However, a Western view of space is related to privacy where individualism also influences the need for space. Therefore, the question of space in terms of Indian culture would be related to whether the space is induced or voluntarily accepted. For instance, Sinha (2004) highlights two contradictory incidents from Indian subsidiaries of MNCs. In one case at a Japanese subsidiary, the Indian workers accorded less respect and importance to their superiors because they were very friendly with them and mixed with them. In yet another incident, the Indian workers were recorded as complaining about the behaviour of their superiors who tried to maintain a significant distance from their subordinates. This contradictory behaviour of Indian workers could be related to whether space is forced upon them or the workers voluntarily accept the space difference based on the power distance dimension (Hofstede, 2001).

An important aspect related to space is teamwork. While space is linked to socialisation, the degree of socialisation may depend on the understanding and utilization of space. Kornberger and Clegg (2004) point out that the compartmentalization of space in organizations is a Taylorist idea which differentiates each activity in an organization. It is argued that compartmentalization promotes individual talents by being exposed to a competitive environment, and it also helps to measure individual achievements by measures external to that individual (Gopalan and Stahl, 2006).

Although lean systems claim to promote a team-oriented culture some research claims that this occurs in compartmentalised groups. For instance, each individual is held responsible for their own actions in the workplace. Altman (2007) criticises the lean system by pointing out the deep segmentation found in the practices of recruitment, training, and so-called group activities inside the plant. Altman (2007) further points out that teams in a lean production system are highly formal and strictly oriented to certain sections of manufacturing processes such as certain machine groups. Thus, lean systems do not follow the spirit of team work in the real sense, or else the definition of team work under a lean system is different to other systems and cultures. Hence, even though workers in a lean system are grouped together in teams they are spaced apart or else confined to machines and teams, thus alienating them from other processes.

The Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness research programme (GLOBE).

The GLOBE project represents one of the latest pieces of research for understanding various cross cultural dimensions. It comprises quantitative data collected from 17,000 managers belonging to 951 organizations functioning in 62 societies across the world (House 2004). The GLOBE researchers identified nine cultural dimensions out of which seven identify with Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Cullen and Parboteeah, 2008). The seven cultural dimensions identified by the GLOBE project as being identical to Hofstede's cultural dimensions are: (i) Uncertainty Avoidance (ii) Power Distance (iii) Collectivism (iv) Collectivism II (v) Gender Egalitarianism (vi) Assertiveness and (vii) Future Orientation (House et al, 2002). The GLOBE project divides the two dimensions of Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Individualism versus Collectivism, and Masculine versus Feminine) into two - namely Collectivism I and Collectivism II, and Gender Egalitarianism and Assertiveness.

In order to avoid repetition only the unique dimensions identified by the GLOBE project are discussed here. These are performance orientation and humane orientation. Each of them is discussed below in detail. However, brief descriptions of Collectivism I and Collectivism II are also given below because of their relevance to this research.

Collectivism I

Hofstede's cultural dimension analyses the degree to which individuals are integrated to a group (Hofstede, 2008). Under Collectivism I, the GLOBE project refers to Societal Collectivism that reflects to what extent organizations and social institutions encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action (House et al, 2002). In short, the GLOBE study refers to Institutional Collectivism under the heading Collectivism I (Holmberg and Akerblom, 2007). Institutional Collectivism is described as the social arrangements made to take care of the collective arrangement for society as a whole rather than for individuals (Holmberg and Akerblom, 2007). Societies with a characteristic of Institutional Collectivism allow their members to form non-profit organizations such as clubs, associations, and trade unions, and membership of any of these organizations is highly valued (Javidan and House, 2001). In terms of HRM, Institutional Collectivism refers to the degree to which a society encourages and rewards collective distribution of resources and collective rewards (Papalexandris and Panayotopoulou, 2004). According to the GLOBE study, Japan has a score of 5.19 and India 4.38 in terms of Institutional Collectivism (the higher the score, the greater the collectivism) (Gelfand et al, 2004).

Collectivism II

The second aspect of Collectivism in the GLOBE study is termed Collectivism II and refers to In-Group Collectivism. This dimension of culture describes the degree of relationship among family members and the extent to which people are concerned with others and are respectful of authority (Gelfand et al, 2004). High In-group Collectivism implies members of a group will have closer inter-personal relationships and exhibit a reluctance to have the same kind of relationship with outsiders (Javidan et al, 2005). According to the GLOBE study, India ranks high on In-group Collectivism with a score of 5.92, whereas Japan scores 4.63 (see Gelfand et al, 2004).

The formation of Quality Circles is an important feature of lean production systems. Accordingly, workers are expected to voluntarily take up work-related interactions aimed at continuous improvement in quality (Raisinghani et al, 2005). This concept could be suspected as an attempt to capitalise the In-group Collectivism found to be prevalent in most of the Asian cultures including Japan and India whereby

interpersonal relationships are extended outside the workplace (see Gelfand et al, 2004). But, as discussed above in relation to Hofstede's cultural dimensions, while the Japanese culture treats work and the workplace as a priority, Indian culture emphasises family relations as a priority over work (Jain, 1987). Therefore, further research needs to be conducted about the success of Quality Circles in India.

In India interpersonal relationships extend beyond the factory walls into social life as well. In fact, the success of group work in India is dependent upon the chemistry of how well interpersonal relationships are managed (Jain, 1991; Budhwar and Boyne, 2004). Hence, Indian collectivism is very personal and there is a sense of obligation to other members of the group and family (Pio, 2007). Indian workers are found to mix personal and familial jobs with official work. Sinha (2004) reports that Indian workers often absent themselves from the workplace to attend to family-related matters, such as a sick member of the family or a family function such as a wedding.

Performance orientation

Performance Orientation measures the degree of innovation, standards, and performance improvement encouraged and rewarded by a community or society (Javidan, 2004). The GLOBE researchers draw inspiration from the 1905 classic work of Max Weber which identified the fundamental difference between the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches as the approach towards work and performance (Baehr and Wells, 2002). While the Catholic Church focussed on prescribed acts such as prayer, confession, and charity as exclusive means for salvation, Protestantism challenged those traditional views by teaching that every work, big and small, leads an individual to salvation (Javidan, 2004). According to the GLOBE report, societies with high performance orientation treat education and training as a means of constant improvement, emphasise results, encourage and reward individual pursuits, and prefer clear and direct communication, whereas societies with low performance orientation value family relations and background, reward harmony with the environment, and emphasise integrity and loyalty in interpersonal relationships (Cullen and Parboteeah, 2008).

A thorough analysis of Performance Orientation, described by the GLOBE project, draws significant comparison with Hofstede's Long-Term Orientation dimension

(which was later added as a fifth dimension based on the Confucian value system) (Hofstede, 1994). Besides, many aspects of the masculine versus feminine dimension of Hofstede such as aggressiveness and high competition are also borrowed by the GLOBE project to explain Performance Orientation. Again, man's relationship with nature, as explained in the Kluckhohn Strodtbeck model, is also incorporated in the analysis of Performance Orientation. For instance, the GLOBE project links Performance Orientation to external and internal adaptations. The external adaptation consists of an individual's relationship to the outside world and society's perspective on time as described in the Kluckhohn Strodtbeck model, and the emphasis on individual responsibility and insistence on high standards of performance as discussed in Hofstede's cultural dimensions; whereas the internal adaptation comprises of assumptions, societal values, and inter-relationships (Javidan, 2004).

Many practices of lean systems such as Total Quality Management (TQM) and elimination of waste are linked with an aggressive approach towards work that involves extensive training and rewards. However, in terms of the GLOBE project's explanation of Performance Orientation, lean production systems and management could be perceived as a fine blend of high and low Performance Orientation. This implies that an aggressive approach towards work practices co-exists with interpersonal relationships and harmony in the name of teamwork. For instance, any worker's right to stop the production line if a defect is noticed could be treated as encouraging individual pursuits. On the other hand, respect for seniority could be treated as a trait found in low performance orientation societies.

Humane orientation

Humane Orientation measures the degree of encouragement and reward a society or organization attributes to individuals for being fair, caring, generous, friendly, and kind to others (House et al, 2002). Therefore, in high humane oriented societies the focus would be on close interpersonal relationships and affiliations whereas self-interest and self-gratification characterises low humane oriented societies (Cullen and Parboteeah, 2008).

The findings of the GLOBE project argue that Humane Orientation increases with advanced technology (Kabasakal and Bodur, 2004). GLOBE cites the development of

post-Fordist production systems as an example to prove their argument. However, the humane characteristic implied here is linked to the way that advanced technologies and practices such as just-in-time and computer-aided processes have given relief and more autonomy to workers (Kabasakal and Bodur, 2004). It could be argued that this dimension of Humane Orientation does not support inter-personal relationships characteristics found in high ranking Humane Orientation cultures. Other features of high versus low Humane Orientation include bureaucratic versus organic design of organization, and shared values and beliefs versus formal relations and standardized practices (see Kabasakal and Bodur, 2004).

In bureaucratic organizational designs, HRM practices are expected to be formal and standardized whereas in high Humane Orientation cultures, organizational designs would be organic in the sense of being less formal and more personalized (Cullen and Parboteeah, 2008). For instance, companies in high Humane Orientation cultures offer various welfare incentives to employees, such as tuition aid for their children, paid holidays, and other family related incentives (Javidan et al, 2006).

A close management-employee relationship is also a characteristic of paternal cultures where subordinates look upon superiors in a parental role. Sinha (2004) analyses the management style of an Indo-Japanese joint venture headed by the Indian counterpart. The owner of the firm was very humane in his approach to workers bestowing them with care and compassion in their official and personal lives. For instance, once an employee overstayed back home when his mother was sick, but when he returned to work he was not scolded by the owner but rather he enquired about his mother's health. In yet another instance an employee was granted a large loan for his father's medical treatment. Sinha (2004) cites such generosity as the success behind the Indo-Japanese joint venture. As mentioned above, high Humane Orientation also characterises informal relationships which has a direct impact upon various HRM practices. For example, it is reported that recruitment, performance appraisal, and reward systems in many Indian organizations are marred by favouritism and partisan approaches (Budhwar, 2003).

India ranks 4.57 and Japan 4.30 on the GLOBE Humane Orientation scale, on a maximum scale of 5.23 (see Kabasakal and Bodur, 2004). However, various aspects of a lean management system show more inclination towards low Humane

Orientation. The lean system from its just-in-time and waste elimination philosophy operates in line with lower consideration for humane factors, such as care and generosity. Instead it is reported to be more inclined towards improving discipline, and direct and indirect controls exerted on workers by way of tools such as punching cards, strict arrival and departure schedules, and many other 'do' and 'don't' policies (Rose and Kumar, 2007).

Chapter 4

Human Resource Management in India

This chapter encompasses a wide-ranging analysis of the nature of human resource management (HRM) in India using the four major functional headings of: recruitment and selection; training and development; industrial relations and trade unions; and performance management and rewards.

Modern HRM in India has evolved from the state controlled and regulated personnel management practices of the past. India's closed economy from independence in 1947 until the early 1990s reduced entrepreneurship and global competitiveness (Bhatnagar, 2007), and left no room for standardized HRM practices. The ideology of the first Prime Minister of independent India, Jawahar Lal Nehru, was based on a socialist orientation which placed the welfare of the people above that of the organization. Personnel management in India can be traced back to 1920 (Budhwar, 2004) when concern for labour welfare led to the enactment of the *Trade Union Act* of 1920. The *Industrial Disputes Act* was enacted in 1947. Personnel management practices in those days were in line with British personnel management practices (Budhwar and Khatri, 2001) and the welfare measures that were introduced were mostly copied from those already in operation in Britain (Legge, 1995) in the mid nineteenth century. Ever since, personnel management has undergone a regular metamorphosis. After independence an attempt towards organised personnel management was witnessed, with the establishment of the Indian Institute of Personnel Management (IIPM) in Calcutta in 1948, and the National Institute of Labour Management (NILM) in Bombay (Mumbai) in 1950. The National Institute of Personnel Management in Mumbai was established in 1980, with the merger of these two organizations. By the 1960s personnel management structures were well established into labour welfare, industrial relations, and personnel administration (cited in Schuler and Jackson, 1991). By the beginning of the 1970s personnel management was found to be struggling to escape from its welfare roots to focus more on organizational efficiency (Budhwar and Khatri, 2001). This transition was hampered by the heavy influence of religion, caste, and politics (Amba-Rao, 1994). In addition, a panoply of federal and state laws

designed to protect and look after labour welfare has also made the transition to modern HRM practices a slow process (Saini and Budhwar, 2004).

India has experienced unprecedented economic growth since the trade and economic liberalization of 1991. Ever since, India has attracted substantial foreign investment (Budhwar, 2004). According to economic forecasts India will become the fourth largest economy in the world in the next 10-15 years (Kapur and Ramamurti, 2006). These trends have opened up immense opportunities for MNCs to set up subsidiaries in India. Research shows that there are more than 20,000 MNCs presently operating in India (Padmakshan, 2008). India, in a span of only a couple of decades, has grown to be a major location preferred by Asian, European, and American MNCs.

Because economic globalization has initiated increasing interactions between foreign cultures (Jones, 2005) this has forced MNCs to look deeper into many of their HRM policies and practices (Varma, Toh, and Budhwar, 2006). Since such interaction involves people (Pieterse, 2000) managing people across cultures has thrown up major challenges for MNCs. Considering the diverse complexities of India in terms of language, culture, religion, and traditions there is considerable pressure for more research on the HRM strategies of foreign MNCs in their Indian subsidiaries (Bjorkman et al, 2008). This is justified, because there are considerable cultural differences between other cultures and Indian culture and their subsequent impact on management practices. Corporations operating in foreign environments are increasingly facing the challenges of a variety of cultural and institutional complexities (Dowling and Welch, 2004; Morley and Collings, 2004). Brewster, Sparrow, and Harris (2005) equate the added value of HRM functions in an international organization to the effective balancing of the organizational system with local needs, including culture.

Human capital is an important determinant of the performance of MNC subsidiaries in transition economies, including India (Fey and Bjorkman, 2006). Hence, the role of HRM is viewed as significant for successful MNC operations. As more MNCs venture into India concerns about the application of standardized HRM practices across the subsidiaries are on the rise (Claus and Briscoe, 2008). Globalization and the liberalization of the Indian economy has thrown up considerable challenges for the

traditional personal management system which is judged as incompatible with modern trends in global HRM (Amba-Rao et al, 2000). With the pressure from globalization, that requires firms to compete globally on one side, and the strong socio-cultural demands of society on the other side, managing the workforce in the Indian context becomes a huge challenge. Concomitantly, scholars doubt whether the application of one set of HRM practices irrespective of variable contexts is a feasible policy (Gerhart, 2005).

One would expect that a strategic organization would prefer to identify with, and adapt to, variable market contexts so as to succeed in an alien environment. However, a survey of MNCs in India conducted on behalf of the London School of Economics found that MNCs lacked emerging market experience before entering India or else their experience was very limited (Bhaumik et al, 2003). This lack of experience and understanding of host country culture has witnessed serious setbacks for MNCs in the past. For example, in the second half of the 1990s Coca-Cola, under the leadership of its CEO Roberto Goizueta, set aggressive growth targets to penetrate markets across the globe, and emphasized centralization and standardization (Ghemawat, 2004). It took almost a decade for the global giant to realize the negative effects of standardization, when its market value declined by more than 40% from its maximum value (Ghemawat, 2004). Today the company believes in localization and indigenisation and is not shy to acknowledge its respect for unique local customs and cultures (Coca-Cola, 2007). Another incident is reported in a study conducted by Lansbury, Kwon, and Suh (2006). The study portrays a prejudiced Korean management apprehensive of union activities, trying to keep unions out of the subsidiary and enforcing a hierarchical structure with Koreans at the top. There were tensions between Korean managers and Indian managers. The latter complained of Koreans being unsympathetic to Indian customs and practices. Korean managers interacted among themselves in their own language, alienating the Indian workers from the organization. The Korean managers in turn complained of the absence of work ethics and prevalence of the caste system among the workforce.

On a broader scale, a MNC's approach to HRM in host countries could be divided on the basis of the policies they adopt. These HRM perspectives have been identified as ethnocentric, polycentric, geocentric, and regio-centric approaches (Heenan and

Perlmutter, 1969). MNCs may adopt one or more of these policies depending on their strategic outlook and organizational philosophy.

Ethnocentric policy

Ethnocentric policy believes in the superiority of the parent company's management system. Operations are tightly controlled by the head office, while it remains indifferent to local situations and culture. It is observed that ethnocentric policies are more common during the early stages of subsidiary operations when MNCs try to optimize control over the subsidiaries (Vance and Paik, 2006).

Polycentric policy

Polycentric policy is a reformed version of ethnocentric policy under which the control still vests with the parent company but it makes accommodation in terms of hiring members of the host country up to middle managerial positions (Fischer et al, 2006). Unlike ethnocentric policy, polycentric policy recognizes the importance of local factors and hence the accommodation of host country nationals to deal with local situations (Vance and Paik, 2006).

Regio-centric policy

Unlike ethnocentric and polycentric policies, regio-centric and geocentric policies assign emphasis to local culture and allied factors. MNCs practicing regio-centric policy entrust development and promotion to strategically formed regional clusters, and senior managers enjoy autonomy in their decision making and operational processes (Shen and Edwards, 2005).

Geo-centric policy

Geocentric policy emphasizes the approach of the 'right person for the right job'. MNCs with considerable international exposure and well developed global structures are found to be practicing geocentric policy (Warner, 2005). The primary objective of this policy is the successful operation of subsidiaries and it attaches utmost significance to strategic adaptations in which local cultural adaptations are vital.

Perlmutter (1969) offered further explanations concerning the evolutionary course of HRM policies. He found that MNCs setting up operations in the host country initially follow an ethnocentric policy which eventually shift to polycentric and finally to geocentric or regio-centric policies as per the situational demands. Globalisation and intense competition has forced MNCs to look beyond one set of HRM policies and practices towards an adaptable HRM approach that best suits the host country cultures and legislation (Turner, D'Art, and Gunnigle, 2001).

Another issue of possible complexity when dealing with the HRM practices of MNCs is the multi-operational areas of the same firm in India. For example, many MNCs such as General Electric, Siemens, Motorola, Volvo, and Honda have more than one operational area in India (Budhwar, Bjorkman, and Singh, 2009). Because India is a multi-lingual and multi-cultural nation, people management becomes further complicated as one set of HRM policies and practices may not be successful across different national geographical locations. For instance, Kamdar (2002) points out strong regional differences in Indian work culture citing differences among the different states of India.

With this view in mind, India, while remaining an attractive MNC location, also throws up various challenges to Western MNCs. Davis, Chatterjee, and Heuer (2006) caution that the country is by no means an easy management system in terms of its culture and processes. As discussed in chapter 1, the complexity of the country comprises not only its diversity of language, religion, and race but its culture as well. Home to many of the major religions of the world, India has 15 major languages with distinct scripts, traditions, and literature (Huer, 2006). Hence it is obvious that the Indian workforce would exhibit traits of the nation's cultures, languages, and religions. The success of a MNC's operations in India depends on the ability to recognize and adapt to India's unique characteristics (Bhalla and Sinha, 2006).

Standardization versus localization of HRM had been a debate among scholars for some time. Those who insist on standardized practices across different subsidiaries of a MNC believed that standardized practices are essential for gaining competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Taylor, Bechler, and Napier, 1996). Edwards and Kuruvilla (2005) expose the 'country of origin' effect by pointing out that knowingly or

unknowingly there is an attempt to export the home country management style to its subsidiaries in host countries, and identify that most of these cases are related to Japanese MNCs. Another set of scholars argue that MNCs should favourably respond to local demands of which culture is the most important. They argue for localised HRM policies and practices reflecting the local influences of customs, values, and regulations (Bartlett and Ghoshal, 1998; Boxall, 1999). Yet another group of scholars prefers a balanced approach by integrating standardised and localised practices in subsidiary companies' HRM. For instance, McGaughey and De Cierri (1999) suggest that MNCs should choose from a variety of options to draft subsidiary HRM policies and practices. Horwitz, Kamoche and Chew (2002) argue that the definition of 'high performance work practices' is similar to that of 'flexible work practices' described by other scholars and implies hybridized HRM practices incorporating global and local factors.

As the debate on standardization versus localisation versus hybridization goes on an overview of HRM practices in Indian MNCs reveals various trends. It could be argued that HRM in Indian subsidiaries of MNCs is on an evolutionary journey. For instance, scholars who initially insisted that standardized practices should overrule cultural hurdles (Saini and Budhwar, 2004) have realised lately that HRM policies are being modified to suit the Indian environment (Budhwar, Bjorkman and Singh, 2009). Som (2003) points out that the implementation of modern practices involves changing the mindset of the workforce which is never easy. In India it is found that there exists considerable influence of social and cultural factors on HRM practices (Sparrow and Budhwar, 1997). Such strong influences would naturally create conflict leading to tension (Budhwar et al, 2006) when standardization is forced upon unwilling recipients. However, Budhwar, Bjorkman and Singh (2009) have discovered that many MNCs in India such as Glaxo Smith Kline, General Electric, and Avon Beauty Products are strictly following global HRM practices.

In contrast, an earlier study of the Japanese management system in India found that some of Japanese practices such as the *ringi* system (decision making) were not successful in Indian subsidiaries (Jain, 1987). Kiyokawa, Oba and Verma (2005) in their study on Japanese joint-ventures in India concluded that the creation of a sense of unity found in Japanese HRM was accepted in India but some practices such as

equality and closing the power distance were not warmly accepted. Jain (1987) reported that a hybridized practice was being followed by the Bank of Tokyo in New Delhi that involved collective bargaining (Indian style) and a Japanese style of dispute resolution (solving the dispute at the point where it arose). Shuler, Dowling, and DeCieri (1992) favour a joint HRM culture in international operations which cannot be achieved without a shared vision and mindset. Geringer and Herbert (1989) argue that integration of cultures is always a successful pathway to growth for international business ventures, and HRM practices may vary depending on cultural situations (Kochan, Batt, and Dyer, 1992).

From the above discussion it is evident that managing human resources is a challenge for MNCs in Indian operations. It is also evident that MNCs are following different policies and practices in regard to HRM in India, with some following standardised practices, some localising the whole exercise, and others adopting policies of hybridization by integrating standard and local practices.

In the following sections we examine the four major functional areas of HRM: recruitment and selection; training and development (HRD); industrial relations and trade unions; and performance management and rewards.

Recruitment and selection

Multinational companies (MNCs) experience a range of challenges in staffing their operations. These challenges are numerous and diverse because of operational environmental pressures that include social, political, economic, and cultural issues (Fischer et al, 2006). Additionally, the high level of competition in the global market with the acceptance of free trade policies by most of the major economies has created unprecedented demand for skills worldwide. Demographic challenges such as ageing workforces in most of the developed countries has worsened the skills availability leading to further challenges for MNCs. Developing countries such as India face different challenges. India has an estimated 14 million skilled manpower graduates every year leaving its 290 universities, 1,500 research institutions, and 10,000 centres of higher education (Raghuraman, Budhwar and Balasubramanian, 2007). However, the employability rate of this skilled manpower in India is reported to be a matter of

concern. For instance, a study conducted by the Indian trade group, the National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM) reported that only one out of four engineering graduates were employable as the rest lacked required technical skills, fluency in English, and the ability to work in team (Sengupta, 2006). It was also reported that Google had trouble finding appropriate skills among the Indian workforce who lagged behind in design technologies.

These issues emphasise the importance of appropriate HRM skills in recruiting and selecting the right people for the right job. Sharpened HR skills are needed not only to select the right skills but also to address various socio-cultural factors linked to recruitment and selection. Amba-Rao (1994) studied two public-sector professional organizations in India during the 1970s and concluded that many American-style HRM principles were ‘conveniently’ adopted in India but many of these practices of the two firms were more formalized and systematic than U.S subsidiaries. The author also discovered distinct traces of Indian culture in the two companies, such as paternalism, hierarchy, status, and power consciousness. However, these observations occurred during the 1970s and should be analysed within the context of Indian society at that time. First, India had a closed economy during the 1970s. Economic liberalisation occurred only from 1991 and modern HRM practices gained momentum only after the arrival of MNCs, especially from Western countries. Second, during the 1970s India had a welfare-oriented personnel management system that was worker-centric (Saini and Budhwar, 2004). Third, between 1975 and 1977 a state of emergency was in operation in India, suspending most of the democratic processes and trade union activities and having a significant impact on HRM practices. However, it is evident from Amba-Rao’s (1994) observations that HRM in India has never been totally free from indigenous cultural influences at any time.

The organisational sector in India can be divided into two - the organised and the unorganised sectors - equivalent to the formal and informal sectors in the international arena (NCEUS, 2007). Workers within the unorganised sector comprise those employed in agriculture and unincorporated private enterprises owned by individuals or households engaged in the sale and production of goods (NCEUS, 2007). These workers, unlike those within the organised sector do not enjoy many employee benefits such as social security and legal industrial protection. In terms of recruitment

and selection in the unorganised sector it is reported that employment is obtained by an individual either by standing at the factory gate or through familial and socio-cultural networks or with the help of labour contractors (NCEUS, 2007). In contrast, in the organised sector recruitment and selection procedures are expected to follow certain norms such as notification of vacancies, and adherence to government regulations such as local recruitment of non-executive workers and nationwide recruitment of executives, employment of 'sons of soil', jobs for those who are displaced from the land to set up a factory, and children of employees on compassionate and other grounds (Venkata Ratnam, 2009).

In an earlier study, Venkata Ratnam (1995) point out that many of the rules regarding standardised HRM practices including recruitment are often manipulated by employers. Sharma (1984) also reported that staffing practices in Indian organizations are strongly influenced by familial, political, and communal considerations. Budhwar and Khatri (2001) point out that selections, promotions, and transfers are influenced by ascribed status and social and political connections. Jain's (1991) study of eight firms which included two large public-sector organisations reports that the recruitment and selection process was influenced strongly by external factors such as same caste, community and regional affiliations, and internal pressures that included bureaucratic and trade union influences. Sahay and Walsham (1997) also report that a strong influence of social, caste, and religious agencies are felt in Indian HRM.

One reason for such manipulations in recruitment practices may be attributed to the highly collective nature of Indian society (Hofstede, 2001). This collective trait is further accentuated by familial factors and caste and religious differences. India has a long tradition of family-owned businesses confined to certain communities and castes (Gollakota and Gupta, 2006). Family businesses account for 70 percent of the largest firms in the country (Dutta, 1997). It is reported that many private organizations in India are reluctant to leave their comfort zones and hence prefer to recruit their relatives to top positions in the firm (Dutta, 1997). Gollakota and Gupta (2006) identify social and familial connections as hindrances in the recruitment practices of many private business organizations in India. This closed approach towards recruitment is believed to be for the purpose of maintaining tight control over the organization (Piramal, 1996). For example, Ramaswamy, Veliyath and Gomes (2000)

cite the example of one of India's largest conglomerates, the Tata Group accounting for 3 percent of the country's GDP, which preferred to appoint a family insider as Chairman of the Board even though other more competent senior managers were available.

A survey conducted by Budhwar (2003) in 1995 across six industries in the manufacturing sector found that recruitment and selection policies were strongly inclined towards an informal 'word of mouth' approach. The author links this tendency to the Indian socio-cultural set up whereby family members, relatives, friends, and loyal employees are viewed as more trustworthy than outsiders. Budhwar's (2003) study also pointed out that while many standardized practices are followed in the firms surveyed, the overall HRM practices represent a hybridised version with strong local influences. However, citing two examples from the Indian banking industry and a public sector organization Budhwar (2003) raises doubts about the continued feasibility of hybridised practices.

These informal practices in recruitment and selection, inclined to facilitate entry of in-group members, could be related to the collective nature of Indian society (Hofstede, 2001). As discussed in detail in chapter 1, the collective nature of a society attributes more care to its group members and members feel more comfortable inside the group. While it could be argued that such a partisan approach disregards natural justice in terms of standardised practices, Indians are bound by socio-cultural obligations to give preference to interpersonal responsibilities over competing expectations of justice, and are not hesitant to make context-oriented alterations in the application of rules and regulations (Miller and Bersoff, 1995). Budhwar and Sparrow (2002) from a comparative study of Indian and British organizations reported that Indian managers tilted towards either collectivism or individualism depending on the impact of various contingency variables, such as the nature of the work (the need for specialists or group actions), organizational policy, and the influence of pressure groups such as trade unions, and religious and caste orientations.

However, Amba-Rao et al (2000) argues that overall collectivism has been weakened over the years due to the impact of globalisation, urbanisation, and a competitive environment on the Indian masses. However, two other pieces of evidence may act to

contradict these conclusions. First, a recent report by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) India, in collaboration with Konard-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS), an international organisation with German roots, states that over 70 percent of Indian youth have never heard about globalisation (Press Trust of India, 2008). The report states further that Indian youth are still conservative, reluctant to make friends outside their religious circle, and more importantly 60 percent of the youths surveyed emphasise strong affinity to family relations and parental authority. Second, according to the 2001 Indian Census the urban population of India accounts for only 27 percent of the total population (Garg, 2007). Therefore Amba-Rao et al's (2000) argument may be limited more to Indians living in the large metropolitan cities where there is a stronger inclination towards Western culture.

The above mentioned manipulations in following standardised HRM practices could be attributed to the low uncertainty avoidance nature of Indian society, as opposed to high uncertainty avoidance in most Western societies (Hofstede, 2001). While in uncertainty avoiding cultures a strong emphasis is laid on following rules and regulations based on 'one truth' (Hofstede, 2008), Indian culture follows a more tolerant approach. Therefore, in Indian HRM practices, a tolerance or yielding to pressure characteristic is seen.

A contradictory dimension of Indian low uncertainty avoidance is related by Budhwar and Sparrow (2002). They argue that Indian managers are averse to risk taking contributing to high uncertainty avoidance. If so, the partisan attitude in recruitment practices may be due to the feeling of threat perceived from members outside their secure group who are feared to create hurdles for the organization. For instance, Hindu owned private firms are reluctant to appoint Muslims in senior managerial positions and vice versa (Venkata Ratnam and Chandra, 1996). However, Budhwar and Sparrow's (2002) argument is based on the views of a relatively small sample of top personnel specialists. Since Indian managers are educated either at Western business schools or at standard business schools in India with greater Western influence they might show a stronger inclination to standardised practices based on individualism, low power distance, high uncertainty avoidance, and long term planning. This raises the question of whether there exists a cultural conflict between

educated managers and job-aspirants in terms of the application of modern HRM recruitment processes by the former?

While the discussion above is mostly based on practices found in family owned and private sector Indian organisations, an investigation into the recruitment and selection procedures of MNCs is also necessary to obtain a full and fair picture of Indian HRM. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) started flowing to India after 1991 when the economy was liberalised. Research conducted subsequently shows the existence of strong cultural influences on the recruitment and selection practices of MNCs in India, although research to the contrary does exist. At the outset of economic liberalisation a case study comprising of surveys and personal interviews was conducted by Jain (1991) on eight firms in India that included four MNCs, out of which one was Japanese and the rest Western. The study reports that these MNCs practiced a dual policy in their recruitment and selection process. While the managers and executives were recruited and selected through a standardised process including interviews and reference checks, the MNCs yielded to the social, cultural, and political pressures in the appointment of blue collar workers, both skilled and unskilled (Jain, 1991). In another case study conducted on an Indo-Japanese joint venture by Awasthy and Gupta (2004) it is reported that the firm retained the senior positions while ceding HRM to local managers. And, interestingly, the Indian partner of the joint venture practiced favouritism by appointing his friends and relatives in the joint-venture organisation, not only in the recruitment of staff but also in the appointment of vendors, dealers, and suppliers.

Due to the existence of strong political, social, religious, and cultural pressure groups in India, it is doubtful whether an ethnocentric policy in regard to recruitment and selection can be successful. Besides, since economic growth strategies remain of prime concern, MNCs may prefer to adapt themselves to their local environment leading them to follow a policy other than ethnocentric (Caligiuri and Stroh, 1995; Lam and White, 1998). A study conducted on the overseas staffing options of Australian MNCs found that host country nationals were preferred over parent country nationals so as to gain local market knowledge and reduce cultural conflicts (Tharenou and Harvey, 2006). A case study of Honda Motors in India found that this Japanese MNC followed a dual policy in its recruitment and selection practices.

While the recruitment of managers and engineers was handled directly by the headquarters with only one local representative, blue collar workers were appointed directly by the local management (Choudhary, 2000). It is also reported that even though standardised procedures were adopted in the recruitment process, the company preferred workers who were living in the vicinity, and a lengthy background check was conducted to ascertain whether the applicants had any sort of connection with trade unions, for Honda did not want to recruit employees with trade union backgrounds (Choudhary, 2000). Lansbury, Kwon and Suh's (2006) study on Hyundai Motors India also reported that the Korean management was averse to union activities in its plant and in order to contain unions the three-year trainees were not allowed to join trade unions. These anti trade union policies of Honda and Hyundai point to the persistence of ethnocentrism in their recruitment practices.

As mentioned above, apart from political factors, social and cultural factors also influence recruitment practices in India. For instance, one of the complaints of the Korean managers of Hyundai India was that the Indian managers followed the caste system hierarchy in appointing workers, and they were also found to be unduly paternalistic (Lansbury, Kwon and Suh, 2006). A survey conducted on 105 organisations in India which included many MNCs found that while formal recruitment procedures such as personal interviews, and internal and external references were followed they were found to be in name only, often being used as a tool to accommodate influential people and expressing social credentials, thereby ignoring specific job competencies (Lawler et al, 1995). In the case study conducted by Awasthy and Gupta (2004) it is also reported that the recruitment and selection procedures were standardised with a Japanese element of hiring fresh graduates, while also accommodating relatives and friends and ignoring other eligible candidates. This dual nature of formality combined with informality points to a kind of integration of standard and local practices. Iles and Hayers (1997) argue for the integration of domestic environmental factors with the practices of the global community. A comparative survey conducted among the American and Indian workers of selected MNCs found that this coordination of HRM policies was critical to the success of MNCs in India (Combs and Nadkarni, 2005).

However, a study conducted on Indian BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) firms by Budhwar, Luthar and Bhatnagar (2006) found that the firms were free from the influence of social, religious, and caste networks, in terms of their recruitment practices (see also Budhwar et al, 2006). This may be true as most of the outsourcing firms are located in the metropolitan cities of India (especially Bangalore), within which indigenous cultural influences are comparatively less. Also, the report was based on a relatively small sample of 50 firms out of over 450 BPOs in India during the time of the study. In addition, the researchers did not investigate the role of political institutions and trade unions on the recruitment and selection practices of BPO firms in India.

Training and development (human resource development)

Human Resource Development (HRD) could be described as a formative process by which employees are moulded to meet the required skills for a given piece of work, and for organisational expectations as a whole. HRD is perceived as an investment for the sustainable future of an organisation (Zeithmal and Bitner, 2004). As the customer demands, globalisation, and market competition never cease it becomes necessary for firms to provide regular training in the technical, knowledge, conceptual, and interactive skills of their workforce, depending on the industrial nature of the firm (Kundu and Malhan, 2007).

HRD in India is a comparatively new concept. It has gained currency only after the liberalisation of foreign direct investment into India, followed by the arrival of MNCs. A comparative study of Indian public and private firms with MNCs (Jain, 1991) reported that the Indian firms employed few or no mechanisms for determining the training needs of their employees, while MNCs accorded a significant role for HRD in their organisations. Many scholars in the 1980s struggled to drive across the need for training and development in Indian organisations. For instance, Pareek and Rao (1981), Kar (1985), and Anandram (1987) campaigned for the need for training policies and systems in Indian firms. Return on investment in training was reported as being very poor (Yadapadithaya, 2000). The small amount of training and development found in some organisations tended to be ad hoc and not linked to the wider organisational business goals (Pio, 2007). HRD was considered as some sort of

luxury in the Indian setting, and being sent for training was considered to be a fringe benefit. As a result, it was akin to a jaunt or going on holiday for the staff in many Indian organisations (Yadapadithaya, 2000).

While this was the case with most Indian organisations, some MNCs that existed in India during the pre-liberalisation period were reported as having well developed HRD systems. For instance, Jain (1996) reported that Larsen and Tourbo was probably the first firm in India to introduce an integrated HRD system with a large number of training and development programmes for its employees. Similarly, Crompton Greaves and Eicher Good Earth also practiced formal training and development programmes in India in the 1980s.

The pre-liberalisation approach to HRD in Indian companies has undoubtedly been subject to change since 1991. However, the influence of cultural, social, and religious factors is still very prevalent (Pio, 2007) and can strongly influence the adoption of standard training and development practices in India. For instance, Paul and Anantharaman (2003) reported that training programmes in the software industry focused only on project completion and delivery rather than boosting the technical competency of the employees. Budhwar et al (2006), in their survey of HRM practices in Indian call centres also found that training programmes focused mainly on voice training, accent skills, and selling aptitudes.

The major factors hindering the adoption of HRD practices in India can now be examined. First, the influence of in-group favouritism and patriotism is strong. In-group collectivism may affect the fair and effective imparting of training. For instance, a manager might practice a partisan policy of training his subordinates by way of favouring his in-group or loyal subordinates and discriminate against others. Interpersonal relationships at work between superior and subordinate is described in the leader-member exchange (LMX) theory as one where a high quality dyadic relationship between leader and member helps the leader to understand problems of his subordinates in relation to their jobs (Graen, 2005). In India this leader-member relationship is not confined to work but is extended into personal affairs as well. As a result, personal relationship traits are reflected in work relationships as well. As LMX theory states, leaders offer support and assistance to their in-group members in

exchange for trust, support, influence, and loyalty; a privilege not enjoyed by out-group members (Varma, Srinivas and Stroh, 2005). This interpersonal relationship as an extension of social, religious, familial, and caste-based relationships articulated as in-group collectivism is a common characteristic of organisational culture in many Indian organisations (Amba-Rao et al, 2000; Sparrow and Budhwar, 1997).

Second, the caste system is also a hindrance to standard training and development practices. For instance, if a lower caste member is chosen over a higher caste member, this could cause conflict having a detrimental effect on group performance. Budhwar, Bjorkman and Singh (2009) write that a lower status trainer may be reluctant to train a member belonging to higher group. More than that, it is not acceptable for a higher caste member to undergo training with a lower caste trainer.

Third, another aspect that could be linked to training and development in India is the uncertainty dimension (Hofstede 2001). Indian society is comparatively low in uncertainty avoidance in contrast to many Western countries which have a high level of uncertainty avoidance. Due to this trait, Indian workers may not be keen to embrace training and development which is a futuristic aspect.

Fourth, another aspect of aversion towards training by Indian employees could be linked to the *karma* philosophy. According to *karma*, a person is born with pre-determined destiny. Hence, he/she is destined in the cosmic cycle to live in their assigned status and only God can change that destiny, thus denying the fruition of individual efforts. Until recently, it was quite common in Indian organisations to find a person retiring in the same job status in which he entered. Any sort of promotion was attributed to the welfare-oriented personnel management system of the firm rather than to individual efforts. Yet another dimension of this analysis relates to the various stages of a person's life found in the Hindu system comprising activities at various stages. Accordingly, the education and training stage (*brahmacharya*) occurs before entering the family stage (*grahastha*) and all the requisite knowledge for the rest of the life is gained at that stage. Indian society is more inclined towards ascribed status over achieved status, and fatalism over pragmatism (Budhwar, 2000). This could be a major hindrance towards training and development practices in Indian firms. Concomitantly, Hinduism also views learning as a life long process. However,

unlike the Western system, the Hindu system emphasises informal learning by way of introspection (*antaravalokana*) and self-study based on personal experience (*svadhyaya*) (Chakraborty, 2005). Based on this, Ashok and Thimmappa (2008) exhort firms to incorporate *karma sadhana* (achieving the practices of action) and *dharma sadhana* (in a righteous manner) in their training and development programmes. A study conducted in the Indian software industry states that all knowledge cannot be gained by training, and smart workers are those who acquire an intuitive feel with experience through a learning process by keen observations (Dayasindhu, 2002). It is interesting to learn that many Hindu reformist and missionary movements such as Brahma Kumaris, Ramakrishna Mission, and Chinmaya Mission have recently initiated corporate training programmes in Indian organisations with the aim of instilling Indian cultural values into business practices (Sudhaker, 2000). For example, the Institute of Culture run by the Ramakrishna Mission is a centre for cultural research and plays an active role in helping the Indian society to align its psychological process with the gaps created by technology in human relations. The Chinmaya Mission teaches incorporating Vedanta into the daily lives of people and runs a specialised management institute with the belief that evolution of human resources is the most important factor for individual, organisational, and societal transformation.

Fifth, power distance plays an influential role in Indian culture. Power distance affects the willingness of superiors to freely impart knowledge to their subordinates. Indian managers are reported as preferring limited delegation and exercising tight control over subordinates (Hickson and Pugh, 1995). Superiors are often reluctant to transfer knowledge to their subordinates for they fear losing authority or control over subordinates, and consequently losing their status within the organisation. Superiors want their subordinates to be dependant on them. There may also exist an element of lack of trust in the capabilities of subordinates, exacerbated by the lack of training which could act as a barrier to delegating tasks (Shenoy, 1981).

The resultant hierarchical distance between superiors and subordinates can cause a lack of transparency in various management practices which force subordinates to believe that they are at the mercy of their bosses. The Indian hierarchical system binds subordinates and superiors together in terms of inter-personal relationships whereby

superiors are considered as patriarchs who are expected to take care of all the welfare needs of their dependants (subordinates). Hence a 'yes boss' culture prevails in many organisations whereby subordinates never say 'no' to their superiors, and always try to please their bosses and keep them in good humour (Sinha, 2004). Tayeb (1988) reported that Indians are fearful of those in power, obedient to superiors, fatalistic, submissive, and dependent on others. The culture of saying 'yes' even when it actually means 'no' could be problematic in training and development practises. For instance, Krishna, Sahay and Walsham (2004) cited that Indian programmers in a software outsourcing company would not say 'no' or voice criticism to their British managers but would send their opinions in email messages later causing frustrations for British managers. Sinha (2004) reports that compared to Japanese workers Indian counterparts would start working on a given piece of work even if they did not fully understand the instructions given to them. They would pretend they understood all the instructions and jump straight into the work but inevitably ended up running into problems. A comparative study of German and Indian workers in the software development project also reports that the Indian workers had a hard time saying 'I haven't understood' or 'I want to ask further questions' (Winkler, Dibbern, and Heinzl, 2008). This fearful attitude towards superiors restricts workers in gaining necessary knowledge related to work in organisations. For instance, Sinha (2004) reports a case in an MNC subsidiary where one subordinate wanted to learn how to operate a laptop but was frightened to ask his Indian superior to help him. Instead he preferred to seek the help of an expatriate manager who readily assisted him.

Despite the limiting effects of these factors on HRD, recent studies in India report that organisations are fast realising the need for training and development in order to be familiar with new technologies, improve the quality of their products, and acceleration of overall productivity (Venkata Ratnam, 1995). Recent research indicates that a war for talent is currently raging in Indian organisations due to competition, economic growth, and globalisation (Sirkin et al, 2008). Post-liberalisation studies on HRM practices in Indian firms have reported significant changes towards the adoption of professionalised HRD practices (see Rao, Rao, and Yadav, 2001). There now exist tremendous pressures on Indian firms to adopt large scale changes in various HRD practices so as to build capabilities and competencies of employees (Som, 2003). As a result, employee poaching and job-hopping has lately

become a challenge for Indian firms (Ranganathan and Kuruvilla, 2008). The impact of such challenges on firms is that employees have become selective about training and development programmes preferring to attend only those training programmes that have a market value and can enhance their resume (Budhwar, BJORJMAN and Singh, 2009). The end result is that employees, after improving their skills, move for better prospects outside the firm.

A study conducted by Bhatnagar and Sharma (2005) reports that Indian managers are working in high involvement work systems, and they believe that development of organisational capabilities is highly correlated with strategic HRM. The report may be good news for advocates of standardized HRM but Bhatnagar and Sharma's (2005) study was conducted on firms located at the National Capital Region of India that comprises of Delhi and newly sprung modern satellite cities. This location is a metropolitan region and embraces a culture more inclined to modern trends. Therefore it could be argued that the authors have chosen a soft target to conduct their study, ignoring the organic cultural facets of the Indian workforce. Even if the metro-culture argument is set aside, another factor to be considered is that living in a large city and facing daily living pressures employees may be forced to accept various standardised practices. This would display a sophisticated picture of various practices outwardly but inside many individuals may be unsettled due to cultural conflicts. In such a scenario professional or modern HRD practices claimed to be practiced in Indian firms may be cosmetic and the reverse may be more accurate. We have argued that familial and social attachments weigh more heavily in Indian society than all aspects of organisational management. Thus, while Indians are exposed to modern HRD practices and are in fact showing adaptable trends to career planning and management processes (see Baruch and Budhwar, 2006), it would be difficult to argue that collective trends are being fully compromised for individual advantages. Perhaps a more consensual position is justified. For example, Radhakrishnan (2008) cites the example of Indian IT professionals who are increasingly portrayed as global Indians with a right balance between career and professional advancement and social and family commitments.

In regard to the above potentially conflicting situations, the HRD practices of an Anglo-American MNC in India may offer a more adaptable solution. Awasthy and

Gupta (2005) highlight the training practices adopted by the company. The unique feature worth mentioning is the 'mentor and buddy' system whereby initially each trainee is attached to a senior manager who acts as his mentor, and later with a marginally more senior person who acts as a buddy. The mentor could be linked to the paternal role in line with Indian hierarchical values whereby the mentee is helped to overcome initial difficulties and become familiarised with the firm. The study quotes the experience of a female executive who had difficulty leaving her mother alone at home in order to attend an outstation training programme. She was helped by her mentor who successfully arranged with the HR department for her training to be conducted locally. Such generous activities help to instil a sense of belonging in the minds of new recruits. The case study also identifies the role of a buddy as a friend with whom the trainee can share his thoughts, concerns, worries, and hopes (Awasthy and Gupta, 2005). This again could be related to the collective nature of Indian society that is committed to interpersonal relationships and familial attachments often intertwined with workplace relations. As a result, Indian workers exhibit a stronger tendency towards personal affiliations and interdependencies and their work related outcomes are more based on those factors than task demands (Kanungo and Mendonca, 1994).

Industrial relations and trade unions

Globalisation, competition, economic growth, and the expansion of MNCs have induced widespread change in industrial relations. As a result, people management down the years has moved away from personnel management and welfare-oriented policies to a more individualistic approach towards HRM thereby reducing the role of trade unions in the functioning of organisations (Guest, 1987). These changes in the economic climate globally and the resultant political backing they have received have pushed to the back burner the rights of workers as clearly distinct and separate from the authority of management (Kochan, Katz and McKersie, 1994). This has in turn dismantled the collective block of employees at the expense of individualism throughout most of the developed world and also in many developing countries. Today, industrial relations practices are viewed and described in the light of individual pursuits and achievements, issues that are compulsively linked to productivity (Kelly, 1998). A case study conducted by Kuruvilla (2006) on the impact

of industrialization in Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, and India concluded that the attraction and benefits of industrialization and economic development for the national economy has tilted these governments towards a pro-employer approach weakening the collective bargaining system thereby affecting many HRM policies and practices.

The economic liberalisation initiated in 1991 has posed considerable challenges for Indian industrial relations practices and has been a subject of intensive debate ever since. Most modernists view Indian industrial relations laws as outdated or too welfare-centric. The issues central to this debate include state intervention, the role of unions, and job security (Sen Gupta and Sett, 2006). A brief discussion of the evolution of Indian industrial relations will shed further light on this topic.

During the pre-independence era the Indian industrial scene was dominated by family-owned businesses and the management system was extremely hierarchical and authoritarian (Budhwar, 2003). During this period employment relations were less structured and issues were mainly addressed as fire-fighting strategies by managers (Sodhi and Ahluwalia, 1992). Cultural and social factors kept employees subservient to the authoritarian style of managers. However, when the independence movement gained momentum workers were drawn into the activities of the freedom struggle enabling close ties to be established between labour movements and political parties (Ramaswamy, 1983). After gaining independence in 1947 the government adopted a closed, centrally-planned economy with the aim of attaining self-reliance in all fields. This led to the growth of a large number of protected industrial conglomerates that emphasised paternalistic, welfare-oriented, and family-oriented cultures. Such companies epitomised job security, over-employment, non-competitiveness, and low productivity. They were characterised by labour indiscipline, industrial unrest, and inter-union rivalry. The factors accounting for such developments are analysed below.

Strategies were adopted that regulated the private sector and the entry of new firms through imposing heavy import duties (Kuruvilla, 2006). Bhattacharjee (1999) refers to these initial years as the period of 'national capitalism'. These policies shielded the labour force from productivity demands whilst also providing liberal benefits. Labour legislation enacted immediately after independence was extremely pro-worker ensuring all possible protection and welfare measures. For example, the Industrial

Disputes Act of 1947 empowered the government to interfere in, and adjudicate on, any labour dispute so as to promote industrial peace in line with social justice (Saini and Budhwar, 2004). India's Factories Act is considered as one of the most detailed and advanced in the world with maternity leave and benefits, provision of child care in all factories, and advanced legislation on health and safety. It seems astonishing to learn that factory rules were so detailed that even the toys to be kept in child care centres in the factory were specified by law (Kuruvilla, 2006).

The concept of collective bargaining as practiced in other parts of the world was not initially conceptualised in independent India. Instead, leaders preferred to follow the same line adopted during the struggle for independence that of non-violent protest advocated by Mahatma Gandhi so as not to hamper the aim of the nation's self sufficiency (Ramaswamy, 1995). As a result, emphasis was placed on harmony. Non-legislative initiatives in industrial relations in 1958 drafted a Code of Discipline and Joint Management Councils, as a result of a tripartite agreement between government, employers, and workers (Venkata Ratnam, 1995). Under the Indian system most disputes were referred to conciliation, then to the Labour Commissioner, and if both these steps failed then it was referred to an industrial or labour court, or occasionally to binding arbitration (Bhattacharjee, 2001). Scholars have often criticised this government intervention in industrial relations as a reason for the failure of collective bargaining to become established as an independent institution in India (D'Costa, 1998; Bhattacharjee, 2001). However, the culture of harmony embedded in Indian society prefers compromise over confrontation and government interference in industrial relations was intended to maintain social harmony so that any confrontation did not spread beyond the factory gates. This principle of harmony found in Indian industrial relations and laws would have probably been a significant factor in persuading many Japanese MNCs to venture into India, even before the period of economic liberalisation. For instance, Toyota, Suzuki, and Mitsubishi were involved in joint ventures in India as early as the 1980s. The Japanese management system prefers industrial harmony over industrial conflicts, and has evolved based on this principle of harmony so as to keep outside union activities away from their firms (D'Costa, 1998).

Because collective bargaining could never fully develop as an institution in India this gap was exploited by political parties to enhance their influence on the masses. The alliance between political parties and trade unions is one of the main factors explaining widespread worker indiscipline, industrial unrest, and resultant lower productivity in many Indian firms. Ramaswamy (1983) gives a descriptive analysis of how a successfully managed complex of three organisations manufacturing automobile components and practicing excellent industrial relations was brought to a state of chaos by the selfish intentions of a single trade union leader. Since every political party in India has an affiliated trade union, industrial workplaces were used by the politico-trade unionists to lobby workers into their fold, by way of promising them protection from most issues related to the workplace (Chaudhuri, 1996). From a cultural point of view, much of the indiscipline found amongst the workforce could be related to the collective nature of Indian society. Interpersonal relationships outweigh the significance of a high work ethic. As the society is patriarchal and familial in nature, individuals are bound to follow the lines drawn by the elders or leaders (in this case union leaders), rather than individual pursuits (Kakar, 1978). The paternalistic role of government and the legal system also contributes to industrial indiscipline in India. For instance, Chapter V-B of the Industrial Dispute Act states that firms employing 100 or more workers must gain a priori permission from the government to initiate a lay off and this permission is seldom granted (Chaudhuri, 1996). Due to various political and cultural factors Indian workers are often blamed for being less productive compared to their counterparts in other advanced countries. For instance, a survey of one thousand Indian manufacturing firms across ten states shows that the productivity is 44 percent lower in states with poor business climate due to strict labour regulations (Dollar, Iarossi, and Mengitsae, 2002).

At this point a natural question arises about the reasons for inter-union rivalry which is often violent in nature. As mentioned above, one reason is political opportunism. Another reason is the focus in India on in-group collectivism which prevails over broader collectivism. As a result, the collective nature of in-groups exhibits certain individualistic traits. This individualistic trait is called anarchical individualism (Nandy, 1980). The character of anarchical individualism is that an individual should always lay primacy on attaining desired objectives through strict adherence to absolutist forms of interpersonal behaviour (Kumar, 2004). As a result, while

interaction between in-group members is strong, it is found to be difficult for members to practice the same kind of relationship with out-group members (Sinha, 2000). Besides, the paternalistic nature of Indian culture places authorities (in this case trade unions) as providers and protectors of their subjects (members of the respective unions). Therefore, in-group collectivism of Indian workers binds them together as a family but this familial zone has a boundary that does not extend beyond their political affiliations at the workplace. Hence there exists inter-union rivalry in Indian organisations.

We have continually emphasised that various cultural dimensions play a significant role in Indian industrial relations. A common element that could be identified in most Indian cultural dimensions relates to the notion of interpersonal relationships. Strong familial bonds and affiliation-related practices among individuals extend to all walks of Indian life including the workplace. For instance, during the employee unrest at Toyota's Bangalore plant in 2006, the parents of the younger employees approached the management to lift the lockout. Also, in a comparative study of UK and Indian financial service employees it was reported that Indian workers sometimes involved the whole family in their work, and in fact the workers felt proud to bring in their families to show them the place where they worked (Cohen and el-Sawad, 2007). As a strategic approach, KIMCO a South Korean subsidiary in India, has also been recorded as playing the family card. Accordingly, on the annual day of the plant, employees were allowed to bring their families to the company and were given gifts (Sinha, 2004). This practice of involving families in workplace relations is a common religio-cultural affair in India. For example, the *Vishwakarma puja* is an annual occasion in India, the day on which all machinery is given a rest. During this day the plant is opened for public access and is the occasion for employees to bring in their families and show them around the workplace. On this day special *pujas* (worship) are conducted to honour the divine engineer of Hindu tradition *Vishwakarma*. Sweets and gifts are distributed free to the workers and their families on this occasion. Another example of familial considerations is the honouring of family members of the workers. For instance, when children of workers perform well in their academic studies or otherwise achieve in any area, the firm arranges special functions to honour and reward them. This in turn is a time of pride for the worker as well, as he feels the parental affection of the organisation on one side and the prestige he enjoys among his

colleagues on the other side. The kind of interpersonal relationship developed due to such familial interactions leaves the workers with a life-long attachment to the organisation. Sinha (2004) cites the example of employer-employee relations in which the paternal, caring, and generous nature of the employer motivated his employees to be so loyal that they stood against the strike call given by some unions in the firm.

Closely associated with familial affiliations, another characteristic found in Indian society is in-group collectivism. This collective trait represents a smaller bracket located within a larger one. As a result, we find family, caste, region, religion, and language as in-group units, the relative importance of which depends on the situation. For instance, a case study on DCM-Toyota, a joint venture between DCM India and Toyota, highlights the following issue at its plant on the outskirts of Delhi (Mathur, 1991). In the plant there were reported to exist two groups, the locals and non-locals. The study reports that one of the main bones of contention between the two groups was that the non-locals travelled by company transport in groups that acquired group identities whereas the locals resided in rural areas near the factory. The polarization was so deep that there were often violent clashes between the groups. The tendency for in-group association is a common feature found in Indian society. Workers prefer to work in an atmosphere where there is better understanding and harmony between the members of the group. As mentioned above, it is more the interpersonal relationships than work outcomes that matter for Indian workers. Jain (1991) points out that work for the sake of mastery over a job is alien to most Indian workers, instead a joint or extended family system which provides a feeling of security and sense of unit are sought within the work system. Saini and Budhwar (2008) report the case of an Indian company where the employer allowed his workers to choose their own team members and accordingly they chose their own acquaintances and friends to form work groups.

The paternalistic features in the Indian context put the employer/manager in the patriarchal role. He is expected to manage the relationship in a sympathetic manner. Harsh words and punitive actions are not acceptable for most Indian workers. For instance, Sinha (2004) reports that the behaviour of Japanese and Korean managers and supervisors in Indian plants, who lose their temper whenever employees make a mistake, is hurtful for Indian workers. Abusing or scolding in public is often

considered as an ego-related issue and Indians often take it as a dig at their prestige among their colleagues. This was one of the problems reported by Sinha (2004) in his case study of an Indo-Japanese joint venture. The workers who were very status conscious in their caste environment asserted 'I shall do everything if you ask politely, but don't prick at my ego (p.187). Public displays of fault-finding and attributing personal blame are taken as a matter of humiliation by Indian workers. Saini and Budhwar (2008) highlight the case of an Indian entrepreneur who never scolded workers in public but saw them in private and politely pointed out their mistakes to make them understand. This employer never resorted to formal punitive actions in case of large or repeated mistakes, but instead would ask the worker to stay back at home and rest for a few days before returning to work. While the Industrial Disputes Act does not permit an employer to suspend workers for more than four days, this informal type of action coated with paternal affection is found acceptable to the workers. These issues raise question marks against many of the strict disciplinary practices of Japanese and other Asian firms operating in India. For instance, tight time management was an issue raised by Toyota employees in India during the 2006 strike. The workers at the Bangalore plant complained that taking breaks to go to the toilet were controlled and monitored. A similar issue was reported by Sinha (2004) at an Indo-Japanese joint venture where the workers were required to take a coupon to go to the toilet. Both these cases also report that morning exercises and shouting company slogans were disliked by Indian workers.

Indian workers are not habituated to pinning themselves to their work and machines in a disciplined manner for long periods of time. They have a relaxed way of performing their work with intermittent breaks to feed their craving for social relations. If they have the opportunity to go outside the plant they would attend to family obligations such as paying bills or attending their children's school (Sinha, 2004). Inside the factory they use such breaks to meet their friends or relatives working elsewhere in the plant or for a casual chat over a smoke or tea or pan (chewing of betel leaves). This behaviour in terms of Western industrial relations might be called 'loitering' and is treated not only as an act of incivility (Johnson and Indvik, 2001) but also a security concern (Aronson, 2005). In contrast, in the Indian context such familial factors often lead to a homely environment in physical terms at the workplace thereby creating a sense of belonging. Amsa (1986) found that loitering

was a common feature in the textile mills of Ahmedabad which contributed towards an environment of low productivity. Thus, the tight production schedules and work intensity characterised by the Toyota Production System goes against the traditional habits of Indian workers. During the 2006 strike at Toyota Bangalore, some of the employees suspended were charged with loitering at the workplace whilst being engaged in union mobilisation activities. Sinha (2004) reports the case of a Korean subsidiary where Indian workers objected to the strict timing schedules imposed on them. The Indian workers argued that the management should see whether or not the work is performed on time rather than enforcing strict timetabling for all activities. The repercussion of such strictness is found in Sinha's (2004) case study where workers resorted to subversive activities such as putting pliers in the slots so that the line moved but not the product that was being assembled, thereby misleading the Korean supervisors who focused their monitoring only on the movement of the line.

The large-scale indiscipline aided by the union-political nexus in fact led to the weakening of trade union activities from the early 1980s (Budhwar, 2003). The failure of a number of strikes forced workers to rethink their militant trade union activities (Das, 1999). Subsequently, there occurred a decline in union membership and workers started to alienate themselves from union activities leading to a reduced incidence of lockouts and industrial unrest (Venkata Ratnam, 1998). Also, the post-liberalisation scenario in India since 1991 is witnessing a break up away from extreme pro-labour regulations to those that are more employer-friendly further aiding the weakening of union activities in India. The arrival of MNCs on a large scale has initiated many reforms in industrial relations. For example, the Government has ratified the United Nations Convention Nos. 100 and 111 eliminating discrimination and promoting equal employment opportunity (Venkata Ratnam, 1998).

Performance management and rewards

Armstrong (2000) defines performance management (PM) as a strategic process aimed at enhancing productivity by regularly upgrading the performance orientation of employees. In order to gain competitive advantage, organisations especially MNCs, competing on a global platform have realised the need for the effective management of human resources in their firms, and have adopted performance management as a

means to sustain productivity (Mendonca and Kanungo, 1996). Even though the phrase was coined in 1976 by Beer and Ruh, it found widespread application only a decade later when organisations started realising that a more integrated approach was needed to manage and reward performance (Armstrong 2000). Bacal (1999) emphasises that PM is not something that a manager does to the workers or a process thrust upon the workers for a desired outcome. Instead he describes PM as an ongoing interactive process between an employee and his immediate supervisor about how efficiently and effectively a job could be done, ways to improve that efficiency and effectiveness, and ways and means of measuring and rewarding the performance. Rewards are motivational tools towards achieving performance objectives. Rewards can be extrinsic or intrinsic. Extrinsic rewards include such factors as money and promotions, whereas intrinsic rewards refer to such factors as job satisfaction, achievement, and a sense of accomplishment.

Various models have been proposed to describe the PM process (for example, Bevan and Thompson (1991); Fletcher and Williams (1992); Armstrong (2000)). Across such models there is widespread agreement that PM should be human-centric and various environmental factors should be considered while drafting and practicing PM policies and procedures. Armstrong (2000) argues that PM should be a 'process' rather than a 'system', for systems are rigid, standardised, and bureaucratic whereas processes are flexible, evolutionary, and responsive to environmental factors. This suggests that PM may vary from firm to firm, and suggests developing unique and firm-specific strategies to manage performance. Koch and McGrath (1996) advise that human resources in a firm should be developed in such a way that the knowledge, skills, and abilities developed are inimitable and firm-specific. This means that instead of using standardised procedures PM should be strategically oriented to accommodate various external and internal factors. Environmental factors that could affect PM may be political, economic, or cultural (Fischer et al, 2006).

Performance management in the backdrop of culture has been a subject of debate for sometime now. Subsequently, there are strong arguments based on Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions of individualism and collectivism, and their influence on PM. The basis of the debate is that PM is culture bound, for what appears right in one culture may not be acceptable in others (Aycan, 2005). For example, performance appraisal

practices in individualistic societies are often based on individual work outcomes which might be described as competitive and confrontational, rather than on group achievements (Harris and Moran, 1996), whereas in collectivist cultures interpersonal relationships and in-group harmony weigh heavily over productivity (Vallance 1999). As a result, the focus is not precisely on individual outcomes but more towards humane orientation, harmonious interpersonal relationships, respect, care, cooperation, and gratitude (Negandhi, 1984). Socio-cultural factors such as ego and face-saving are part of an individual's social standing and have to be taken into consideration in the balance (Mendonca and Kanungo, 1996). Thus in a country like India the transformation from traditional welfare-oriented personnel management practices to competitive modern HRM practices can be painful and has to take into account the traditional social and cultural values of the country (Agarwal and Misra, 1993).

Some of the cultural traits found in Indian workers include fatalism, submissiveness, clan-orientation, in-group collectivism, power distance, paternalism, and a comparatively low masculine characteristic (Amba-Rao et al, 2000). These cultural characteristics are believed to exercise a strong influence on the PM system in India and are often in conflict (Mendonca and Kanungo, 1996). Kumar's (2007) study on the hierarchical tendencies in Indian bureaucracy reports that various dimensions of hierarchy relevant to Indian context are still prevalent and require practicing managers to moderate their management style.

Acknowledging life's events to fate is one such traditional trait. The *karma* theory of Hindu philosophy links all events of present life to the results of past life. Hence, it is believed that life's happening is destiny and cannot be altered by human intervention. Kovach (1995) points out that in fatalistic cultures work outcomes are believed to be beyond human control and hence should be tolerated and accommodated by other group members. This has a negative impact on PM as proactive actions to improve performance are viewed as futile attempts (Gopalan and Rivera, 1997). The *karma* teaching which is linked to the cycle of life teaches that actions of present life get rewarded in the next life of an individual. Therefore, while the actions of past life limit the current state of affairs there is always scope and hope for improvement for a more fruitful reward in the future life (Sinha, 1994). Another aspect of *karma* theory

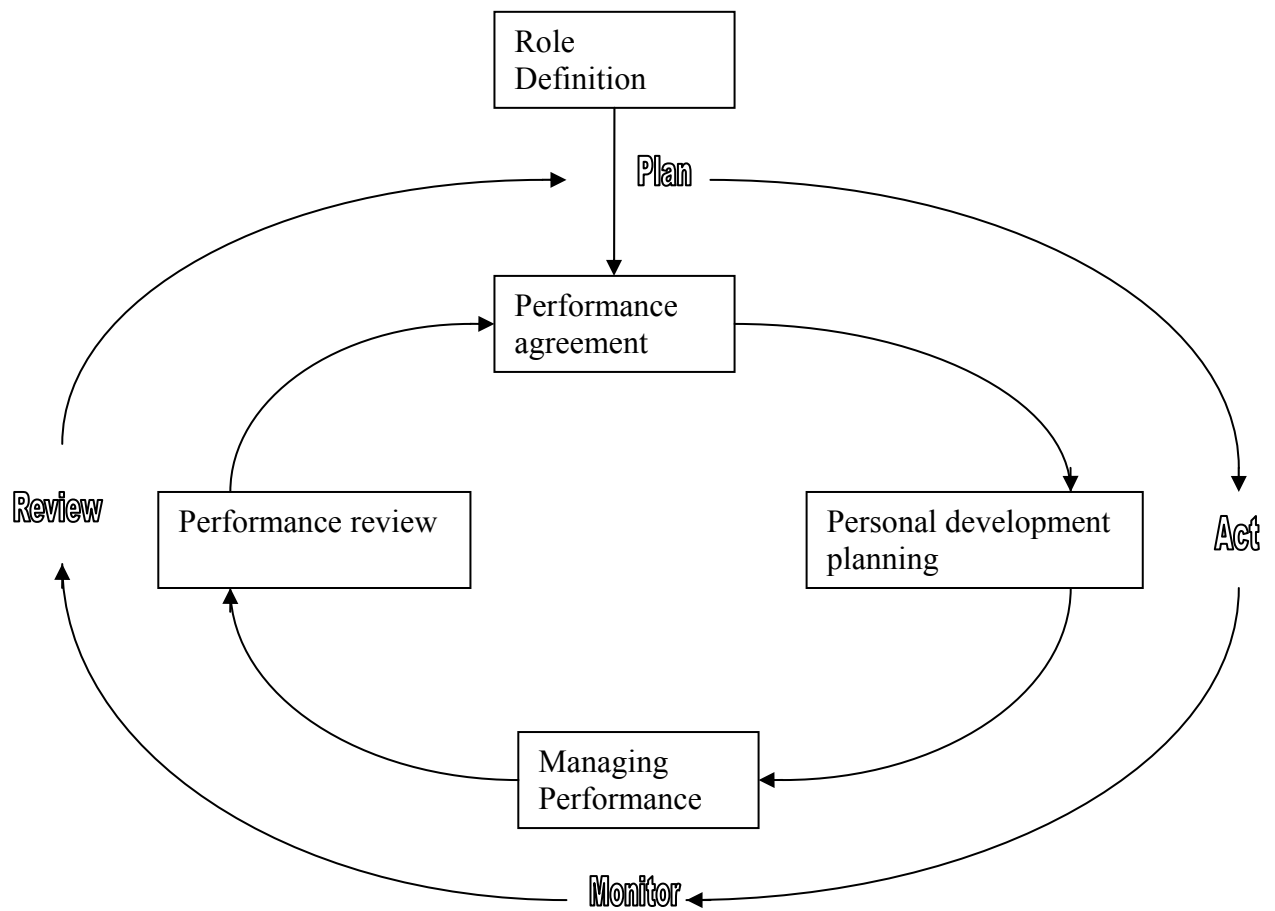
is the *nishkama karma* which teaches that one should focus devotedly on the work rather than the outcome of that work which would otherwise distract the performer from successfully executing the task due to anxiety (Pande and Naidu, 1992). The above two aspects, *nishkama karma* and future orientation, allow HRM specialists the possibility of exploring for an Indian version of PM. Those workers who strongly adhere to the karma philosophy could be motivated by *nishkama karma* philosophy where they (the employees) would focus on perfection in their work with utmost sincerity. Instead of motivating them with material rewards (money and fame) management could use the psychological reward of a better life in the next stage of the life cycle of employees.

Another important issue to be considered here is the Indian legislative system which grants reservation in jobs to members belonging to various weaker sections of society including lower castes (schedule castes). As a result, they enjoy special privileges in all HRM and PM practices. While the reservation is mostly confined to public sector organisations, recently there have been efforts to extend it to private organisations as well. Here again, many of the weaknesses or shortcomings at work may have to be accommodated which challenges the implementation of uniform modern performance appraisal practices along with other HR practices.

In order to analyse these issues we will adopt the recent model of Armstrong (2000) as a framework for our analysis, as shown in figure 4.1. He identifies five main activities involved with performance management:

1. Role definition
2. Performance agreement
3. The Personal development plan
4. Managing performance throughout the year
5. Performance review.

Figure 4.1
Model of performance management



Source: Armstrong (2000).

1. Role definition

Role definition lays the foundation for individual performance planning based on three key aspects related to performance: purpose of the role (which defines the expectations from the performer); key results areas (on which performance objectives and standards are set); and key capabilities (expectations of abilities and behaviour from the performer). Armstrong (2000) indicates that PM is a cyclic process. This implies that the process takes a cyclic round through the rest of the four activities mentioned above and returns to the first one, role definition. Being an ongoing process, therefore, every time the process reaches the role definition stage, PM may have to be revamped on the basis of feedback and appraisal. Thus, role definition could be defined as a process of repositioning (Galbraith, 1992)

However, like every other process, the PM cycle requires a starting point, in this case performance planning, defined as an interactive process that involves a detailed discussion between managers and subordinates regarding work expectations, work processes, the development of skills required for the work, and a mutual agreement covering the outcome and rewards associated with these (Armstrong, 2000). In brief, performance planning involves two main aspects - goal setting and determining performance dimensions (Aycan, 2000). Therefore, based on Armstrong's (2000) view we may assume that individual performance goals in an organisation are set in a mutually agreed manner with an aim towards effective accomplishment. When we talk about individual performance goals they should be understood within the backdrop of wider organizational goals communicated down to individual level.

Goal setting theory as formulated by Locke and Latham (1990, 2002) postulates that the setting of goals gives proper direction to work effort and helps to channel the efforts required for goal achievement by way of regulation and measurement of the entire exercise including its outcome. This would mean that goal setting helps to eliminate waste that might surface in the form of social and cultural issues pertaining to individuals, and placing the focus of employees strictly on work. While such an approach may be practical in individualistic cultures where socialisation at the workplace is limited and more formal, the same may not be appealing for collectivist cultures. This is because in collectivist cultures there is a stronger emphasis towards group activities, norms, and behaviour. Hence, the focus of attention in collectivist cultures is mainly on goals that serve the best interest of the group rather than an individual work focus (Sullivan, Suzuki and Kondo, 1986). In the Indian context there is more emphasis on interpersonal relationships, permeated with emotional attachment (interdependence) and mutually obligatory responsibilities (Roland, 1988). Therefore, 'modern' goal setting in its original form may not be successful in the Indian context.

Drawing inspiration from the ideas of Locke (1968) many organisations set goals according to the SMART acronym - specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-framed.

Specific: Standardised goal-setting practices insist that goals should be specific and clearly communicated to employees by managers. Hence, specificity refers to the preciseness with which goals are communicated (Vecchio, 1988). An experimental study by Locke and Bryan (1967) concluded that specifying goals improved the performance of employees. It is also argued that goal specification is a tool for motivation (Goold and Quinn, 1990); and quantifiable goals help workers to focus on their efforts (White, Mitchell, and Bell, 1977). Identifying Key Performance Areas helps goals to become specific, hence assisting managers to assess the performance of employees as well in a systematic manner (Rao, 2004). Locke and Latham's (1990) theory of goal setting has been lately challenged for its mechanistic perspective on goal setting by Ordonez et al (2009). They are of the view that goals that are too specific would lead employees to develop too narrow a focus that they fail to recognize obvious problems unrelated to task, and there is a strong possibility that they could ignore safety standards.

Measurable: This refers to the lack of ambiguity in the manner in which goals are formulated and presented. Subjectivity in assessment should be kept to a minimum so that everybody clearly understands what the rubrics are. Measurement is used as a tool to assess the performance as well as to improve the process of work by rescheduling goals (Donthu, Hershberger, and Osmonbekov, 2005). Khanna et al (2002) argue that strategic planning always leads to the setting of measurable goals. Ordonez et al (2009) argue that strict measurement of goals may often lead to employees easing up once the set goal is achieved. They cite a case study of New York cab drivers who disappeared from congested streets on rainy days because they had already met the target earlier on the day and went home.

Achievable: Achievable goals are those that are challenging but within the reach of a competent and committed person. Such performance goals help to build and strengthen a sense of efficacy among individuals and groups (Bandura, 1997). Locke and Latham (1990) point to the balance between the efficacy-perceptions of the person assigning the goal and the individual or team that receives the assignment. Therefore, this points to the necessity of mutual agreement so as to assess the feasibility of goal achievement. But if a goal requires the achievement of a harder goal than the ability and knowledge of workers allows then such workers would find

the task beyond their grasp, leading them to feel discouraged and reducing performance (Locke et al, 1980). For instance, the conflict in industrial relations at Toyota's Bangalore plant was due to the high performance expectations from the management, within a context where workers possessed little exposure to such a highly disciplined system.

Relevant: this term refers to the alignment between organizational goals and individual goals. Guth and MacMillan (1986) argue that if the goal structure of employees is not congruent with that of the organisation there is always a chance of low personal commitment from the workers in the task implementation process. This highlights the necessity for consensus on goals whereby there is an agreement not only on goals but on the means to achieve those goals, so as to cater the ultimate organisational goal of economic performance (Bourgeois-III 1980).

Time-framed: Apart from consensus on goals and the means of achieving these goals there should be consensus on the time required to complete the assigned task. Within the Western paradigm time is linear, advancing from the past to the future through the present treating each second as valuable (Slife, 1993). This view, known as clock time, was adopted by organisations to enhance individual productivity and efficiency (Fried and Slowik, 2004). In contrast, a relativist view claims that time is cyclic and is not independent of its surrounding context (Jones, 1988). Therefore, the time perspective differs from culture to culture. Goal setting theory (Locke and Latham, 1990) insists on deadlines for goals and argues that this motivates employees to be more productive and accomplish the task more efficiently. However, as mentioned above, cultural variations could affect the concept of time-frame setting for performance.

Let us now analyse the concepts of role definition and performance planning within the Indian context. As discussed, the concept of goal setting is mostly built on the foundations of the Western concepts of various factors including time and specificity. The ultimate aim is to maximise productivity using the full potential of the employees. Therefore, role definition and performance planning could be treated as a vertical system where every road leads to organizational goals. While organizational goals are important, the process of their achievement becomes more challenging when standard PM processes invade the cultural comfort zone of workers.

Bevan and Thompson (1991) raise doubts about the success of a top-down process due to the probability of misalignment between organisational goals and individual goals. They realise that a formal approach does not take into consideration the situational aspects and environmental factors. We have seen that Indian society is permeated with emotional attachment (interdependence) and mutually obligatory responsibilities (Roland, 1988). These factors may hinder performance planning in its more formal scientific mode. For instance, let us take the example of the goal specificity factor. In the Indian context, comparatively low uncertainty avoidance pulls the Indian workforce away from adapting to precision modes in goal setting (Kanungo, 1990). Indians prefer to rely on their superiors who are viewed as their patron, carer, and protector in the workplace and even outside the workplace. The Hindu philosophical view of a leader is *tvam hi no neta tvam hi no data; yatra tvam nayasi tatra gacchamah* - "You are our Leader, You are our Provider; wherever you lead us, there we shall follow" (Tejomayananda, 2008). This view entrusts full faith in the leader establishing subordinates as just takers of the order thereby avoiding any direct involvement in risk. The paternalistic trait found in Indian society catalyses the behaviour of dependence, setting subordinates free from responsibilities and bestowing their faith and hope in their superiors, who should be more worried about job planning. Hence, Indian workers exhibit an inclination towards close supervision rather than specifying the goal and setting them free (Kunannatt, 2007). This leads to workers looking for instructions at each step of the work process, where supervisors closely monitor and command the whole process. In a typical Indian setting the role of the manager or the leader is highly visible and workers are reduced to a more mechanistic level.

High power distance places the Indian work system in a position where powerful characters and an authoritarian style draw respect and command prestige whereas a democratic style is viewed as a sign of managerial weakness and incompetence (Gopalan and Rivera, 1997). This acts as an additional impediment in the planning process. Kanungo (1990) points out that Indian managers tend to withhold information from subordinates so that they have constant control over them. By withholding information they expect subordinates to keep approaching them thereby feeding the ego of status consciousness. In turn, workers utilise this as an opportunity

to establish an intimate relationship with their bosses. A worker would do this by going to his bosses as many times as possible in a day to give the impression that he is an obedient and hard worker. The interpersonal relationship thus developed leads to flexibility in work relations due to the formation of an in-group, the members of which enjoy comparatively more favours and benefits than out-group members. Thus, even in the face of systematic planning this may not be transformed into expected work outcomes.

2. Performance agreement

Armstrong (2000) defines a performance agreement as a contract between managers and workers detailing expectations such as the goal to be achieved, capabilities needed to achieve those goals, and how performance will be measured. This makes workers and supervisors equally accountable for the job. Jellison (2006) states that a performance agreement comprises an 'if-then' scenario: if a worker achieves the set goal in the given time then he will be rewarded in a particular way. Before reaching agreement supervisors should have a detailed discussion with the workers about the nature of the job, identify any hurdles anticipated by the workers, and then jointly arrive at a conclusion as to the best way of performing the set task. According to McCarty (2002), the key to understand a performance agreement is through recognizing that it represents the outcome of a collaborative process of discussion in which both parties came to a shared understanding through mutual exploration of anticipated problems and potential solutions.

Armstrong (2000) identifies five major aspects of a performance agreement:

Objectives and standards of performance: these refer to the goals to be achieved and standards to be followed to achieve the goals.

Capability profile: this refers to the skills required to carry out the set goals. By analysing and discussing the required skills, supervisors gain first hand information about the training to be imparted and workers become more motivated to perform the tasks efficiently.

Performance measures and indicators: these refer to the measurements needed to assess objectives and standards of performance. Through measurement, the work performed is quantified by analysing the efficiency and effectiveness of actions (Neely, Gregory, and Platts, 1995).

Capability assessment: this refers to how levels of capability will be assessed for the performance of an agreed task. It implies that an attempt is made to match the skills of an individual or a team with the planned task so as to achieve maximum productivity.

Core values or operational requirements: these refer to an agreement by all personnel to follow the fundamental values of the organization while carrying out their work. Core values may include quality, customer service, teamwork, and employee development.

One of the problems identified with formal agreements in the Indian context is that Indians are not comfortable in such situations and are reluctant to raise questions in the face of their superiors. Various case studies have shown that Indians invariably remain silent during the whole discussion, often nodding in agreement or understanding. Then they jump immediately into the task and end up committing mistakes (Sinha, 2004).

3. The personal development plan

This stage comprises the action plan that a worker intends to pursue for self development to extend their knowledge, skills, and capabilities to achieve specified goals. Dransfield (2000) argues that performance development plans should comprise not only the development of employees to meet organizational goals but should also consider the development of employees to meet their personal needs. An effective organisation would always try to integrate individual and organizational goal as a means to attain greater productivity (Hall, Schneider, and Nygren, 1970). Taylor and Edge (1997) believe that the personal development plan transfers the ownership of personal development back to the individual for the benefit of the individual as well as the benefit of the organization. Harel and Tzafrir (1999) argue that career development strengthens the psychological contract and motivates employees towards organizational commitment.

The personal development plan could be viewed as a long term plan whereby an employee is progressively taken from a lower level of the hierarchy to the upper layer. This involves broad based personal development planning for workers asking such questions as:

- What skills do they have now?

- What role do they currently fulfil?
- What is the next logical progression?
- What training do they need?
- What is the time frame for the training? (Higson and Wilson, 1995).

From the above discussion it could be concluded that while performance development in an organization facilitates the accomplishment of set tasks, it is also an opportunity for the human resource development of organisations, helping them to strategically position themselves for future growth and challenges.

In this context personal development planning is self-developmental and focussed on goal orientation. It is regarded as a means of boosting efficiency, which would ultimately be measured in terms of its outcomes. Thus, it initiates inter-personal competition as workers aim for career advancement. It does not necessarily emphasise or value group-harmony or inter-personal relationships. However, in the Indian context an individual cannot ignore the group's harmony while attempting to tread his own path to success. The *dharma* (moral duty) concept of Hinduism focuses on looking after one's immediate family members and maintaining harmonious relationship with other immediate group members (Aycan, 2005). Good human nature, harmonious inter-personal relationships, respectful attitude, loyalty to superiors, gratitude, and contribution and conformity to group maintenance are counted as significant factors (Sinha, 2004). In the Indian context, high performance employees who stand out in the group are disliked by other members in the group as it is believed to cause disharmony (Kovach, 1995). Inter-personal cooperation and loyalty to the in-group weigh heavily over interpersonal competition and productivity (Aycan, 2005).

4. Managing performance throughout the year

Managing performance through the year implies a continuous support system providing feedback to the workers on their performance, review of work progress, updating objectives, and dealing with problems that occur during the performance of jobs (Armstrong 2000). This constant monitoring of performance is more informal in nature as it is meant to support and empower workers in the lead-up to a formal performance review at the end. Williams (2002) attributes regular monitoring of

performance to the skill of managers or line supervisors where they have the opportunity to regularly interact with their subordinates and establish a sound relationship in the work process. He further argues that managing performance throughout the year enhances efficiency and goal achievement, when compared to storing all performance related information for an end-of-year performance appraisal. Above all, regular monitoring of performance improves managerial efficiency as well because it enables managers to evaluate performance of their subordinates more accurately and thereby helping them to suggest better solutions and provide sound feedback (Komaki 1986). Another advantage of informal monitoring of performance is that it leads to innovation. For instance, Hayes and Abernathy (1980) argue that rigid monitoring would force workers to resort to defensive action whereas a cordial and flexible environment of performance monitoring would encourage and enable innovation. Mintzberg (1993) refers to direct supervision where there is a continuous two-way flow of communication between workers and supervisors which improves organizational effectiveness. Latham et al (2005) advice that effective feedback from supervisors focus on work behaviour rather than the person, and on desired behaviour rather than on undesired behaviour of workers. Any criticism should be selected and constructive that avoids overwhelming the person and emphasises honesty towards work.

Even though there are many advantages for constant monitoring of performance, there are human tendencies and traits that may act as impediments to the process. For instance, the development of a close relationship between supervisors and workers could be open to misuse in some circumstances where faults may be over-ridden or covered up leading to an accumulation of errors. This could be more relevant to countries with a collective cultural orientation where inter-personal relationships are a significant factor.

The type of PM monitoring we have outlined above could be perceived as difficult to establish in the Indian context. In-group collectivism and power distance are major obstacles to such practices. Favouritism towards in-group members is a major hurdle. Virmani and Guptan (1991) who studied the practices of a variety of Indian firms discovered that although these firms adopted modern HRM practices in order to get the work done they had to use the old culture oriented customary practices to motivate

their workers. Rao (2007) highlighted that those managers with good personality characteristics, work reputation, and who practiced sound inter-personal relationships succeeded in implementing the PM system effectively.

Sinha (2004) reports an incident from an Indian subsidiary where a worker stated ‘if you ask me or tell me with love (in polite terms) I will do it, but if you try to be coercive then I won’t’. Awasthy and Gupta (2007) report an incident from their case study of a Korean MNC where the Korean Managing Director, who believed in giving full autonomy to the workers, once walked through the shop floor and stopped at a workplace where a couple of workers were repairing a music system. He looked at the workers and quietly walked away. While the MD’s intention was not to distract the workers or interfere in any way, the workers were upset because they expected a comment, or more than that a ‘sabash’ (very good, keep going), from the MD.

Gopalan and Rivera (1997) have pointed out that power distance is a major factor where authority figures are always conscious of their power and rarely skip any opportunity to show it. By exercising power such figures are often viewed as icons compared to friendly managers who are considered as weak. Rao (2007) observed that in the Indian PM system, superiors often acted in a possessive and biased manner and never communicated properly in performance appraisal matters. This lack of communication, or rather unwillingness of the superiors to engage in effective communication with their subordinates, could be related to the power distance dimension of Indian society. However, strong communication often existed between management and unions, who acted as the intermediary. One factor worth stressing in relation to power distance is that within the Indian context people will accept the authority of those figures that have the ‘cultural right’ to do so. That means, for example, that in a caste conscious society employees may not accept the authority of a lower caste boss. Similarly, a foreigner may not be accepted as an authority-wielding figure. This has implications for the management authority exercised by foreign managers in MNCs in India, as well as the personal beliefs of these managers. For example, many managers believe that Indian workers need close supervision. This emerged as an issue in the conflict at the Hyundai subsidiary in India where Korean managers exercised close supervision over Indian workers (Lansbury, Kwon and Suh, 2006). Similarly, Cohen and El-Sawad (2007) in their case study quoted Scottish

managers as stating that if managers take their eye off the ball then things begin to slip and workers revert back to their old ways of doing things.

5. Performance review

Unlike constant performance monitoring discussed above, a performance review (sometimes called a performance appraisal) is a formal process conducted at a set point in time (usually yearly) when a review takes place covering the preceding period, relating to achievements, progress, and problems (Armstrong, 2000). This review and assessment becomes the foundation for future performance plans, thus concluding and simultaneously initiating a cyclic process. In the performance review stage the manager and worker sit together and discuss the outcomes of the goals, review objectives, and make further plans in the light of business changes (Williams, 2002). The review comprises providing feedback to employees, deciding compensation or reward, job status, training requirements, and sometimes disciplinary decisions (Cederblom, 1982). Nathan, Mohrman Jr. and Milliman (1991) argue that the success of a performance review depends on the degree to which the evaluation is based on behavioural factors such as goals, specific behaviours and responses, and whether workers are provided with the opportunity to participate in the whole exercise. Therefore, performance evaluation should also be a motivational tool for the workers. For instance, people need to receive acknowledgement that their successful efforts will lead to a favourable appraisal and a decent reward (Robbins et al, 2001).

Performance reviews are invariably solely linked to systematic work processes and ignore most or all external factors including societal aspects. However, collective cultures, especially Indian culture, mix up workplace relationships and personal relationships. As a result, mutual dependence is ubiquitous in all workplace activities including performance management. Snape et al (1998) identify the Western notion of performance appraisal as being linked to fairness and objectivity with a strong emphasis on explicit appraisal criteria. In contrast, the Asian process is found to be non-formal with superiors rating performance based on loyalty and obedience (Aycan, 2005). The paternal orientation by which the superiors keep subordinates in their fold also restricts superiors from engaging in transparent practices (Gregersen, Hite and Black, 1996). Davis (1998) points out that a 360-degree performance appraisal system is not appealing in high power distance cultures where the preference is for a top

down appraisal of performance denoting the hierarchical set-up of society. Besides, in collective cultures an appeal process is also unusual as it is viewed as challenging authority (Fletcher and Perry, 2001).

An important aspect to be examined here is the Indian preference for appraisals that appear to be non-formal and biased. If obedience and loyalty become the sole criteria for a performance review then productivity may suffer. However, in the Indian context it should be understood that loyalty to the boss also means pleasing him. If the manager is concerned with work outcomes then he can use the 'loyalty card' to ensure the work is done. A comparative study of Indian and British workers sheds more light on this concept. Cohen and El-Sawad (2007) showed that while British workers worked to strict timings, their Indian counterparts showed devotedness to their work by 'stretching' their hours and often brought the whole family into work. These acts may sound silly within a Western context but in Indian society they show the loyalty of the workers towards their work and organisation. Arguably there is no tool or metric to measure the extent of this loyalty-oriented performance. If at the end of the day it is only work outcomes that determine performance, then in the Indian context this would be branded as a process that lacks humane orientation. Substantiating this argument, Sinha's (2004) case study of an Indo-Japanese joint venture reports that while modern HRM system were implemented in the firm, superiors relied on the information obtained from their trusted subordinates about what was happening in the company, and in return they were favoured with positive performance appraisals and recommendations for monetary and non-monetary rewards, thereby rewarding their loyalty. Therefore, it is the degree of relationship between superiors and subordinates that weighs over independent application of performance appraisal tools (Varma, Pichler and Srinivas, 2005). Sinha and Sinha (1994) report the case of an Indian manager who practiced excellent management at his office in terms of modern systems and simultaneously maintained a social court at his residence in the evening where subordinates of all ranks visited him, touched his feet in the traditional manner, and reported organisational matters to seek favours. Sinha (2004) describes this as *kripa* (mercy) of the boss for his trustworthy subordinates. Sinha (2004) states that this 'yes boss' system prevailed over individual performance and in the final analysis counted for promotion and other rewards.

High power distance inevitably contributes to centralised decision making thereby excluding employees from the performance appraisal process (Virmani and Guptan, 1991). Such one-sided approaches were reported to be common in the 1980s in Indian organisations and were used as a tool to discipline and keep employees loyal to the management (Rao, 2004). As a result, performance analysis used to be arbitrary with little consultation or involvement of appraisees. For example, a study conducted by Kulkarni, Prakasam, and Nangia (1980) of Indian banks reported that only 14 percent of the employees surveyed were aware of the criteria their superiors used to evaluate their performance; and 68 percent felt that the data entered in the Annual Confidential Report (ACR) had nothing to do with their job performance. Raman and Singh (2006) also reported that ACR system adopted by public sector firms in India was used as a mechanism to promote or discipline employees and did little to improve employee performance. The authors further pointed out that it was seniority that was used as a general criterion for promotion and rewards rather than performance. Respect for seniors is embedded in the cultural make up of the country where elders are expected to be respected. Hence it is not admissible in the culture for a junior to surpass the seniors in the hierarchically structured national system. While a biased process may be easier for superiors to manage performance, the subordinates may have many grievances against such a practice. For instance, the findings of another case study of two large Indian private sector organisations' performance review process state that while the appraisers were satisfied with the system and process, the appraisees reported a number of ambiguities in the process relating to communication, feedback, and fair distribution of rewards (Ahmed, 1998). Another important factor is the ego and face saving dimension prevalent in Indian culture. Direct feedback on performance affects an individual's integrity and standing within the group. For example, positive feedback to an individual can lead to jealousy and be viewed as an act of sabotage of in-group harmony, whereas negative feedback affects a person's reputation in the group (Trompenaars, 1993).

However, there are organisations in India that engage in a systematic process in the implementation of performance review and rewards processes without hurting the value sentiments of the workforce. For instance, Raghuraman, Budhwar and Balasubramanian (2007) report that a slow and cautious approach can be successful when implementing a modern PM system with a lot of emphasis given to inter-

personal relationships, transparency, and open communications. Tripathi (2005) conducted an empirical study of Indian manufacturing industry covering 360 firms and found that systematic implementation of TQM has helped motivate Indian employees with suitable performance appraisal, compensation, and reward systems. However, the study was based on the survey results from senior management level executives only. Such executives in India are more exposed to a modern life style and most of them have Western educational backgrounds. Employees of lower ranks are more rooted in traditional values and practices. A study conducted by Anand, Sahay and Saha (2005) on the application of the Balanced Score Card for performance appraisal in Indian companies found that while many organisations have adopted this approach, the role of Indian culture in the success of practicing this system needed more research. These findings again point to the dualism in Indian culture. Ramamoorthy et al (2007) assumes that the increased level of competition brought in by MNCs may have reinforced a competitive attitude among the younger generation of the country. This assumption is again confined to their survey of professional workers in Bangalore and may not be applicable to non-professional workers or those from non-metropolitan and semi-urban regions of the country.

Therefore, even though modern trends and situations may distract from the explicit practice of philosophical and religious values, the essence and aura of spiritualism is believed to be still embedded in the psyche of Indian minds (Roland, 1988). Social and cultural forces and institutions in India may be a contesting factor for the blind adaptation of modern PM practices. As a result, it is often seen that while Indians embrace modern practices and trends, it is not at the cost of age-old traditional values but just by means of an accommodative behaviour. Therefore, instead of replacing old sets of beliefs, behaviours, and practices it is often the birth of another context (Ramanujan, 1990).

Chapter 5

The Development of the Indian Automobile Industry within its Historical Context

This chapter traces the historical development of the Indian automobile industry. The analysis is divided into three major historical periods: import substitution phase (1950-1981); Maruti-Suzuki era (1982-1991); and the post-liberalisation period (1991-date).

The history of the Indian automobile industry can be traced back to the period of pre-independence British rule when General Motors set up a plant in Bombay in 1928 to assemble cars and trucks. This was followed by Ford who set up a plant in Madras in 1930 and then in Bombay and Calcutta in the following years (Sagar and Chandra, 2004). Economic concerns during the Second World War forced the British regime in India to permit and encourage local manufacturing of automobiles leading to the establishment of Hindustan Motors in 1942, Premier Automobiles in 1944, Tata Engineering and Locomotive Company in 1945, Ashok Motors in 1948, and Mahindra and Mahindra in 1949 (Pingle, 1999).

The post-independence era after 1947 witnessed successive Indian governments adopting a protectionist policy. Indian industry was primarily divided into different categories based on their strategic importance to the country. Consequently the automobile industry was categorised as a 'basic industry of importance' under government control (Ranawat and Tiwari, 2009). A protectionist policy was adopted with strict controls on imports and foreign investment into the automobile industry. All activities related to the automobile industry such as the entry of firms, expansion of capacity, product diversity, and technology were effectively controlled by the State (George, Jha, and Nagarajan, 2002). This resulted in sluggish growth of the industry for the next couple of decades. The car segment and heavy vehicles segment were dominated by only two and four companies respectively who effectively controlled the vast Indian market, using their oligopoly status to enjoy huge profit margins and a large market share (Narayanan, 1998). Production of motor vehicles was only 4077 units in 1950-51, rising to 30,000 at the end of the first five-year plan in 1956

(Ranawat and Tiwari, 2009). Since then the Indian automobile industry has evolved in a slow and phased manner. After the entry of Maruti-Suzuki cars in 1983 the industry expanded dramatically. In 1998-1999 the industry produced 4.5 million units (including two and three-wheelers), ranking India as the fifth largest auto producer among the emerging economies after Korea, Brazil, Mexico, and China (Okada 2004). During this century the automobile industry is continuing its growth at the rate of 15-27 percent annually. In 2008 India was ranked 12th in the list of the world's top 15 automakers (IBEF, 2009).

The Indian story of the automobile industry can be divided into three stages: the import substitution phase (1950-81), the Maruti-Suzuki era (1982-1991), and the post liberalization period starting from 1991 (Tewari, 2001).

The import substitution phase (1950-1981)

The self-realisation programme embarked upon by the Indian government during the initial years after independence formulated policies and programmes to promote the growth of indigenous firms and subsequently brought in various measures to curtail imports. This eventually led to the exit of General Motors and Ford from India in the mid 1950s who found the local market too uncompetitive for sustaining indigenous manufacturing programme (Ranawat and Tiwari, 2009). From then onwards until the entry of Maruti-Suzuki cars into India in the early 1980s the whole Indian market had to be satisfied with only two brands of cars - the 'Ambassador' manufactured by Hindustan Motors, and the 'Premier Padmini' car manufactured by Premier Automobiles. Only four players were involved in the heavy vehicles section of the industry.

Political factors

The nationalist policy adopted by the first Indian Government after independence was undoubtedly influenced by the many years of hardship and exploitation under colonial rule. Political and economic independence were regarded as reverse sides of the same coin, and in order to achieve economic self-sufficiency India embarked upon a succession of five-year plans. The Indian National Congress formed in the nineteenth

century grew into a mass political movement on the basis of its opposition to foreign rule and the vision of an independent India with certain basic human rights (Hiro, 1976). However, the ruling party had to walk a delicate path whereby it needed to protect the private properties of the upper class and simultaneously uplift the plight of the lower and marginalised classes (Chakrabarty, 2008).

The two decades that followed independence could be regarded as a turbulent phase in the history of independent India with a series of challenging issues. For instance, the deep communal divide especially following the partition of India, untouchability as a result of caste hierarchy, famine, drought, and the ideological divide between the haves and have-nots were all immediate issues that needed attention (Hiro, 1976; Parekh, 1995). The territorial conflict with China in 1962 and the three wars fought against Pakistan between 1947 and 1971 all took their toll (Hiro, 1976; Mukherji, 2009). The combined impact of all these events would have probably exacerbated the feeling of insecurity making the true realisation of independence a distant dream.

Government policies

Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India had a significant exposure to Western life. His family belonged to the highest caste in India. His home was located in a British residential locality at Agra near New Delhi. He had two English governesses and an Irish-French tutor (Tharoor, 2003). He attended Harrow school at the age of fifteen, and continued his education with law studies at Trinity College, Cambridge and the London School of Economics. He was strongly influenced by Fabian socialism (Mahendra-Dev, 2008) and the writings of nationalist and anti-capitalist authors (Tharoor, 2003). Nehru's visit to the Soviet Union to attend the tenth anniversary of the Russian Revolution was another event that catalysed his socialist line of thought and admiration of Soviet economic development (Tharoor, 2003).

In order to reach his goal Nehru initiated a top-down nation building process in which the Western educated bureaucracy was acknowledged as a significant player (Parekh, 1995). He introduced an industrial policy aimed at keeping foreign businesses out of the country and establishing and encouraging local heavy industries (Ghosh and

Gabbay, 1999). The Industrial Policy Statement of 1948 articulated protection for small scale industries, and the Industrial Policy Resolution of 1956 emphasised self-sufficiency amongst the various industrial sectors (Bagchi, Rao and Sen, 2006). From 1960 emphasis was laid on the development of strong ancillary industries in India. The Phased Manufacturing Programme required indigenisation of production (Debroy, 2000) prompting local vehicle manufacturers to rely almost 100 percent on local suppliers for components (Okada, 2004). This led to the formation of cluster bases of auto-component manufacturers located around the vehicle manufacturing plants, mostly outside the cities following Mahatma Gandhi's village development programme (Bagchi, Rao and Sen, 2006).

Lal Bahadur Shastri succeeded Nehru as the second Prime Minister of India in 1964. There was a significant shift of economic policy during Shastri's two-year reign as Prime Minister. While Nehru was averse to private participation Shastri on the other hand established a closer relationship with industrialists and private entrepreneurs (Mukherji, 2009). He believed in a flexible market economy with limited government controls (Lewis, 1995). He de-controlled various industrial sectors such as steel and cement and developed closer relationships with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industries (Kudaisya, 2002). After Nehru and Shastri, Indira Gandhi, the daughter of Nehru became the Prime Minister of India, in 1966. She initially followed the liberal economic policies of Shastri, but strong opposition from a wide section of society forced her to switch back to her father's policies as was evident from her act of nationalising all the major banks (Denoon, 1998). The tenure of the fourth Prime Minister of India, and the first non-Congress Prime Minister, Morarji Desai, was very short (1977-1979). He was a right-wing politician who opposed the left-leaning policies of Nehru. However, he headed a weak coalition Government comprised of ideologically different parties and as a result was forced to follow the previous government's policies (Thakurta and Raghuraman, 2004). It was during his tenure that IBM and Coca Cola were ordered to reduce their stake by 40 percent or leave the country (Thakurta and Raghuraman, 2004). However, he did reveal his true colours by allowing BHEL, the largest public sector company in India, to have a tie up with the German firm, Siemens (Ramamurthy, 1987).

To sum up, until the beginning of Maruti era (1982) there existed now-and-then interactions between the public sector and the market economy which however did little to help the growth of the automobile industry in India. This was more because automobiles were not a priority sector in a poverty stricken country which did not even have proper roads (Kaushik, 1997).

Economic factors

Civil unrest, mostly in the form of caste and communal conflict, frequent wars with neighbours, famine, and drought had a dramatic impact on economic conditions in India which was already severely impacted by centuries of colonial rule. Since the priority of the government in the economic sector was to meet the need for the immediate uplift of people from deep poverty, it regarded automobiles as a luxury product and the development of the industry as a low priority (Venkataramani, 1990). The import substitution industrialisation policy adopted by the government witnessed an annual economic growth rate of 6 percent, with public sector enterprises increasing their numbers from 5 to 214 due to large scale investment by the State (D'Costa, 1995). During Indira Gandhi's tenure as Prime Minister the Indian currency was devalued for the first time (in 1966) with the exchange rate reduced from Rs.7.5 to Rs.4.76 against one U.S dollar (Budhwar, 2001). Famine and drought caused severe food shortages, leading to rising food prices, marred by black marketing and corruption. This was one reason why the then Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi declared a state of emergency in 1975 (Catanach, 1998). Subsequently, the oil crisis of the late 1970s also led to high inflation, reducing the growth rate to 3.45 percent during this period (Prasad, 2003).

The period from 1961 to 1981 witnessed considerable growth in the labour market in India. Employment grew by 45% in the private sector and by 120% in the public sector (D'Costa, 1995). The large growth in public sector employment might be one of the reasons for the growth of a large middle class population in India that had ever since contributed to the growth of the Indian market as a whole.

Social and cultural factors

The long religious and cultural tradition of India was sometimes challenged and sometimes accommodated and hybridized by invaders in the past. However, British rule in India exposed the high castes to a Western system of education, ideas, and thinking (Athavankar, 2002). As a result, the post-independent period witnessed a social divide between Western ideas and national culture. Nehru believed in the superiority of Western ideas and believed that Western educated bureaucrats would help to build a nation on par with the West (Parekh, 1995). On the other side, the bureaucrats believed that the initiatives (such as the Community Development Programme) would only yield results if village Indians agreed to a cultural change (Catanach, 1998). By the 1970s India started to experience heightened communal and caste conflicts. The wide gap between the haves and the have-nots began to take its toll. The higher castes who were also the bureaucratic class of the country were accused of misusing their power to consolidate their position, and the rich landlords and the privileged class were perceived as being unwilling to share their wealth with the poor (Pandey, 2001).

Technology

Due to the Government's restrictive policies and a lack of competition the automobile industry had to rely on the same models. There was no access to modern technology (Kubota, 2006). During this period there were only two models of cars providing production of 40,000 units a year. Even scooters had a waiting period (Milestones, 2009). Between 1953 and 1986 there was little change in the base engine of these cars (Sharma and Roychowdhury, 1996).

An interesting factor is that while the nation was opposed to foreign goods (as evident from Gandhi's appeal to boycott foreign goods during the freedom struggle era), a section of society believed in the superiority of Western products. This resulted in a hybridised policy where licensing of foreign designs and technology was adopted. The rush for self-sufficiency resulted in increasing the manufacturing process but failed to realise the need for indigenous designs and technology (Athavankar, 2002). For example, Hindustan Motors that manufactured Ambassador cars relied on the design and technology of Morris cars, whilst Padmini cars relied on Fiat technology.

Institutional factors

A brief discussion about industrial relations and trade unions in India is necessary in order to understand the Indian context. Trade unions in India have their origin in Madras (present-day Chennai) when B.P. Wadia, assistant editor of a local pro-Congress daily newspaper and a member of the Theosophical society organised the textile workers of Buckingham and Carnatic Textile Mills in 1918 (Hiro, 1976; Bhowmik, 2004). A few months later, Mahatma Gandhi founded the Textile Labour Association (TLA) in Ahmedabad, the capital of Gujarat State. This union was unique in many ways in that it adopted a tactic of cooperation over confrontation and initiated many welfare and educational programmes for workers, with closer cooperation from the employers and other wealthy people of that time (Bhowmik, 2004). Gandhi's ideology of harmony in industrial relations was later adopted by the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) formed in 1947, when it discovered that the policy of industrial harmony favouring a ban on strikes and compulsory arbitration of disputes was unacceptable to a major section of the previous All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), a union grouping which comprised leftists, rightists, and centrists (Hiro, 1976; Jayapalan, 2008).

AITUC was founded in 1920 by bringing different trade unions under one umbrella to catalyse the freedom struggle by drawing together workers and peasants (Bhowmik, 2004). In the initial years the Communists and the Congress leaders worked together in the union, but later when the Congress leaders were pre-occupied with the freedom struggle the Communists gained more control over union affairs (Chibber, 2003). By the eve of independence in 1947 the scenario was tense with militant trade unionism at its peak. Nehru had to play a balancing act between the leftists on one side, and the nationalist forces within the party led by Sardar Vallabhai Patel (Chibber, 2003) on the other side. Patel insisted that the leftist AITUC needed to be contained and proposed the formation of a new trade union loyal to the Congress Party, thus forming the INTUC in 1947 (James, 1958). While Patel's initiative secured the interests of business houses in India, the socialists in the Congress party were critical of the role and activities of business (Chibber, 2003) and in 1948 they formed the Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS) (Reddy, 2004). Soon after, many unions were formed in a span of few years and as political affiliation became a requirement for unions to survive, every

political party found unions and industrial disputes as a short cut to gain political mileage and dominance (Ramaswamy, 1995). In fact, it was the Congress Party that insisted that unions should be kept in the fold of political parties rather than leaving them independent, a decision taken with the desire to contain militancy in union activities and focus effectively on nation building (Chibber, 2003).

Labour legislation in India was first introduced by the British government in the second half of the 19th century. The conditions of textile workers of Bombay (present-day Mumbai) prompted the government to introduce the first Indian Factory Workers Act in 1881, which was applicable to factories that employed a minimum of 100 workers (Yadav, 2000). Under this act, the employment of children below 7 years was prohibited, while those between 7 and 12 years were not allowed to work for more than nine hours a day (Yadav, 2000). This act was amended in 1891 with the cover extending to a minimum of 50 workers, introducing a compulsory rest of half an hour during the day, provision of a weekly day off, prohibition of employment of children under 9 years of age, fixation of the hours of work a day for women to 11 hours, and prohibition of night shift between 8 pm and 5 am for women (Banerjee, 2008). The Factory Act was again amended in 1911 by fixing the working hours for adult males to 12 hours a day for the first time, and provisions made for the health and safety of industrial workers (Yadav, 2000). After the formation of the AITUC in 1920, and following industrial action by the union, the act was amended for the fourth time in 1922 by extending coverage to a minimum of 20 workers, reducing working hours to 10 a day, prohibiting children less than 12 years from working in factories, and reducing to 6 hours a day the working hours of children between 12 and 14 years (Bhowmik, 2004; Yadav 2000).

The strike at Madras Textile Mills in 1918 and its aftermath was the cause for the introduction of the first Trade Union Act introduced in 1926. This act was amended twice before independence (in 1937 and 1942) and four times after independence (Jayapalan, 2001), all during the tenure of Nehru as Prime Minister. This act provided the right for seven or more workers to form a trade union and register it for recognition by the government (Sharma, 1997). The act granted workers and trade unions free association and immunity against civil and criminal liability for taking industrial action. Another act passed during the pre-independence era was the

Industrial Employment Standing Orders Act (IESOA) of 1946. This act explained the terms and conditions of employment applicable to the workplace, thus facilitating the right of workers to know what their rights actually are (Saini and Budhwar, 2004).

The Industrial Disputes Act (IDA) was passed in March 1947, only a few months before independence. The Act applied to every industrial establishment in the country involved in trade, manufacturing, and distribution of goods and services irrespective of the number of employees involved (Singh, 1996). The British government realised that the mechanics of industrial disputes needed to be institutionalised and enacted the IDA to establish permanent machinery for the settlement of disputes (Reddy, 1990). It was this act that initially involved the State as an active player in dispute resolution.

During the post-independence period there were extensive debates on the role of government in dispute resolution (Saini and Budhwar, 2004). However, the policy of Nehru's government in the initial two decades after independence was to maintain industrial harmony through Gandhian means of non-violence and mutual resolution (Reddy, 1990). In order to further industrial peace and harmony, the government initiated two non-legislative measures in 1958 in the form of a Code of Discipline and Joint Management Councils both of which were expected to resolve industrial disputes outside the courts (Saini and Budhwar, 2004).

While harmony was the hallmark of industrial relations in India, the insistence on social justice and socialist experimentation followed by the government after independence led to industrial relations practices tilted towards employee welfare and rights regardless of the welfare of employers (Roychowdhury, 2005). The proliferation of industrial relations laws and clauses further complicated the quest for harmony and industrial peace. Inter-union conflicts and union-management conflicts were fought out with the aim of gaining supremacy rather than for genuine worker welfare (Ramaswamy and Schiphorst, 2000). In India, both Federal and State Governments have the right to draft industrial relations laws provided they are not beyond the scope of the Constitution of India. Rough estimates suggest that the number of industrial relations enactments reached a maximum of 160 (Saini and Budhwar, 2004).

The Maruti-Suzuki era (1982-1991)

The idea of small cars in India is as old as its modern history as an independent nation (Becker-Ritterspach and Becker-Ritterspach, 2008). However, it could not materialise in any real sense until a government-supported enterprise called Maruti Technical Services Private Limited (MTSPL) was established in 1970 by the son of the then Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi. The company was awarded the contract by the Indian government to manufacture a 'people's car'. The contextual factors surrounded this event are discussed below.

Political factors

Indira Gandhi, the daughter of the first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, became the third Prime Minister of India in 1966. In the face of a severe economic crisis Indira Gandhi declared emergency rule in India in 1975, thereby temporarily suspending the democratic process in the country (Somerville, 2007). While there was both internal and external criticism of her dictatorial actions, it has also been argued that the situation gave her Government extraordinary power to introduce measures aimed at economic upliftment. Dommermuth-Costa (2002) points out that during the emergency period India's agricultural and industrial production and exports witnessed considerable growth, beggars were taken off the streets, cities were cleaned up, and discipline and order was established across the country. However, Malik (1988) highlights the huge amount of money extracted from businesses through unfair means during the emergency rule by Indira Gandhi and her son Sanjay Gandhi. Faced with growing political opposition Indira Gandhi decided to withdraw the state of emergency and restore democracy after only two years in 1977 (Somerville, 2007). In the general election immediately following the lifting of the state of emergency, Indira Gandhi and her party were removed from power. The next three years witnessed high drama with the witch hunt initiated by the Janata Party government led by Morarji Desai (Frank, 2002) before Indira Gandhi and her Congress Party were returned to power in 1980 (Gould, 1980). Her son Sanjay Gandhi was also elected as a Member of Parliament in the election.

Even though the idea of producing a small car had been contemplated since the early 1950s, it could be realised only in the early 1980s when the government permitted the establishment of joint ventures in the automobile sector (Becker-Ritterspach & Becker-Ritterspach, 2008). Prior to this, automobiles were considered to be a luxury and not a priority industry (D'Costa, 1995; 1998). In 1970 Sanjay Gandhi founded Maruti Technical Services Private Limited (MTSPL) with the aim of producing small cars for the Indian market. He possessed little experience for the job except for a short stint as an apprentice at Rolls Royce in the United Kingdom. MTSPL caused a storm of controversy in India on account of the undue favours showered on the company by the Federal government led by his mother and some State governments. However, after enjoying so many benefits and extracting large amounts of money from businessmen across the country promising dealerships Sanjay's company was unable to produce a single car. His lack of prior knowledge about car manufacturing and design and skill shortages adversely impacted the company (Venkataramani 1990). When Indira Gandhi returned to power in 1980 the company was nationalised. This helped MTSPL to avoid further controversy. The newly-created public sector company was called Maruti Udyog Limited (MUL) and immediately suggested a foreign collaboration to produce a 'people's car' for India (Venkataramani, 1990). Coincidentally, the Japanese government during this period was promoting its car manufacturers to vie for foreign markets due to intense competition in the domestic market (D'Costa, 1995; Lee and Anderson, 2008). Therefore, through a coincidental juxtaposition of international events a new Indo-Japanese joint venture (Maruti Suzuki Limited) was born.

In India this joint venture helped Indira Gandhi to rehabilitate her family from the malaise of the previous Maruti scandal that had tarnished her family's image (Becker-Ritterspach and Becker-Ritterspach, 2008). Her popularity received a boost by naming it the 'janta car' (people's car) portraying it as the new car for the common masses amongst whom owning a car had always been perceived as a luxury (Gupta, 2008).

Despite this success the challenges to her leadership kept on coming. While she envisaged a society free of the bondages of communalism, casteism, and regionalism this vision created a negative effect on society with tensions rising to new heights

during the later years of her rule with widespread civil unrest in the form of riots and clashes (Malik and Vajpeyi, 1988). In the early 1980s Sikh demands for secession led to violence across their home State of Punjab and the neighboring States, especially targeting Hindus (Malik, 1988). In the north eastern region of the country, large inflows of refugees from the newly-formed country of Bangladesh left Hindus in that region feeling threatened by the increasing population of Bangladeshi Muslims resulting in riots in the State of Assam (Vohra, 2001). Hindu nationalist forces began campaigning against Indira Gandhi's policies of appeasing Muslims in the north east; and Sikhs in Punjab (Vohra, 2001) with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) acting as a particularly strong voice. In 1984, she ordered the Indian army to enter the Holy seat of the Sikh community, the Golden Temple at Amritsar in Punjab, to flush out Sikh extremists hiding there (Barua, 2005). This action delighted the majority Hindu community in the country and was reflected in her party's gaining a large majority in the 1984 general election and 1985 state elections in many North Indian states (Malik, 1988). Simultaneously in the south of India the influx of Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka to Tamil Nadu, the Tamil State of India, was another major challenge to Indira Gandhi's leadership (McDowell, 1996). Over and above these three regional issues, the dispute with Pakistan over the status of Kashmir also demanded considerable time and attention, an issue of conflict that had been ongoing since independence.

The ramifications of these issues were catastrophic for Indira Gandhi. She was assassinated by her own Sikh bodyguards who avenged the desecration of their holy place. Her son Sanjay had earlier died in a plane crash in 1980. With the loss of Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi took over the leadership of the Congress Party and became the next Prime Minister. He was assassinated in 1991 by Tamils who avenged his action of sending the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) to Sri Lanka to fight against the Tamil uprising there (Laqueur, 2000).

Government policies

The Maruti era witnessed the government slowly relaxing its hold over the economy. The government de-classified passenger cars from the luxury segment to the utility segment and identified the automobile industry as a core segment for the nation's economic prosperity (Ranawat and Tiwari, 2009). This policy shift in the early 1980s

led to the entry of four new entrants in the light commercial vehicle (LCV) manufacturing segment, entering into foreign collaborations and establishing manufacturing plants (Pingle, 1999). Four new companies were formed: DCM Toyota (a joint venture between Delhi Cloth Mill and Toyota of Japan); Swaraj Mazda (a joint venture between the public sector organisation Punjab Tractors Limited and Mazda of Japan); Allwyn Nissan (a joint venture of Allwyn, a household manufacturing company and Nissan Motors of Japan); and Eicher Mitsubishi (a joint venture between Eicher, manufacturing agricultural equipments and Mitsubishi of Japan).

The process of economic liberalisation was initiated by Indira Gandhi during the period 1980 to 1984 when she along with a group of senior bureaucrats realised that reformation of the nation's industrial policy was long overdue (Shastri, 1997). As a first step in this direction, investment from Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) was opened up with the objective of attracting substantial capital into the country. The aim was to repay the country's debt, estimated at \$55 billion, as well as generate enough resources to accelerate the pace of development (Misra, 1988). Envisioning new industrial development, business houses were now allowed to enter restricted sectors provided they established their plant in economically backward regions of the country, existing units were permitted to expand their manufacturing base provided they were export oriented, and access to foreign technology was granted.

As previously mentioned, the establishment in 1981 of the state-owned Maruti Udyog from the ashes of MTSPPL was a political and family priority for Indira Gandhi (Becker-Ritterspach and Becker-Ritterspach, 2008). The government then entered into a joint venture agreement with Suzuki Motor Company of Japan, on an equity participation of 74:26 (Kim, 2003). Suzuki promised to launch three of the latest car models. This established a new era in the history of the Indian automobile industry. Maruti-Suzuki revolutionised the Indian automobile industry with its small and economical versions of cars. For the first time consumers had the opportunity to experience a new model, new design, and the latest technology. In addition, India was introduced to Japanese management and business practices for the first time (Kubota, 2006). The company was initially allowed to import essential components from Japan even though local component requirement regulation was still in existence. The first

car rolled off the company's production line in 1984 (Ranawat and Tiwar, 2009). Besides receiving full support from the Federal government, Maruti also secured the backing of the Haryana state government where the plant was located. For example, in 1997, when Maruti wanted to set up a supplier park, the State government readily agreed to Maruti's proposal for a joint venture with the State government and also contributed its share of the 30 million dollar project (Okada and Siddharthan, 2007).

The Government's new industrial policy also facilitated the expansion of existing domestic industries and encouraged their collaboration with foreign firms. For instance, during this period, Hindustan Motors entered into collaboration with Isuzu of Japan for manufacturing diesel engines and power-train assemblies, and with Vauxhall of the UK for design and tooling technology. PAL also entered into a technical collaboration agreement with Nissan of Japan, and AVL of Austria (Sagar and Chandra, 2004).

Economic factors

From the early 1980s, India witnessed a shift from a socialist economic model to a slow economic liberalisation path. The overall economic growth of 3.5 percent, which was nicknamed as the 'Hindu rate of growth' at the eve of Maruti Suzuki era, rose to 5.6 percent during the 1980s. Much of the credit for this has been granted to Indira Gandhi's son, Rajiv Gandhi, who had been newly introduced into the Congress Party and the Government (Shastri, 1997). Indira Gandhi appointed various committees to make recommendations aimed at initiating economic reform (Rosen, 1992). One major achievement was the liberalisation of the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act which required government permission prior to production expansions. Ironically, this liberalisation was met with opposition from the Indian automobile industry which feared that it would soon be overtaken by the new automobile player, the Maruti-Suzuki joint venture (Mukherji, 2009).

Following her assassination Indira Gandhi was followed by her son Rajiv Gandhi as Prime Minister in 1984. The Cambridge educated young Gandhi was looked upon as the new and changing face of India. The call for change by Gandhi reverberated across India and in a span of only five years major reforms were introduced. He

privatised the telecommunications industry and strongly supported the growth of the software industry in the country (Mukherji, 2009). Another reform that specifically helped the automobile sector was the 'broad-banding' policy which allowed firms to switch production lines such as trucks and cars, introduced in 1986 by the Rajiv Gandhi government (Panagariya, 2004). In all, the decade of the 1980s could be seen as a cautious and slow step towards liberalisation but with many restrictions still prevalent. For example, the government was not willing to fully open up the market for international players so as to protect its joint venture, Maruti Suzuki. Additionally, protection continued to be offered to local companies (such as Hindustan Motors and Premier Motors) by exempting them from newly introduced emission standards (D'Costa, 2006).

To offset the positive effects of his reforms Rajiv Gandhi experienced severe opposition against many liberalisation initiatives. For instance, his plan to remove subsidies on some essential items gave a weapon to the opposition parties to regain the lost ground among the peasant masses of the country, including incitement of an urban-rural split (Kohli, 1994). The Congress Party lost control of Haryana, one of the major Hindi speaking States in the country with a powerful peasant base. This led Rajiv Gandhi to retreat from some of his pro-liberalisation measures (Kohli, 1994) and prompted a temporary halt to liberalisation measures, to re-emerge more powerfully in the following decade. Eventually he lost the federal election and the succeeding Prime Minister V.P Singh virtually put a halt to further liberalisation measures by attacking and punishing large industrial houses on the pretext of corruption and large outflows of money from the country (Wariavwalla, 1988). On the eve of larger economic liberalisation in 1991, India was carrying a large deficit on its trading current account.

Social and cultural factors

The politics of liberalisation in the form of pro versus anti-liberalisation measures created a gap between the urban masses who were blamed for enjoying the benefits of liberalisation at the cost of the rural population (Kohli, 1994). The first signs of unrest started showing up through the farmers' movement in the 1980s. Its slogan was *Bharat versus India* where it was argued that Bharat (the original name of India) was being exploited by India, which was projected more as an entity of colonial inheritance (Stern, 2003). Another major politically induced social division was the rise of militant Hindu nationalism in the 1980s. A new political party was formed

(Bharatiya Janata Party) causing severe conflict with Muslims, mainly in northern India (Johnson and Johnson, 2008).

Indian culture was considerably influenced by liberalisation during the 1980s. Liberalisation helped the growth of the middle class segment of the Indian population and became a prime motivational force for MNCs to invest in India (Ganguly-Scrase and Scrase, 2009). Indians received more exposure to a modern lifestyle which in turn influenced their consumerist behaviour and consumption habits (Singh, 2003). Liberalisation enabled middle class Indians to advance their social status and wellbeing by way of emphasising thrift, education, and individual achievement over the Indian aristocratic belief in inheritance and privilege (Sanyal, 2008). The deployment of satellites brought television programmes into the country and televisions soon became gadgets of prestige for the middle class. Television facilitated the growth of a consumerist culture in India (Chakravarty and Gooptu, 2000). The Indian middle class was easily attracted to themes based on Indian values such as family, community, and nation building, which were central to various commercial programmes such as television serials and advertisements (Mankekar, 1999). For example, one of the most popular programmes of the 1980s, *Bharat Ek Khoj*, was a dramatised version of Jawaharlal Nehru's book, *Discovery of India*, which enabled Indians to rediscover the lost glory of the nation and strive towards nation building. Modernisation theory argues that cultural changes are unavoidable as a society advances in industrialisation (Inglehart and Baker, 2000). Cultural changes follow economic development. However, within the Indian context it might be argued that change was more a re-discovery of the Indian value system. Di Maggio (1994) argues that change in the economic conditions of a society does not necessarily change the value system. Rather traditional values keep exerting influence on the cultural changes of a society.

Thus, whereas during the Nehruvian era the exposure to a modern lifestyle and outlook was limited to the privileged upper castes who mainly adorned the bureaucratic echelons of the Indian government, by the time Rajiv Gandhi assumed power this privilege was extended to the middle class as well. By the eve of wider liberalisation in 1991 Indian society was pretty much ready to embrace globalisation,

as the foundation for it was laid during the previous decade by Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi.

Secular nationalism as envisioned by Jawaharlal Nehru and propagated from independence until the late 1970s was reviewed during this decade when liberalisation measures enabled people to think beyond the frames (Gokulsing and Dissanayake, 2004). It is argued that Nehru's rhetoric on secularism was a nationalistic approach against anti-colonial forces, which was vital both for the independence struggle and post-independent nation building (Gabriel, 2006). Hence, Nehruvian secularism may be treated as a temporary phenomenon for the immediate rescuing of the country from falling into the hands of communal forces. Mahatma Gandhi on the other hand, right from the beginning of the freedom struggle advocated a value-based approach which was embedded in Hindu religious teachings. Unfortunately, Gandhi's rhetoric was treated as a religious discourse rather than understanding the values embedded in it (Juergensmeyer, 1993). Thus what many critics may have missed is that the Indian value system is not a separate entity from the Hindu religio-cultural system, and hence Indian values have been often misinterpreted as religious factors forgetting their heritage value. Nehru's secularist ideology was not different from Gandhi's value based ideology. However, the means adopted by both these leaders were quite unique. Mahatma Gandhi followed the essential route of Hinduism which is accommodative in its approach as evident from his philosophy of *satyagraha* (seek the truth) and *ahimsa* (non-violence) (Andrews, 2007). In contrast, Nehru was averse to religion and banked on secularism as a means to prosperity (Tharoor, 2003).

Technology

Having earlier argued that the long period of protectionist practices until the early 1980 enabled India to build up a diverse and fairly sophisticated industrial base, the other side of the coin is that such practices contributed to inefficiency and technological backwardness (Forbes, 1999). Lagging technology was one of the major problems that hampered Indian industry, including the automobile sector, on the eve of the Maruti Suzuki era. The establishment of this joint venture kick-started more technical collaboration with Japanese firms during the 1980s in the automobile sector. During the initial years of Maruti Suzuki, it was reported that there were no suppliers

in the vicinity who could manufacture components according to the required technical standards. The company initiated a programme to build and strengthen a technical competent supplier network around the plant (Sandhya and Mrinalini, 2002). In addition, the company also had problems with dealers in the early years. The large unorganised garage mechanics comprised the service dealers of the Indian automobile industry until Maruti Suzuki cars were introduced onto Indian roads. During the initial years these mechanics worked as anti-Maruti Suzuki agents propagating product and component deficiencies to hide their lack of knowledge in the new technology (Sahay, 2006). This issue was addressed by the company sharing its resource and knowledge base with its component suppliers (Khare, 1997), dealers, and the private mechanics (Sahay, 2006). The arrival of Maruti Suzuki helped to stir into action the other Indian automobile producers. When technology acquisitions started in 1983, Tata Motors responded immediately by increasing its outlay on research and development (Husain and Pathak, 2002). This helped Tata to survive in the Indian liberalised market and compete with other MNC giants such as Suzuki in the early days and Toyota in the later days.

Besides the auto industry, it was realised that India lagged behind in terms of technology in other sectors as well in the 1980s. The nation found compelling reasons to upgrade its technological know-how and skills especially when the international electronic industry was experiencing dramatic advancements with the advent of computers and the internet (Chand, 1991). Rajiv Gandhi could be given the credit for initiating the establishment of the present-day Silicon Valley of India situated in Bangalore. He deregulated the computer industry and created the first Software Technology Park in Bangalore in the mid 1980s (Chakravartty, 2004).

Institutional factors

Education is a major institutional factor identified as having an impact on international business. The Maruti Suzuki era witnessed widespread educational development in India. During the sixth and seventh Five Year Plans that occurred during the decade, India made large advances towards achieving increased literacy and diversified educational development aided by massive expansion in the number of educational institutions both elementary and professional. By the end of the sixth Five

Year Plan (1979-84) there were 755,000 educational institutions in the country which increased to 789,541 during the seventh Five Year Plan (1985-1990), compared to 231,00 in 1951 (Agrawal and Aggarwal, 1990; 1994). Subsequently the literacy rate in India which was 43.5 percent at the dawn of the decade rose to 52.2 percent by the end of the decade (Chandra, 2005). Another contributing factor in the educational sector was the priority accorded in the seventh Five Year Plan for universal elementary education to be achieved by 1990, complete eradication of illiteracy from the 15-35 year age group, qualitative improvement of educational standards that could meet the national level requirements and needs, and modernisation of technical education (Sharma, 2002). This growth of literacy during the Maruti Suzuki era would later become an attractive factor for MNCs to establish business operations in India.

Another institutional factor to be considered during this period relates to industrial relations and the role of trade unions. Enterprise level unionism was unheard of in India until Maruti Suzuki brought in the Japanese style of management (Venkataramani, 1990). As discussed earlier, trade unions were a vital part of political activity in the country and their legacy could be traced back to the independence struggle. However, there was a considerable decrease in the number of industrial conflicts as the Maruti Suzuki decade advanced. Venkataratnam (1998) reports that the number of industrial disputes in public sector enterprises decreased from 707 in 1981 to 361 by 1989, and in the private sector from 1882 in 1981 to 659 by 1989.

The Maruti Suzuki decade could be understood as a period of experimentation for the introduction of Japanese management techniques. The first Chairman of Maruti Suzuki and his deputy were ardent fans of Japanese management techniques and they propagated them from day one of the joint venture (Venkataramani, 1990). It is interesting to discover that the first Chairman, Mr. V Krishnamurthy, used a hybrid model in his approach to the introduction of Japanese techniques (Venkataramani, 1990). Three appealing values were emphasised by Krishnamurthy: 'we' feeling among the workers; one large 'family'; and 'service' to the nation. These values were highly appealing to Indian workers and acted as a piggy-back for the Japanese philosophy. Thus, Indian workers came to regard the two sets of values as complimentary rather than conflicting. The 'we' feeling stands on the platform of the collective nature of Indian society. The 'family' orientation also is a core cultural trait

found in the Indian society. The third factor 'service' to the nation appeals to the patriotic nature of Indians. Hindu teachings about affinity to the nation revolve around the concept of 'Bharat Mata' which means *Mother India*. In the Indian familial orientation mother is always viewed and treated with utmost respect. There exist many female goddesses among whom Bharat Mata also has an important place of adoration in society by means of an emotional bond (Alter, 2004). This emotional bond triggers in people a sense of obligation to the nation which interprets service to the nation as one's primary duty (Leslie-Chaden, 2004). Haryana, the Indian State where Maruti Suzuki has its plant, is a majority Hindu State and is historically significant in the Hindu tradition as the place where Lord Krishna delivered his epic *Bhagwat Gita* sermon, offered as advice to Arjuna before he fought the great Mahabharata War (Bindloss et al, 2007). The Mahabharata war is core to the Hindus in terms of patriotism and especially the role of Gods in aiding the war for the triumph of good over evil. Therefore, introducing 'service' to the nation could be viewed as striking the right chord in the Hindu heartland of the nation.

Standing on this strong cultural platform of Indian values and traditions, Krishnamurthy introduced his Japanese management techniques. He insisted on building a Maruti culture by establishing core Japanese elements such as quality, waste elimination, employee identification with the company, wearing of identical uniforms, open canteen, morning exercise, and open communication by means of Indian values based on collectivism, family orientation, and duty to the nation (Venkataramani, 1990).

Krishnamurthy could also be remembered for his tactical approach to the introduction of enterprise level bargaining in the company. In the beginning he followed a one union policy by appointing a Congress Party affiliated union leader to represent the workers (Mathur, 1991). However, the political ambitions of the union leader and his close contacts with the Chairman and top management started to distance him away from the workers and middle managers which eventually led to his departure. The employees started thinking in the Japanese direction of 'we can manage on our own', ultimately falling to the wide net cast by Krishnamurthy for enterprise level union in the form of the Maruti Sahayog Samiti (Maruti Cooperative Society) which was started in a tactical manner to encourage knowledge sharing and cooperation among

employees at various levels and departments (Venkataramani, 1990). This was not an entirely successful approach and did breed some resentment and conflict. Krishnamurthy has been accused of misunderstanding the sense of freedom of Indian workers. Research on industrial conflicts at Maruti Suzuki shows that a major cause was management's intrusion into the rights of workers by forcing a union leader on them and the insistence on the role of Maruti Sahayog Smaiti to improve quality and productivity, but ignoring the genuine concerns of workers (Venkataramani 1990; Mathur 1991). It is noteworthy that Indian workers are educated and well informed about their rights, thanks to the high political involvement at workplace and the role of labour legislation and Standing Orders (Saha, 2008). So although we find traces of hybridisation in people management at the company it could be argued that this was superficial and a covert means of bringing Japanese techniques into the plant.

However, Maruti Suzuki's approach was arguably more informed than that introduced at another Indo-Japanese joint venture, that of DCM Toyota. The plant like Maruti Suzuki was also situated outside Delhi, at Surajpur in Uttar Pradesh State. DCM Toyota's approach was more ethnocentric and more insistent on strict Japanese production practices (Mathur, 1991). Right from the start DCM Toyota was insistent on enterprise level unionism (D'Costa, 1998). Further, in order to keep external union elements at bay DCM Toyota practiced the policy of recruiting young boys and freshers with the hope that they could train and induce them into the Toyota culture. Unfortunately for the company, once these freshers became permanent in their jobs they fell into line with hostile external elements (Mathur 1991). During the same decade, and situated in the same geographical vicinity, we witness Maruti Suzuki having more success in maintaining industrial peace than DCM Toyota. Maruti Suzuki proved to be an overall success and soon became a household name in India. In contrast, DCM Toyota failed as a joint venture and Toyota left the country.

The post-liberalisation period (since 1991)

The previous decade witnessed significant changes in economic policies with some bold steps towards liberalisation. These continued after 1991. However, political pressures and instability were never far from the surface and acted to temporarily arrest the advance of liberalisation in the country. Post-liberalisation economic growth,

along with the ascending middle class, has attracted major automobile players into the Indian market. Prior to the arrival of the Maruti-Suzuki joint venture the only players in the Indian automobile industry were Hindustan Motors, Premier Automobiles, and Standard Motors. In 1970, Hindustan Motors and Premier Automobiles had market shares of 51% and 26% respectively (D'Costa, 1995). Until the arrival of Maruti-Suzuki, India's annual automobile production was only 40,000 vehicles (Mohanty, Sahu, and Pati, 1994). Maruti-Suzuki, albeit with full political support, revolutionised the Indian automobile industry in the passenger car segment. By 2000 Maruti-Suzuki enjoyed sales figures of 340,182 vehicles, equivalent to almost 60% market share (www.marutisuzuki.com).

The arrival of Suzuki was the result of the Indian government's first phase of deregulation of economic policies started in the 1980s. During this decade, total vehicle production increased from 126,000 (1980-81) to 350,000 (1989-90), with the passenger car segment recording an increase from 47,000 to 224,000 during the same period (Narayanan, 1997). The decade of the 1980s can be viewed as a period of joint ventures in the automobile segment in India. Japanese companies were the most prominent in this development. Besides Suzuki, other Japanese automobile manufacturers that entered into joint venture with Indian companies were Toyota (with DCM to form DCM Toyota), Mazda (with Swaraj Motors to form Swaraj Mazda), Nissan (with Allwyn Motors to form Allwyn Nissan), and Mitsubishi (with Eicher Motors to form Eicher Motors) (D'Costa, 1995). In the light commercial vehicle segment the local active players were Tata, Mahindra, and Bajaj. The Japanese joint ventures (except Maruti-Suzuki) also operated in the light commercial vehicle segment and competed with the above-mentioned local manufacturers. In 1989, local manufacturers enjoyed a combined market share of 67%, whilst the four Japanese joint ventures had a share of 33% (D'Costa, 1995: 489). Implicit in this discussion is that the passenger car segment was still lacking enough players, the only addition being Maruti-Suzuki cars. Passenger cars were still considered a luxury and hence attracted less attention from policy makers.

It was only after 1991 that the global automobile industry started to regard India as a serious potential market. Ford Motors entered India in 1995 through a joint venture (50:50) with Mahindra Motors, to form Mahindra Ford India Limited. Subsequently

the equity division changed to 85:15 and the company was renamed Ford India (www.media.ford.com). Ford commenced local manufacturing in 1999 but by 2010 had captured only 2% of the passenger car market (stock watch, 2010). Also in 1995, Honda Motors entered India through a joint venture with Siel Limited and commenced passenger car manufacturing in 1998 (www.hondacityindia.com). Additionally, Toyota entered India in 1997 through a joint venture with Kirloskar to form Toyota Kirloskar Motors, and commenced production in 1999. By 2009 the joint venture's annual output had reached marginally in excess of 50,000 vehicles. Also worth mentioning is the Korean car manufacturer Hyundai which entered India in 1996 and commenced production in 1998. Its annual sales have increased from 8447 cars in 1998 to 290,000 in 2009 (www.hyundai.com).

In 2000 the Government fully liberalised the economy thus paving the way for the establishment of wholly-owned subsidiaries in India. Since 2000 almost all the major global car manufacturers have established their presence in India, amongst them being General Motors, Mercedes Benz, Volkswagen, Skoda, Volvo, and Audi. Furthermore, the 10-year Automotive Mission Plan (AMP) created by the government in 2006 has prompted even more focussed attention and support on the automotive industry in India (Belzowski, Henderson, and Koppinger, 2007).

Besides the global players, local manufacturers remain active in the industry intensely competing with the world brands. Tata Motors, Mahindra and Mahindra, and the earlier car manufacturers such as Hindustan Motors and Premier Automobiles are still active. Tata Motors, though established in 1945 was focused only on heavy vehicles until 1998 when it manufactured its first indigenously built passenger car, Indica. In a short span, it captured a substantial market share, second only to Maruti-Suzuki, and commenced exports to Spain, Italy, and South Africa (Engardio, 2007). The company created news in the global market when it acquired the luxury brands Jaguar and Landrover in 2008 (Poddar, 2010). In 2008 Tata launched the small car 'Nano', the cheapest car ever manufactured in the world with a price tag of \$2500 (O'Connor, 2008). In early 2010 the company held over 200,000 orders for the car and the single plant was running at full capacity of 100,000 vehicles per annum (Herald Sun, 15 January, 2010). Soon after Tata launched a 5-passenger van, the Magic Ibis, for an on-road price of \$US2000 (ibid). Additionally, Mahindra Motors which initially sold

tractors and assembled the Willys Jeep in India, also ventured into the passenger car segment in 2002 and now manufactures the sports utility vehicles ‘Scorpio’, ‘Bolero’, and ‘Xylo’ (www.mahindra.com).

India’s car market is forecast to grow three times over the next decade until 2020, from its current level of approximately two million vehicles (www.theage.com.au). Table 5.1 shows the growth path of the market since 1994.

Table 5.1
Indian car production: 1994-2009 (in millions)

Year	Production	Year	Production
1994-5	0.26	2002-03	0.61
1995-6	0.35	2003-04	0.84
1996-7	0.41	2004-05	1.03
1997-8	0.40	2005-06	1.11
1998-9	0.39	2006-07	1.32
1999-2000	0.58	2007-08	1.52
2000-01	0.52	2008-09	1.52
2001-02	0.56	2009-10	1.96

Source: Automotive Component Manufacturers Association of India:
www.acmainfo.com/industry-stat1.htm

Political factors

Even though the fruit of liberalisation were being reaped in the form of increased GDP growth, Rajiv Gandhi’s government was cornered by political scandals and allegations of corruption and kickbacks (Denoan, 1998). As a result, the Congress Party lost the Federal election in 1989 and India had a minority government formed by a coalition of many political parties leading to political instability for the next 17 months. Another election was declared in 1991 after two governments, one led by V.P Singh for 11 months and Chandrasekhar for 5 months, were unsuccessful due to

internal political squabbles. The Congress Party won the federal election and P.V. Narasimha Rao was elected as the ninth Prime Minister of India. He was a veteran statesman and scholar, fluent in many Indian languages as well as French, Spanish, German, English, and Persian (Chand, 1991). He appointed another scholar, Dr. Manmohan Singh, as the Finance Minister in his cabinet, who led the country towards greater economic liberalisation.

Even though Narasimha Rao succeeded in finishing his five year term in office, he was always troubled with problems both from within and outside the party. By the end of his tenure, the Congress Party was boiling with internal squabbles and was on the verge of collapse. In the following federal election held in 1996, the Congress Party was defeated and a loose coalition *United Front* formed the government after a mere 13 day rule by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The United Front government had two Prime Ministers within a short span of two years and a federal election was declared again in 1998 which brought back the BJP government to rule for a full term of 5 years. The next election was held in 2004 when the Congress Party returned to power after a break of seven years which completed its term in 2009 and was re-elected to rule for the next five years. When Congress returned to power in 2004, the master architect of modern economic liberalisation, Dr. Manmohan Singh, was elected by the Congress Party to become the Prime Minister and has continued in the post thereafter.

In the midst of the 1991 election campaign Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated by Tamil suicide bombers at an election rally. His death disrupted the continuity of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty as a ruling family since independence. However, the family had carved a niche in the family-oriented Indian society and had become adorned as the Nehru-Gandhi *parivar* (family). Enthusiastic supporters celebrated them as the 'first family' of the country (Bhargava, 2005). Continuing political instability and internal struggles within the Congress Party led its leaders to realise the need for a Nehru family member to be at the helm of affairs. As a result, the widow of Rajiv Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi, took over as President of the Congress Party.

The propaganda machine of the Congress Party was keen to perpetuate the importance of the Nehru-Gandhi family name in Indian politics and laid emphasis on a new idiom

that encompassed stability, sacrifice, and progress (Kumar 2003). These three factors go to the cultural roots of Indian society. First, stability is valued in India. The change process in Indian society is very slow unlike in many other cultures, especially in the West. Frequent changes of government and Prime Minister proved to be irritating for the country. Second, sacrifice is something related to family affairs in the Indian context where parents or the head of a family tend to make sacrifices for their subjects (family members). The Nehru family has a long history of sacrifice. Nehru sacrificed his material comforts to serve the country, and his daughter and grandson were both assassinated. These events planted the Nehru family name in the heart of Indian society. Third, economic liberalisation was moving forward apace and there was a new awakening among the Indian masses, an aura of progress was everywhere. In short, the Nehru family name was capable of re-inventing itself to match new realities and continued to command respect across the country.

On the flip side, during the early 1990s, there was a rise in Hindu fundamentalism spearheaded by some Hindu organisations which culminated in the destruction of the Babri Mosque in 1992 (Jindal, 1995). Various Hindu organisations joined together and came to be known as Sangh Parivar (Sangh family) which self-proclaimed itself as the custodian of the Hindu faith and caretaker of all Hindus (Lochtefeld, 2001). Again we see the concept of 'family' coming to the fore in Indian society and the political scene. The Indian political context became significantly polarised between the Nehru family represented by the Congress Party and the Sangh family represented by the BJP.

Government policies and economic factors

Major policy changes across different areas of the economy were initiated in 1991. These included the liberalisation of the 'licence raj' (eliminating restrictions on imports and exports); reduced entry barriers for foreign companies to set up and operate in the country; privatisation of airlines, telecommunication and power sector; easing restrictions on the banking and insurance industry; opening up the stock market for foreign investment; and easing restrictions on foreign exchange flows in and out of the country (Khanna and Palepu, 1999).

India's balance of payment crisis in 1991 was the major reason behind economic liberalisation (Budhwar, 2004). At the eve of economic liberalisation the fiscal deficit was 3.4 percent of GDP as compared with 1.7 percent a decade earlier leading to high inflation, deteriorating exports, and an increasing balance of payment crisis (Nayar, 1998). In early 1991 the country had reserves of only \$1B which was equivalent to only two weeks of imports (Budhwar, 2004). This resulted in the downgrading of India's credit rating by foreign agencies pushing the country to the brink of bankruptcy (Joshi and Little, 1996). The government was forced to initiate strong fiscal retrenchment measures to create a healthy financial sector, facilitate market determination of interest rates which would in turn help in the efficient allocation of resources, and prepare the financial system for increasing international competition (Sharma, 2005). The rupee was devalued, restrictions were imposed on imports, and more focus was given to exports so as to improve the foreign exchange reserves (Nayar, 1998). Positive trends were noticed almost immediately. There was a reduction in the combined fiscal deficit of federal and state governments from 9.4 percent of GDP in 1991 to 7.0 percent in the following years, and the balance of payment crisis was eliminated by 1993 (Ahluwalia, 2002).

Another area where the nation embarked on reforms was the industrial sector. The pursuit of economic nationalism propagated and practiced since independence was no longer achieving its desired results, despite its appeal to patriotic endeavours. On the contrary, it was now working to detract India from economic health and international competitiveness. Until 1991 Indian industries were either under public-sector control or else were highly regulated with licence requirements. As part of the liberalisation measures all except 18 industries were absolved from requiring licences, which was later reduced to 14 (Chadha et al, 2001). By the new millennium this was further reduced to only three industries that were government controlled - defence, atomic energy, and railways - with the rest either fully or partially privatised (Ahluwalia, 2002).

As part of the reform agenda in trade policy, the government's export-import policy plan introduced widespread changes in the licensing of imports and exports, resulting in restrictions being limited to only 45 percent of commodities in 1994/95 as opposed to 87 percent in 1987/88 (Topalova, 2004). Quantitative restrictions on imports and

exports were gradually removed after 1991 and by the turn of the following decade only nationally sensitive items such as explosives, weapons, medicines, and drugs were under the purview of restrictions (Balasubramanyam, 2004). However, Ahluwalia (2002) has argued that the pace of reform in trade policy has been very slow. This policy of gradualism has cost India dearly and has caused it to drastically lose ground to countries such as China. For instance, Ahluwalia (2002) points out that it took a decade from 1991 to release items with high export potential such as garments, shoes, and toys from production restrictions, thus affecting export earnings.

Besides fiscal, industrial, and trade policy, reforms were initiated in other areas as well. For instance, foreign direct investment regime was liberalised and as of today 100 percent foreign ownership is permitted in a large number of industries. Inward FDI stock as a percentage of GDP was 5.7 in 2006 compared to 0.5 in 1990 (UNCTAD, 2007). However, these figures are still quite low when compared to foreign direct investment in China which was 11.1 percent of GDP in 2006 (UNCTAD, 2007). This again highlights Ahluwalia's (2002) point of gradualism witnessed in the liberalisation process in Indian economy.

Social and cultural factors

Liberalisation precipitated a shake up in Indian social institutions. Politically the country was moving more towards stability. People were more inclined to support national parties and started moving away from regional parties (Kumar, 2003). However, during the initial years of liberalisation when the Indian middle class first started rising there was a tilt towards Hindu nationalism which also witnessed some communal stratification across the country. Fernandes (2006) argues that the rise of civic consciousness and a feeling of national identity, resulting from liberalisation, were misinterpreted by Hindu nationalist forces as purified Hindu citizenship. Purification is a core concept in Hindu religious practices and faith. There was an attempt to weave in the concept of purification with that of nationalism resulting in the emergence of the quest for a puritanic society free from disruptive elements, primarily Muslims (Fernandes 2006). This movement introduced an element of polarisation into Indian society at the time.

The impact of liberalisation and globalisation was experienced in other social strata as well. For example, the traditional joint and large family structure has slowly but steadily been transformed into that of the nuclear family. Kashyap (2007) argues that globalisation has enabled members to break away from joint families and migrate to places where employment is available resulting in more nuclear families in the urban and metropolitan regions of India. Research by Kapadia (2005) shows that the nuclear family does not involve a complete cut-off from the parent family; rather it is merely a situational response to employment and survival demands. Nuclear families resemble subsidiaries of a giant family with operational relationships maintained intact by fulfilling the expected obligations of a kin to his or her family.

Another aspect of change in Indian society as a result of liberalisation is increased prosperity and diminishing job security (Donner et al, 2008). While plenty of opportunities have arisen as a result of liberalisation, the traditional permanent job structure has also been changing with employees switching jobs or being separated from organisations as part of the adaptation to modern HRM practices (Bhattacharjea, 2006). This in turn had resulted in a hybridised societal pattern where individualism is embraced to some extent, whilst on the flip side a sense of insecurity has prompted Indian society to remain collective.

One of the significant developments resulting from the liberalisation of the Indian economy has been the rise of a consumerist culture. The same is attributed to the mass spread of television channels across the country, through which commercial notions and advertisements penetrate directly into people's homes. Luce (2006) reports that there are 150 television channels in the country and the number is growing fast. Johnson's (2001) study on the role of media on the lifestyle of rural India suggests that this commercialisation has spread beyond the urban areas.

The opportunities thrown up by liberalisation in the form of education, employment, and exposure to modern culture has infused a new sense of national identity among the Indian population. The rise of Hindu nationalism in the early 1990s could be viewed as an attempt to seek recognition from cultures especially Western culture (Hansen, 1999). In pursuit of such a cultural parity Indian culture does not hesitate to accept elements from Western culture to re-format itself (Radhakrishnan, 2009). This

cultural hybridisation does not imply that the essence of the Indian core cultural ethos is being discarded. Rather a rejuvenisation process is in train using Western popular concepts such as individual rights, liberty, and feeling of self.

The rise of the middle class is another significant development of the post-liberalisation era. The middle class has become the torch bearers, apologetics, and sometimes missionaries of Indian culture to the rest of the world. The growth and spread of Indian philosophy and Indian spiritual movements such as Ramakrishna Mission, Chinmaya Mission, International Society of Krishna Consciousness, and Mata Amritanandamayi are a few examples of this. The growing popularity of Bollywood which produces mostly culturally hybridized themes such as practicing an ultra modern lifestyle set in an Indian context has given a boost to the globalisation attempts of Indian culture (Thussu, 2008). Punathambekar (2005) argues that Bollywood movies in recent years have enabled the Indian community to expand beyond its geographical border by forming a 'Great Indian Family' and bringing the huge Diaspora into the fold. Concomitantly, the regular interaction of the local community with the Diaspora has enabled life style changes in India. However, it is interesting to note that even though the influence of the Diaspora's culture on local culture is remarkable, it is not at the cost of local styles and cultural sensibilities (Lakha, 1999). Therefore, it could be argued that the two-way interaction of culture has enabled India to embark upon a hybridisation process whereby the best of foreign cultures and those of Indian culture are interwoven. India as a nation has always accepted, adopted, and encouraged attractive elements from foreign cultures as is evident from the chronology of events from the original Aryan migration, through the Mughal empire, to British colonial rule.

Technology

After 1991, the Indian government embarked on a liberalised approach to technological advancement with programmes initiated to support the absorption of imported technologies by industry, develop and demonstrate indigenous technologies, help individual innovators to become technology-based entrepreneurs, and commercialise indigenous technologies (Krishnan, 2003). Since the signing of the GATT agreement by India in 1993 a large number of global companies have

established research and development centres in technologically intensive sectors in the country to capitalise on highly skilled and cheap labour (Bowonder and Richardson, 2000). More than 100 foreign firms have opened research and development centres in India over the last decade (TIFAC, 2005). Subsequently almost all MNCs irrespective of industry have formed at least one research and development centre in India. This increased competition has also encouraged local Indian companies to expand their research and development activities (Kumar and Aggarwal, 2005). India now ranks ninth in world rankings in terms of spending on research and development and is fast advancing (Dutz and Dahlman, 2007). India's advancement in the last decade in information and communication technology is now well acknowledged. Important home-grown companies such as Infosys, Wipro, Tata Infosys, and HCL are now internationally recognised for advanced software technology. Notable achievements also exist in other Indian industries. For example, Indian drug companies have more applications for patents pending with the US Food and Drug Administration than any other country (Luce, 2006).

Institutional factors

Liberalisation has brought in various challenges to the traditional human resource (personnel management) practices in India. Market challenges have initiated fundamental restructuring with an emphasis on greater flexibility, competitiveness, and accountability in workplace activities in order to address competition (Raman and Singh, 2006). This has impacted on industrial relations in the country especially in certain labour sensitive States such as Kerala and West Bengal where Communists are in the majority. This differential approach in industrial relations has led to the categorisation of the states into pro-employer states and pro-labour states. In a survey carried out between 1980 and 1997 Aghion et al (2008) put West Bengal in the extremely pro-worker category followed by Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Gujarat, and Rajasthan which were only in the early amendment stages towards a pro-employer stance. Setting aside Kerala, the latest development trends show that all the other States mentioned above have made considerable advances in their institutional reform with Karnataka, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra now being viewed as investment friendly states along with Andhra Pradesh (Bagchi and Kurian, 2005). Apart from major institutional reforms initiated by the federal government, respective

state governments also have initiated reforms in order to attract more investors (Aghion et al, 2008). Competition is now fierce between different States to attract additional investment. For instance, when Tata's revolutionary Nano project was met with local opposition in West Bengal, Gujarat immediately grabbed the opportunity to offer attractive incentives and succeeded (Ganguly, 2009).

There have been considerable reforms in labour legislation in India since 1991 (Bhattacharjea, 2006). However, Indian labour laws are still rated among the most rigid by the World Bank (Chandran, 2009). The strike at Toyota Bangalore in 2006, the recent strike by pilots of Jet Airways, and the murder of the HRM manager of an auto component manufacturing plant in Tamil Nadu by trade union workers in 2009 (Philip, Mohan and George, 2009) exemplify this issue. One negative impact of estranged industrial relations is that more jobs are being shifted from the organised sector to the unorganised sector by firms in order to avoid conflict in industrial relations (Bhowmik, 2009).

Chapter 6

Methodology, Data Collection, and Analysis

This chapter presents a justification for the chosen qualitative methodology of conceptual ordering. It also describes the emergent nature of the data collection and analysis, and an audit trail of the 30 interviewees for the study together with an explanation of how significant concepts emerged at key points of the collection and analysis of the data.

I commenced my doctoral studies in 2007 at a time when events at Toyota Kirloskar Motors (TKM) had been prominent in the news headlines in India for several years. The company appeared to be in turmoil with a succession of disruptive episodes due to strikes and unrest. Toyota is a multinational company with affiliated companies around the world. It had always possessed an enviable record of industrial harmony and was on the verge of taking over from General Motors as the largest producer of motor vehicles in the world. It trumpeted a slogan of ‘respect for people’ based around the concepts embedded in the Toyota Way and the Toyota Production System. Yet industrial unrest had been endemic in TKM for several years and the company was falling well short of its ambitious targets for production volumes and market share in India. How could this have happened? I contend that my Indian heritage provides me with a suitable background to understand the cultural nuances of the research setting. Combined with my preference of applying a critical interpretation to events, and my tendency to seek emancipatory meanings within research settings, I believe this provides me with the necessary insight to analyse the research question that forms the basis of this thesis.

Research topic and research question

Due to the prominence of the problems at TKM plus my own Indian background and long-standing interest in organisational change and culture, my research topic and research question derived fairly smoothly from these developments. Holliday (2002) divides the initial stage of the research process into three phases as shown in table 6.1.

Table 6.1
Initial stage of the research process

Determining the area or topic
This refers to what is going to be studied. Research topics can be fruitfully obtained from previous interests or concerns, or from things that happen in a work or social situation. Researchers must be able to take advantage of any opportunities that may arise to find a suitable research topic
Determining the research question
This refers to the researcher deciding what she wants to find out. Suitable research questions relate to what we all ask about things which fascinate, puzzle, anger, and shock us about social life. Such questions can vary from fairly specific to not very specific
Determining the research setting
This refers to the location and boundaries within which the research will take place. This setting can vary from one specific unit, such as a case study, to a multitude of different settings across organisational or geographical spaces, such as a comparative study

I entered into my doctoral study with the broad research topic of ‘the operations of Toyota in India’. In accordance with the arguments of Holliday (2002) this topic derived from my own long-standing interest in organisational change and culture. I was able to marry this interest with my knowledge of Indian culture to choose a topic of current relevance. My research question was also fairly broad ‘*why has TKM experienced such a tumultuous journey since its establishment in 1999?*’ In devising this question I was able to take the opportunity presented by the current newsworthiness of events at TKM. The research question was purposefully kept fairly broad because of the unknown nature of the causal factors and my unwillingness to be too precipitous in narrowing down the research question too much at the commencement of the research. With regard to the determination of the research setting this was not a matter of major thought or concern. TKM only operates from one site, Bangalore in India, and so the location and boundaries of the research were specifically determined by the geography of the problem.

Qualitative or quantitative approach?

The nature of the research topic and question lends itself more easily to qualitative research. The reasons for the industrial unrest were unknown at the commencement of the research. Important issues and variables would have to be discovered through an

emergent form of research. I was interested in understanding the personal meanings and interpretations behind the flow of events over several years of TKM operations in India. These complex dynamic and longitudinal issues are less easily managed by quantitative analysis. However, they form the essence of qualitative research: ‘with qualitative data one can preserve chronological flow, see precisely which events led to which consequences and derive fruitful explanations’ (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 1). Additionally, researching a topic as diverse as industrial unrest presupposes the vital significance of inter-personal relationships. Because qualitative research enjoys ‘a preference for naturally occurring data’ (Silverman, 2000: 8) these are more fruitfully uncovered and understood through the medium of such methods as observation and unstructured interviews.

Mason (1996: 4) argues that qualitative research is grounded in a broadly interpretivist philosophical position ‘in the sense that it is concerned with how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced, or produced’. Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 3) provide a more extensive definition as shown in Box 6.1 below.

Box 6.1
Definition of qualitative research

Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of meanings people bring to them.

A number of key concepts in this definition illuminate the essential nature of qualitative research – interpretive, visible, transform, representations, natural settings, make sense of, and meanings. Flick (2002) argues that because life worlds are now increasingly pluralised, qualitative research is specifically relevant to the study of social relations. Such pluralisation ‘requires a new sensitivity to the empirical study of issues’ (p. 2). I was aware that the nature of the interaction between Japanese culture and the varied cultures of India would introduce a certain degree of pluralism into the research that required a sensitive approach. According to Mason (1996) qualitative

research employs methods of data collection which are flexible enough to provide this sensitivity to the social context. She argues that in complex environments qualitative research ‘aims to produce rounded understandings on the basis of rich, contextual, and detailed data’ (p. 4). Qualitative research aims to achieve this through being a ‘situated activity that locates the observer in the world’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: 3). This approach implies ‘a preference for meaning, documenting the world from the point of view of the people studied [thus providing] a deeper understanding of social phenomena than can be obtained from purely quantitative data’ (Silverman, 2000: 8). Because qualitative research deals with ‘the analysis of words and images rather than numbers’ it is able to analyse ‘areas of social reality which statistics cannot measure’ (Silverman, 2000: 8). This opinion meets with agreement from Miles and Huberman (1994: 7) who regard the main task of qualitative research as being able to ‘explicate the ways people in particular settings come to understand, account for, take action, and otherwise manage their day-to-day situations’. For Mason (1996: 6) this involves the researcher in producing ‘social explanations to intellectual puzzles’.

Miles and Huberman (1994: 10) present a number of strengths of qualitative data as shown in Box 6.2 below.

Box 6.2
Strengths of qualitative data
Focus on naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings, so we have a strong handle on what ‘real life’ is like
Local groundedness, collected in close proximity to a specific situation
Emphasis on a specific case, a focused and bounded phenomenon embedded in its context. There is a possibility of understanding latent, underlying, or non obvious issues
Richness and holism, strong potential for revealing complexity, thick descriptions that are vivid, nested in context that rings true to the reader
Collected over a sustained period making them powerful for studying process rather than a snapshot
Emphasis on people’s lived experience useful for locating meanings people place on events, processes, and structures of their lives, and for connecting these meanings to the social world around them

Flick (2002) emphasises that qualitative research is not based on a unified theoretical and methodological concept. Miles and Huberman (1994: 5) stress that qualitative research 'may be conducted in dozens of ways, many with long traditions behind them'. Various different theoretical approaches and their methods characterise the research practice resulting from 'different developmental lines in the history of qualitative research which evolved partly in parallel and partly in sequence' (Flick, 2002: 7). It is beyond the scope of this thesis to survey these numerous approaches and their historical development. For the purpose of this thesis I will remain broadly within the interpretivist tradition for the primary reason that it enables the researcher to produce 'well grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes in identifiable local contexts' (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 1). In order to achieve this objective a number of conditions for the conduct of the research must be adhered to. Mason (1996: 5) emphasises that the research should be strategically, systematically and rigorously conducted, not 'casual', 'ad hoc' or 'rigid', and yet should be 'flexible and contextual, sensitive to changing contexts and situations'.

Within the interpretivist tradition, Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 4) note that in order to get a better understanding of the subject matter at hand researchers deploy a wide range of inter-connected interpretive practices: 'each practice makes the world visible in a different way...[h]ence there is frequently a commitment to using more than one interpretive practice in any study'. Miles and Huberman (1994: 7) remind us that most analysis is done with words: 'these words can be assembled, sub-clustered, broken into semiotic segments...[t]hey can be organised to permit the researcher to contrast, compare, analyse, and bestow patterns upon them'.

Conceptual ordering

For the purpose of this thesis the methodology of conceptual ordering was chosen as the analytical and organising approach for collecting, ordering, and making sense of the data. Conceptual ordering refers to 'the organisation of data into discrete categories (and sometimes ratings) according to their properties and dimensions and then using description to elucidate those categories' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 19). Thus, researchers attempt to make sense out of their data by organising them according to a classificatory scheme. Items are identified from data and are defined

according to their various properties and dimensions. When presenting their interpretations researchers present various amounts of descriptive material using a variety of communication styles.

Strauss and Corbin (1998: 20-21) outline three different modes of conceptual ordering (although these are not necessarily exhaustive of all possibilities).

1. Ethnographic accounts: these reflect attempts to depict the perspectives and actions of the portrayed actors, combined with an explicit ordering of those into plausible non-fictional accounts. The final presentation is organised around well-developed and ordered themes, but the themes are not connected to form an integrated theoretical scheme.
2. Ordering data according to steps or stages that often are aptly described. Often missing from such schemes are the larger theoretical schemes that explain what drives the central or organising process from one step to another. Nor is variation built into the schemes.
3. Organising materials according to different types of actors or actions, including both persons and organisations. Headings and sub-headings pertain to those types. The types usually represent well-ordered and developed concepts but what is missing is a larger explanatory theoretical scheme.

All these three modes are represented in my research findings, although they were not pre-conceived at the commencement of the study. First, the findings represent a non-fictional ethnographic account of the significant actors at TKM presented in the form of ordered themes. Second, the findings are presented in the form of stages that unfold over chronological time. Third, well-ordered concepts are presented under various headings and sub-headings as applicable to separate actors and actions. What is obvious from these three different modes is that conceptual ordering does not represent an attempt at theorising, but it can be used as a precursor to theorising. Despite this deficiency, Strauss and Corbin (1998: 20) are adamant that conceptual ordering 'is the desired research end point of some investigations'. This is the approach I have taken in this thesis.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) present the concept of conceptual ordering within the overall context of their book dealing with grounded theory techniques. However, because grounded theory is distinguishable within the literature on qualitative research as an approach based on theory-building, it would be difficult to put forward the claim that conceptual ordering is a form of grounded theory. However, it could be argued that conceptual ordering does share a number of common features with grounded theory. First, there exists the common basis of a reliance on ‘emergence’ rather than ‘preconception’. The concept of emergence is presented by Glaser (2001: 176) in the following terms:

‘We do not know what we are looking for when we start. Everything emerges. We do not preconceive anything. The research problem emerges, our sample emerges, concepts emerge, the relevant literature emerges, and finally our theory emerges. We simply cannot say prior to the collection and analysis of data what our study will look like’.

In line with the dictum of emergence I entered the field with little or no preconceptions over and above already existing common knowledge. I allowed myself to be guided by the evolving data. Once my analysis of the preliminary internet search and early interviews yielded the initial categories I searched for comparisons to extend the analysis and fill emerging gaps. This introduces the second common feature between conceptual ordering and grounded theory, namely that of theoretical sampling. Theoretical sampling is the process of determining where to sample next. As concepts and ideas emerge theoretical sampling allows the researcher to go to other sources to find more data. Later respondents are chosen because they are sources of information that may ‘illuminate emerging concepts’ (Glaser, 2001: 181). This process cannot be preconceived. It is emergent. Sources ‘emerge developmentally’ (Glaser, 2001: 180). Once the initial unit is left, the researcher does not know in advance who the participants will be or where they are to be found. Because of the constraints on time and resources, not to mention the geographic distance between my base in Australia and the research site in India, it was not possible to indulge in constant theoretical sampling from one interview to the next as the research progressed. In total three trips to India were organised for the purposes of

interviewing and observing, together with one trip to Toyota's regional headquarters in Bangkok. During each of these trips data was collected in a bunch. However, as far as possible I listened to the tape recording of each interview on a progressive basis and reviewed my field notes as frequently as possible in order to obtain clues for the direction of my next interview. Accordingly, I was able to stick fairly closely to the demands of pure theoretical sampling.

As interviews and observations build up in number and intensity the evolving process is driven by the simultaneous activities of data collection, coding, and analysis. This introduces the third common feature between conceptual ordering and grounded theory, namely memoing. Memoing is a constant process that begins when first coding data and continues throughout to the very end (Glaser, 1978). Writing memos is the vehicle by which 'concepts and ideas pour out, are saved and grow' (Glaser, 1998: 178). Through this process memos provide the lead to theoretical sampling. The fourth common feature is that the nature of questioning and interviewing evolves as the study progresses. Initial questions will be broad and open-ended of the 'tell me about topic X' variety. This approach encourages respondents to present the important issues as they see them and not as the researcher may necessarily see them. It also generates the maximum number of initial categories and themes which can then be built upon through theoretical sampling. As the study progresses questions will tend to become more focused as the researcher tries to fill in important gaps or seek out finer details.

Data collection and analysis

Silverman (2001) argues that there are four major methods used by qualitative researchers: observation, interviews, recording and transcribing, and analysing texts and documents. All of these methods have been used in the research in this thesis.

The first data gathering interview occurred in November 2008. Through personal networks within the community contact was made with a young Indian man who had recently immigrated into Australia. He had worked at the Toyota Kirloskar plant in Bangalore for several years before emigrating and was willing to share his experiences with us. Numerous issues and observations arose from this first interview

including: the disciplined methods of working; new learning in terms of safety, quality, and lean working; resistance and opposition from young aggressive workers; low automation compared with Japan (which he had visited); problems and strikes involving production workers; problems associated with age differences; and favouritism towards workers from outside the region.

Simultaneously I conducted an online search of media sources using the keywords 'Toyota Kirloskar'. This unearthed a wide range of media reports from Indian newspapers and other news outlets relating to events and developments at the plant. Because of the importance of the Toyota joint venture in India it seemed to have captured the imagination of industrial journalists and happenings at the plant were reported frequently. Most news reports were of a strong factual nature, reporting on issues such as new vehicle models, sales figures, statements from senior managers, incidents of industrial unrest, corporate social responsibility initiatives, and so on. These news items were downloaded and sorted chronologically so that a running history of the plant could be created over the period since 1999.

A search of the academic and semi-academic literature was also conducted to add more substance to these news reports. The literature relating to Toyota Kirloskar is fairly sparse. Several case studies written by management consultants are available (Majumdar, 2006; Mikkilineni, 2006; Ray and Roy, 2006), plus book chapters (Das and George, 2006), and scattered references elsewhere in the literature mainly relating to wider developments in Indian globalisation (Sinha, 2004; Mooij, 2005). Other online sources were also found to contain various snippets of information about developments at the company, mainly in the form of conference papers and comments about the unrest experienced at the company (Jones, Mathew, and James, 2009).

These sources outlined above enabled me to obtain a superficial knowledge and understanding of the Toyota Kirloskar joint venture. In order to add to this knowledge several data collection journeys have been organised over the period 2009-2010. The purpose of these journeys has been to conduct interviews with key personnel and also observe developments in the plant in the form of a guided tour around the factory premises. Three separate visits to Bangalore have been conducted (April 2009; June

2009; September 2010) as well as one visit to the Asia-Pacific regional headquarters of Toyota (January 2010).

The first data gathering session in India occurred in April 2009. During this trip interviews were conducted with eight different journalists, two senior trade union leaders, two senior managers at the plant, and one interview with the Vice-Chairman of the Toyota Kirloskar joint venture (13 interviewees in all). A guided tour of the factory was also arranged which provided the opportunity to observe specific activities, ask more questions, and take field notes. These observations were written up into detailed field notes immediately after the cessation of the tour. The journey was arranged so that interviews with industrial journalists were, as far as possible, conducted first. We were able to identify the main journalists who reported on Toyota's affairs in India through our previous online collection and reading of Toyota-related news reports. These journalists were contacted before leaving for India and definite dates for interviews were arranged. Through these interviews a large amount of background information was obtained about the company. One shortcoming of the information provided by journalists is that it tends to lack specificity with regard to activities occurring inside the factory. Only two of the journalists interviewed at this stage had ever been inside the factory and were unable to provide detailed information pertaining to the introduction of lean manufacturing or the conduct of production-related activities. Consequently, it was necessary to widen the scope of interviewees and this was achieved by subsequent interviews with trade union leaders and senior managers within the plant. Our interview with the Vice-Chairman provided a detailed background to the history of the joint venture and its subsequent operations. The two interviews with trade union leaders provided extremely detailed inside perspectives on the state of labour relations at the plant, the reasons underlying the continuing industrial unrest, and their perceptions of the difficulties facing the introduction of Japanese techniques into the Indian context. Finally, the interviews with the two senior managers (both Indian nationals) provided us with information pertaining to focused questions we asked about operations and developments within the plant. For this reason we found it extremely beneficial that our interviews with these senior managers occurred at the end of the trip when we had already received a wide range of information about the company from other sources. Our questions were able to be more sharply focused to obtain specific information.

The second data gathering trip to India occurred soon after in June 2009. The previous weeks had been spent transcribing the interviews and developing themes for further analysis. Once these themes had been identified we realised that some crucial gaps existed in our knowledge. In particular, we required information from a more micro level within the company relating to specific aspects of the introduction of Japanese techniques into the workplace, problems encountered with such, and the reactions of managers and workers to these ongoing developments. During this second trip we conducted an interview with a middle manager responsible for production activities in the plant. We also interviewed one of the senior trade union leaders for a second time. Finally, we interviewed two managers from a supplier company for the main Toyota Kirloskar plant, which was situated about 50 kilometers from the assembly plant. These interviews (four in all) served the purpose of providing us with more detailed production-related information that we required. (We also conducted several interviews with personnel from another multinational motor vehicle assembly company during this trip, which provided us with more data on the specific problems of setting up production operations in India, although this data was not specific to Toyota).

In January 2010 we visited the Asia-Pacific regional headquarters of Toyota in Bangkok, Thailand. This visit was not specifically related to the research topic of this thesis but whilst at this location we took advantage of meeting various personnel who possessed knowledge of the Indian operations and who were willing to share their experiences with us. Consequently, we conducted three interviews: one with a senior trainer who is responsible for management training activities throughout the Asia-Pacific, one with a middle-ranking manager who conducts standardised work training and audits throughout the region, and one with the senior manager with overall operational jurisdiction over the Indian operations. Resulting from these interviews we were put in contact with a senior manager from the Australian subsidiary of Toyota in Melbourne who was completing a project on various aspects of the Indian joint venture. This resulted in two further meetings, none of which were tape recorded, but field notes based on the meetings were written up soon afterwards and added to our data collection.

Transcription and analysis of these interviews uncovered further areas of knowledge for which we required additional elaboration. This mainly related to industrial relations matters and developments at the plant during certain specific time periods. We obtained this information in the form of a telephone interview conducted in May 2010 with a senior trade union official based in Bangalore. This interview was not tape recorded but field notes were written up immediately after the interview ended and added to our data collection.

The third data gathering trip to India occurred in September 2010. By this stage our data analysis was at an advanced stage. However, a gap was observed in our data in the sense that our knowledge and understanding of events at the plant after 2006 were not as detailed as for the period before 2006. This could be explained by the fact that most of the interesting information which we and our respondents wanted to talk about related to the period of intense industrial unrest before 2006. After this date events began to settle down at the plant and a period of relative stability was established in terms of industrial relations. We needed to obtain a greater understanding of the reasons behind this period of stability. Consequently during the third trip we conducted interviews with: a senior manager who had worked at the plant since its inception but had moved to a senior role in another automobile company in 2008; the senior manager in charge of marketing and sales at TKM; and interviews with three trade union shop stewards from within the plant (five interviews in all).

Our interviews have also been complemented with a series of ongoing discussions and interviews with a senior Indian academic currently based at a university in Australia. We have used this source to ask countless questions about the nature of Indian culture. The content of these discussions has been collated into a single data source and we have regarded this as one additional interview for the purpose of our data collection.

In total 30 interviews have been conducted for the purpose of this research. These are summarised in table 6.2 below.

Table 6.2
List of interviewees

Interviewee Number	Position / Role	Date
1	Ex-maintenance worker at TKM	Nov 2008
2	Bangalore-based journalist	April 2009
3	Bangalore-based journalist	April 2009
4	Bangalore-based journalist	April 2009
5	Bangalore-based journalist	April 2009
6	Bangalore-based journalist	April 2009
7	Bangalore-based journalist	April 2009
8	Bangalore-based journalist	April 2009
9	Bangalore-based journalist	April 2009
10	General Secretary of external trade union body	April 2009
11	Assistant General Secretary of external trade union body	April 2009
12	Vice-chairman of TKM	April 2009
13	Senior manager TKM	April 2009
14	Senior manager TKM	April 2009
15	General Secretary of external trade union body	June 2009
16	Senior manager – TKM supplier company	June 2009
17	Senior manager – TKM supplier company	June 2009
18	Middle manager – production – TKM	June 2009
19	Senior trainer, Toyota Asia-Pacific, Bangkok	Jan 2010
20	Senior manager, Toyota Asia-Pacific, Bangkok	Jan 2010
21	Standardised work manager, Toyota Asia-Pacific, B'kok	Jan 2010
22	Senior manager, Toyota Australia	Feb 2010
23	Senior manager, Toyota Australia	March 2010
24	Assistant General Secretary of external trade union body	May 2010
25	Ex-senior manager TKM	Sept 2010
26	Senior manager TKM	Sept 2010
27	Trade union shop steward TKM	Sept 2010
28	Trade union shop steward TKM	Sept 2010
29	Trade union shop steward TKM	Sept 2010
30	Senior Indian academic	Ongoing

Data gathering 1: India, April 2009

During our first data collection visit to Bangalore in April 2009 we initially interviewed a wide range of journalists in order to obtain general background information. Focused questions were not put to the journalists. Instead we asked each journalist to ‘tell me about’ the TKM plant in the expectation that each interviewee would identify for themselves the most significant issues. Interviewee 2 (a senior

journalist with many years experience) tended to concentrate on the complex nature of Indian culture and how Toyota had underestimated the difficulties of establishing their lean manufacturing system in India. He believed that Toyota had not done its homework on India and miscalculated the challenge. This respondent raised a number of issues including: environmental degradation of the site; second-hand technology and low automation; mistreatment of workers; uniqueness of India; low discipline at work; importance of age; emotional nature of Indian people; and threats by TKM against the Government. Interviewee 3 (also a senior journalist with many years experience) tended to concentrate on TKM's choice of vehicle to introduce into the Indian market and their subsequent mistakes in misreading the Indian automobile market. Interviewee 4 concentrated on the competition against TKM within the city of Bangalore where other multinational companies were also well established with a longer experience of Indian conditions. Interviewee 5 mentioned the secretive nature of TKM and the careful way in which the company released information to the market through well-screened media outlets. Interviewee 6 proffered that TKM was harsh towards its Indian managers as well as its Indian workers and related the story of how a senior manager who had been employed at TKM from the company's inception had resigned in 2008 in a high-profile case stating that 'Toyota does not trust Indian managers'. The remaining three journalists also offered a range of information around the topics of motor vehicle sales and the high competition in the Indian market.

Resulting from these eight journalist interviews we were able to attempt some initial coding of the data. Our first two codes were quickly identified as 'cultural issues' and 'technological issues' which we then divided into a number of sub-categories such as the nature of work, importance of age, attitude towards work, second-hand technology, and phased-out motor vehicle. By this stage we had not identified a specific theme relating to 'disrespect', although we did identify a number of themes/issues which we called arrogance, ethnocentrism, and prescriptive work methods.

Our next port of call involved two separate interviews (10 and 11) with the most senior officials in the external trade union grouping (Centre for Indian Trade Unions – CITU) that sponsored the TKM trade union. These two officials provided detailed information about the series of strikes and industrial unrest that had plagued TKM since its establishment in Bangalore. Their underlying message was that Toyota stood

guilty of mistreating its employees. This reiterated the theme previously expressed by interviewee 2. When we interviewed the Vice-Chairman of TKM (interviewee 12) the issue of industrial unrest was not spontaneously raised. Instead he concentrated his interview around the issues of the history of the Indian joint venture partner (Kirloskar), the similarity between Toyota and Kirloskar in terms of their rural roots, and the manner in which lean manufacturing has transformed the productivity within his own group of companies. These interviews collectively provided us with sufficient information to conduct informed interviews with two senior managers within the TKM plant, both of Indian descent (interviewees 13 and 14). Topics of interest raised in these two interviews included the development of the supplier and dealer networks and the reaction of these to the level of detail and discipline involved in lean manufacturing; how TKM coped with cynicism against its methods in the early days; the unrealistically high expectations harboured by the young workforce because of their 'immaturity'; some problem aspects of Indian culture, such as a relaxed attitude to time and discipline; and the 'enthusiastic' approach of some Japanese trainers which can sometimes cause problems and requires local management to diffuse. Overall, the message from both interviewees was one of strong progress and success in the company in adapting to Indian culture and overcoming the issues that had arisen over the years. Their overall tone was one of strong optimism. The visit was concluded with a tour of the factory.

On returning to Australia all interviews were transcribed and coded. I still persisted with the demarcation between 'cultural' and 'technological' factors, but the interviews had made me aware that these issues were inter-related. Extensive coding was pursued around the various issues of Indian culture that appeared to be at odds with several aspects of Japanese work techniques, lean manufacturing, and the Toyota Production System. Data from the interviews was analysed in conjunction with themes emerging from the extant literature, especially aspects such as the paternal workplace, influence of the family, hierarchical aspects of society, discipline, and the nature of work and the workplace. I observed three specific gaps in my information database which required filling through theoretical sampling – more information on actual work practices and developments *within* the TKM plant; more insight on allegations that Toyota had misread the Indian market and had not performed enough research before entering the Indian market; and the allegations that Japanese

managers and trainers were guilty of mistreating Indian workers (and sometimes managers).

Data gathering 2: India, June 2009

As a result of this analysis another trip to India was planned to occur in June 2009. We again interviewed the General Secretary of CITU (interviewee 15). This official was still active in trade union circles and was well beyond the normal retirement age. He had extensive knowledge of the Indian industrial and trade union scene in and around Bangalore. We wanted to solicit more information from him about the allegations of mistreatment of Indian workers. He chose to address the issue by putting the topic within its historical context, recalling events as far back as the 1950s. He analysed the nature of industrialisation during the post-Independence era with its emphasis on large, welfare-oriented companies, which were extremely paternalistic and cared for their workers within an overall context of employment creation and a closed economy. This he contrasted with the ‘ravages’ of globalisation following the liberalisation of the Indian economy in 1991, and the poor people practices of multinational companies, especially the Japanese and especially Toyota. For them the aim was to exploit the Indian people and syphon-off as much profit as they could from Indian resources.

Interviewees 16 and 17 were two senior managers (both Indian) from a company that supplied TKM with vehicle components. The company was well imbued with the Toyota Production System and TKM was their sole customer. Hence, their company shared many similar characteristics with TKM. The most significant theme emerging from these interviewees is that they both saw themselves as ‘elderly’ men who did not act as a boss but rather as a paternalistic patron to their young, male workforce. Such workers had many initial problems adjusting to the Toyota Production System – indiscipline and sloppy work habits, frequent absences from work, and lack of conceptual skills. However, by acting as a paternal employer, guiding and advising the workers, and offering a wide range of welfare benefits, the company assumed the role as an extension of the family. No industrial unrest had ever been experienced at the company, unlike TKM. Interviewee 18 was a long-term employee at TKM and had climbed the ranks to middle manager status in the operations and production area.

He emphasised that there were misunderstandings in the early days of the plant between managers and workers, mainly because the workforce was young and could not grasp the Toyota way of working. Many aspects of Japanese culture were difficult for Indian people to adapt to and the company had been on a long journey of learning.

Coding of these additional four interviews from the second trip to India gave an additional dimension to our analysis. What was striking was the difference between the experiences of the Toyota supplier company (a paternalistic company mindful of Indian culture) and those of TKM (which had experienced many ‘misunderstandings’ and severe industrial unrest). I coded this issue ‘disrespecting Indian culture’. Two separate questions were raised as a result of this code - what are the properties of this disrespect; and has the aspect of disrespect moved through any chronological stages? The first question elicited a search of the transcribed data to identify all possible incidents of perceived disrespect towards Indian culture. The second question was of interest because of the responses of interviewees which seemed to suggest that the unrest had been more severe in the early years of the plant (2000-2006) but had somewhat subsided in later years. What, if anything, had changed?

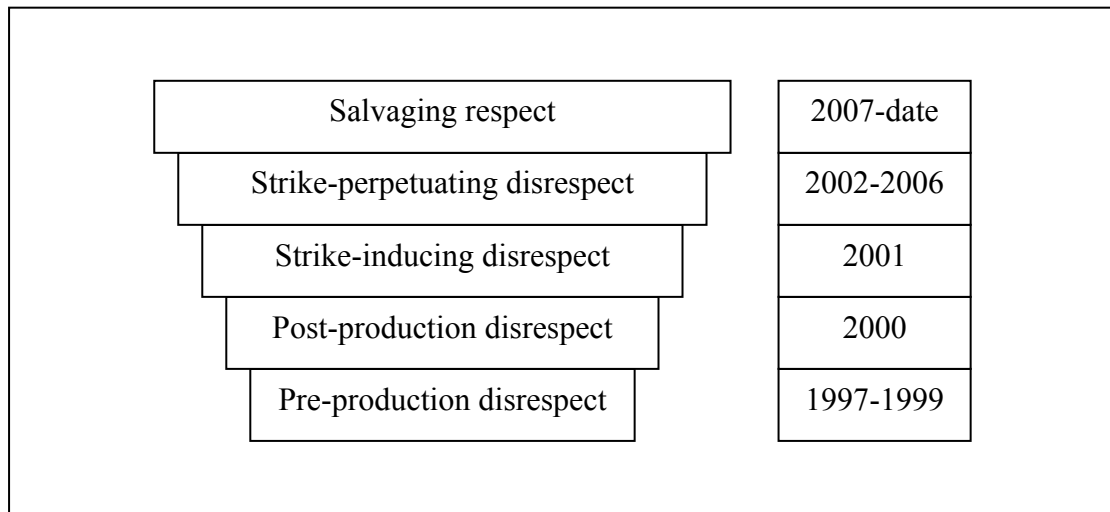
Data gathering 3: Bangkok and Australia, January-March 2010

Armed with this emerging slant on the data an opportunity arose to visit the regional headquarters of Toyota Asia-Pacific in Bangkok where three additional interviews were conducted. Interviewee 19 was a senior trainer who was responsible for management training across all the Toyota affiliates in the Asia-Pacific region. Such training is standardised and common principles are taught to managers and train-the-trainers from all countries. When the issue was put to this interviewee that some aspects of Toyota practices seem to contradict Indian cultural beliefs the answer was ‘there is no doubt about it we are trying to work against the culture, but frankly we are doing it anyway’. Interviewee 20 (a senior manager) quoted his manager as saying that he never wanted to go and visit India because ‘I hate them, I hate India’. Interviewee 21 was critical of Indian work standards stating that Indian workers found it hard to pick up standardised work techniques and displayed little discipline in performing common work tasks for long periods of time. All three interviewees were non-Indian. The common theme across them was an ambivalent attitude towards

Indian culture and an overwhelming belief in the ‘rightness’ of the Toyota system. Resulting from these contacts a meeting was arranged (subsequently extended to two meetings) with an Australian manager who was researching a project on the progress of the Toyota operations in India. These meetings (22 and 23) turned into information-swapping sessions and field notes were written up afterwards. Again the issue of disrespect towards Indian culture was raised. The manager was surprised to hear such an issue raised. However, the significance was sheeted home when discussing a recent television advertisement aired in India for the Toyota Innova which showed a young couple hand-in-hand frolicking and dancing around their new vehicle. Such a display of public immodesty is not widely accepted in India and could have alienated potential consumers against the vehicle. However, the manager was unaware of such a possibility. The advertising agency responsible for devising the advertisement was based in New York, and arguably was also unaware of any offence that may have been caused.

Subsequently I re-visited all the transcribed interviews and associated data and commenced detailed coding around the central issue of disrespect. A number of topics were discussed in a further telephonic discussion with the Assistant General Secretary of CITU (interviewee 24) to fill in some information gaps that had emerged during the coding and analysis. A chronological analysis of events proved useful in demarcating several separate stages of disrespect that unfolded progressively over a number of years. Each subsequent stage acted to overlay previous stages of disrespect in a cumulative fashion, rather in the manner of progressive sedimentary-type events. This is shown in figure 1.

Figure 6.1
Chronological layers of disrespect at TKM



The diagram above depicts these sedimentary layers in graphic form, together with the relevant chronological time stages. Each of these layers was analysed in terms of the main properties that constituted each incident of disrespect during the relevant time period.

Data gathering 4: India, September 2010

As a final piece of the theoretical sampling jigsaw it was realised that several gaps existed in analysing the stage of ‘salvaging respect’ in the period since 2007. Consequently a third trip was arranged to India in September 2010 during which five additional interviews were conducted (25-29).

Interviewee 25 had previously occupied a senior managerial role in TKM for many years but had moved on to another multinational automobile manufacturer because of the lack of opportunity for Indian senior managers to progress further up the ladder at TKM. He confirmed that Japanese executives had prevented the upward mobility of Indian managers at TKM on the grounds that this was ‘company policy’. Top management positions were reserved for Japanese only. This had caused cultural difficulties within the company, especially when Japanese managers occupied sensitive positions, such as in human resource management. Interviewee 26 confirmed

this perception. Accordingly, this manager had left the company in 2003 but had returned several years later. He was headhunted back to TKM when the policy of 'Japanese only' was eased as from 2008. His perception was that the Japanese-only policy had caused major problems in the areas of marketing and sales through lack of familiarity with the Indian automobile market.

The three interviews with trade union shop stewards (27-29) proved extremely informative for the purpose of obtaining additional information regarding the period of 'salvaging respect' after 2006. Major initiatives were commenced by the company to introduce a sense of calm and stability. These included recognising the trade union, taking back suspended workers, improving pay, strengthening communication and worker involvement, bolstering training, and transferring Japanese managers to advisory roles only. Accordingly the company had entered into a far more settled situation following the major industrial unrest of 2005-2006, thus enabling the establishment of a second plant with an annual capacity of 100,000 vehicles to go ahead, specialising in the production of a small car (the Etios) specially designed for the Indian market. The insight provided by this extra information allowed me to pursue further coding and analysis to round out the properties of the 'salvaging respect' category.

Chapter 7

Chronological Developments at Toyota Kirloskar Motors

This chapter traces chronological developments at TKM paying attention to significant events and turning-points in the period from 1997 to 2010. Much of the data used in this chapter was obtained from media reports and other published sources, although it has been supplemented in places with information obtained from interviewees. The information contained in this chapter was useful in the sense of providing background knowledge and awareness of various developments and events in the history of TKM before the field trips to India actually occurred.

1997-1999

TKM is a joint venture between the Toyota Motor Corporation Japan and the Kirloskar group of companies in India. A memorandum of understanding was signed in August 1997 and plant construction commenced in June 1998. The plant is situated in the township of Bidadi forty kilometres from Bangalore in the State of Karnataka. TKM was warmly feted by the Karnataka Government and given many incentives and exemptions to invest in the state pertaining to entry tax, sales tax, investment subsidy, land acquisition, power and water supplies, and relaxation of pollution controls. Perceptions of favouritism and unfairness (one rule for locals and another for foreigners) began to emerge. TKM is reputed to have indulged in environmental degradation in the construction of its plant which is located in a hilly region. One hill was reported as being levelled in order to create flat ground for the plant's construction involving various environmental issues. However, at that time the Karnataka Government was 'very keen to get this plant, so a lot of these issues were buried under the carpet' (interviewee 2).

2000

At the time of its establishment TKM was, and still is, one of the lowest automated Toyota plants in the world (interviewee 2). According to union sources 'it is not a new line...it is a scrap line from some other country...already used line...and they have

brought that technology here' (interviewee 11). In fact, when production first commenced at TKM it involved manual operations only: 'initially we started with manual operations, there was no automation, all operations were manual, we emphasise to instil the process' (interviewee 18)

The first motor vehicle (called the Qualis) rolled off the production line in January 2000. From the start the Qualis received a scathing response from the media. First, it was criticised for not being a car and not being a new offering: 'just a re-make of a 15-year-old multi-purpose vehicle already offered as the Kijang in Indonesia' (wardsauto.com, 2001). The fact that the Qualis was a 're-designed for India car which had already been phased out in other parts of the world' (interviewee 2) was treated with disbelief within the media. Second, its aesthetic appeal was severely criticised: 'a portly people carrier' (rediff.com, 2000); 'looks like it's been designed by a bored design engineer' (Financial Express, 2002); and 'looks like a fat lady on high heels' (Financial Express, 2002).

Toyota's joint venture partner Kirloskar is a well-established group of engineering-based companies which has its traditional base in the neighbouring state of Maharashtra. Historically, there have existed animosities between the peoples of Karnataka and Maharashtra. They each speak different dialects. When TKM was established it is claimed that there was an initial bias towards hiring Maharashtra people (interviewee 1). Some workers already employed within the Kirloskar group were also transferred across to TKM. This created divisions within the workforce since the two groups of workers tended to work and socialise with their own people. Problems were exacerbated when it was claimed that workers from Maharashtra were receiving favourable treatment in promotion to team leaders (interviewee 2). These practices of regional patriotism fuelled perceptions of discrimination to the extent that local workers felt isolated on their own soil.

Within months of the commencement of production internal problems began to appear in the Kirloskar joint venture partner. In April 2000 media sources reported that the Kirloskar family business group was beginning to splinter. Kirloskar holdings in TKM fell from 26% to 11%. This development did not appear to unduly worry Toyota which commented that the Kirloskars had been chosen as a partner because of

their 'influence' (Murali, 2000). Certainly the Kirloskar family exerted considerable industrial and political influence and had good connections with the State Government. The Karnataka Government was keen to help TKM as much as it could. In March 2000 the Karnataka Chief Minister was reported in the media as urging TKM to move ahead quickly with subsequent phases of its planned expansion at Bidadi, offering 'all help' with the project (rediff.com, 2000).

Despite initial reservations about the Qualis the vehicle sold strongly in the opening months. TKM's target for January-March was 10,000 units, but demand exceeded 12,000 units, of which TKM was able to supply only 2000. Because demand proved higher than expected a decision was made to expand production. A two-shift system was introduced in May 2000. The first shift started at 08.00 and finished at 16.00. The second shift started at 20.00 and finished at 04.00 (Mikkilineni, 2006). The four-hour gap between shifts was often filled with mandatory overtime, invariably arranged with short notice. This working arrangement put pressure on the young and inexperienced workforce. The Deputy Managing Director of TKM was quoted as saying that productivity had to improve: 'we want...to do more work in lesser time' (Murali, 2000). Simultaneously with increasing production, the inexperienced workforce was also being required to cope with the introduction of the Toyota Production System (TPS). Aspects such as just-in-time (JIT), kanban, and jumbiki (synchronised supply) were in evidence, although 'with local factors built into the system' (rediff.com, 2000). By November 2000 the inventory build-up at the plant was only equivalent to one-day's production. Production for 2000 was 21,500 vehicles, exceeding the forecast of 20,000.

TKM began to experience labour-related problems from the early days of its operations. A number of aspects were evident. First, the pace, discipline, and intensity of work was far greater than was considered normal within the usual Indian industrial context. Second, production workers experienced a high sense of job insecurity. They were hired under the guise of trainee associates for a period of three years, with promotion in the third year. Third, Toyota's policy was one of not recognising any external trade union to represent the workers, even though India has a long history of trade union involvement in the workplace. Fourth, soon after production commenced stories began to emerge from the plant of disrespect for local workers, their culture

and customs. Local journalists reported an instance of a Japanese trainer abusing a worker by seizing his cap, throwing it to the floor, and stamping on it, whilst shouting 'you Indians'. Another example involved the Indian custom of eating with their hands: 'it makes it extremely palatable and very tasty, lots of us don't use knives and forks, I suppose there was a bit of a mismatch there' (interviewee 2). It is claimed that the Japanese did not really understand or appreciate the way Indians ate their food. Another example involved TKM management forcing skilled (male) workers to perform such menial tasks as cleaning their workspace and mopping the floors. The way in which workers were treated by TKM management was a serious issue for the trade union: 'a worker can have a satisfaction because of the treatment from the employer and how he is looked after. That matters. That's the big problem with Toyota...the burning issue is the treatment of the workers, that is the problem here' (interviewee 11)

2001

In January 2001 TKM announced that it was thinking about introducing a small car into the Indian market plus a top-end luxury model. It also announced that two more variants of the Qualis model were to be manufactured.

In June 2001 TKM experienced its first industrial unrest. A three-day strike was called in response to the sacking of two workers. Tensions had been simmering at the plant since April when the management unilaterally announced a pay rise of 300 rupees per month (about AU\$10). According to union sources the workers boycotted lunch as a protest. In response management forced the workers out of the factory and declared that the action taken by the workers amounted to a strike. Approximately 25 leaders of the action were called in by management for questioning and were subsequently 'targeted' (Das and George, 2006: 293). Workers commenced a sit-in. The leader of the lunch boycott had his employment terminated on the grounds that his performance was not satisfactory.

In consequence of this episode of unrest the management established a Team Member Association (TMA) and announced that elections would take place amongst the team members with the objective of electing 15 worker representatives. According to union

sources, one team member who tried to file for nomination of the Association was prevented from doing so and then summarily terminated without notice. Even an elected TMA member was terminated on the grounds of non-performance. The role of the TMA was extremely curtailed. It was not used as a body for collective bargaining and negotiation. Rather it was restricted to issues of workers' safety and welfare, such as uniforms and workwear, canteen issues, and communication between managers and workers. TKM management refused to discuss the issue of worker terminations with the TMA.

Workers went on strike in June 2001 filing several demands: the reinstatement of dismissed workers, reduction in the period of training and probation, increased job security, and a modification of standing orders. Management claimed that the unrest was due to the fact that workers did not understand the system of performance appraisal. The company followed a transparent global HR system where appraisals are conducted every month. The team members who were dismissed had been warned twice for poor performance before they were terminated (Business Line, 9 June, 2001). However, management did reach a conciliated settlement with the Team Member Association whereby management promised an enquiry into the dismissal of one of the workers, the probationary period was dropped and agreement was reached to regularise employment of workers at the end of the training period, and finally agreement was reached to review standing orders in the company.

In July 2001 the Karnataka State Government amended the Industrial Disputes Act 1947 by declaring Toyota to be a public utility service, in effect outlawing strike action in the company. However, this was achieved without the knowledge of the trade union. It only came to the union's attention in 2005 when another strike action was commenced at the company. At the same time workers at the company were struggling to transform the Team Members Association into a Trade Union. They were successful at managing to get the union officially registered in July. However, they were surprised to find out from the Deputy Registrar of Trade Unions that a management sponsored trade union had already been registered in 1999 with three employees who were not amongst the elected leaders of the Team Members Association. The new union (Toyota Kirloskar Motor Employees Union) initially affiliated itself with the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) but

subsequently switched its affiliation to the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) some time later. The union immediately submitted a charter of demands to the company. As a result of a tripartite meeting between the union, company, and the Assistant Commissioner of Labour Bangalore, the training period at the company was reduced from three years to two, after which a worker's employment would be regularised. In those cases where a trainee failed to perform to accepted company standards he would be placed in a Special Development Programme and subsequently either regularised or asked to leave (Mooij, 2005). However, this new development did not entirely satisfy the union and remained an issue of discontent. In addition, no progress was made in reversing the suspension and termination of workers.

When TKM financed the building of a new primary school for local children near its Bidadi plant in August 2001, this act of corporate social responsibility was regarded somewhat cynically in some circles when compared with TKM's alleged treatment of its employees in the plant. The new school cost about AUS\$50,000.

By November 2001 some commentators were describing the TKM operations as 'low fat' (Sinha, 2004: 46). Raw material inventory at the factory did not exceed two hours' production requirements, all finished vehicles left the premises within 48 hours, and no dealer was sent more than 15 days' stock. At the same time the company announced a dramatically ambitious 'game plan' for India: one million vehicles by 2011, a substantial market share, and a global car hub in India thereafter (wardsauto.com, 2001). Vehicle production in 2001 rose to 28,400 units (a 32% increase over 2000). At the same time, in January 2002, the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) declared that the productivity of Indian labour was one of the lowest in the world. SIAM called for a flexible labour policy whereby 'the industry has the freedom to discharge, retrench or layoff workers' to retain a competitive edge (Krishnamoorthy, 2002).

2002

As 2001 came to an end union sources claimed that management forced workers to perform compulsory overtime in violation of the Factories Act. It is claimed that those workers who protested were harassed, threatened with termination, and had their

training period extended. One trainee was placed in the Special Development Programme and then dismissed when he challenged the decision, even though he had completed two years service with good performance. The union declared a strike, the second instance of industrial unrest within six months, demanding the reinstatement of this worker along with other demands. Management responded by dismissing the union General Secretary and Joint Secretary and suspended the union President. The manager of the weldshop was also dismissed. The union made a raft of demands including desisting from interference with union organising activities, revocation of suspension orders for workers, permitting external people to bargain on behalf of the union, reduce the gap between shifts to thirty minutes, fix definite workload and production targets, and desist from forced overtime. Pay also continued to be a sore point with monthly wages only reaching R4000 (Business Line, 17 January, 2002). Company management responded by labelling the strike illegal and stating its usual defence that workers were suspended following indiscipline, misbehaviour, or poor performance in terms of the appraisal system. The union's external legal adviser demanded an immediate intervention from the State Government in the form of 'a court of inquiry to look into the unfair trade practices of the management' (Business Line, 17 January, 2002). The strike continued for 52 days from 10 January 2002 during which Section 144 of the Indian Penal Code (prohibiting public gatherings or meetings) was imposed within a five kilometre radius of the factory. Some workers who had organised a gate meeting were arrested along with others who were congregating at a bus stop (Mooij, 2005). In late February the Government banned the strike and referred several issues for adjudication by the Labour Court. No concessions were made by TKM management. Workers returned to duty on 1 March.

A significant charge against the use of the performance appraisal system was that it was employed as a tool to control, discipline, and victimise workers. Das and George (2006) claimed that the system utilised seven criteria for evaluation: attendance, teamwork, attitude, quality, cost reduction, behaviour, and adaptability. Measurement used a four-point scale: poor, average, good, and very good. Only two of these seven criteria were objectively measured (attendance and quality) the other five relied on subjective interpretation on the part of the supervisor. As a result, the appraisal could be easily manipulated by the supervisor to do the bidding of management (p. 286) and to develop a hierarchy amongst workers who are essentially of the same status.

‘Irrational promotions on the basis of performance and loyalty to the management are deliberately organised to weaken the class-consciousness of the ordinary workers’ (George, 2006: 2).

In June 2002 the company management signed an agreement for the period 2002-2003 which included a substantial wage increase and a revision of the shift system with a gap of only thirty minutes between shifts. By this stage the Toyota Kirloskar Motor Employees Union (TKMEU) had started to initiate a link with the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), a federated grouping of trade unions with Communist leanings. However, company management was adamant that it would not recognise any trade union that permitted outsiders to be office bearers. As a result TKMEU was constituted with only Toyota employees as office bearers, but relying on CITU advice and guidance in its negotiations with management.

In September – October 2002 TKM announced three developments regarding new models and product launches. First, a new model of Qualis was launched with new looks and features which gave the vehicle a better balanced appearance. Second, TKM introduced the Camry into India fully imported from Japan. The objective was to widen Toyota’s reach into the Indian market through a more luxury offering. However, there were no plans to produce the Camry in India. Third, TKM announced that production of the Corolla would commence in Bidadi in 2003.

Vehicle production for 2002 was 25,200, a drop of 11% from the 2001 level. This setback was caused by the strike action during the year. Planned production for 2003 was set at 34,000.

2003

As from the beginning of 2003, the existing MD at TKM, Sachio Yamazaki, completed his 5-year stint and was replaced by Atsushi Toyoshima. Toyota announced that its global aim is to capture 15% of the world market by 2010. New TKM MD Toyoshima announces that his aim is to contribute to this global vision through his efforts in India, and to instil the Toyota Way of thinking throughout TMK.

In June 2003 TKM denied rumours that the company was planning to phase out the Qualis. MD Toyoshima declared that the vehicle had become 'very popular' and there were 'no plans to phase it out in the near future' (Financial Express, 2003). However, ten days later the MD issued a seemingly contradictory statement stating that once the Qualis 'reaches its peak level we will look at phasing it out of the market' (Business Line, 2003). TKM announced that it was intending to move into other segments of the healthy Indian car market, most notably the compact car market. Later that year TKM announced that it planned to launch a small car in India within three years in the same price range as the Maruti 800, perhaps one already produced by its associate company Daihatsu. Simultaneously TKM declared that it hoped to increase its market share in India to 10% 'within a few years' (Business Line, 2003) at that stage its market share was 3.4%. However, these plans would have to be attained without substantial financial input from Kirloskar. In mid-2003 its stake in the joint venture was reported as having dropped to 1%.

2004

Commencing in December 2003 through until June 2004 the company was continually disrupted by industrial unrest and worker suspensions. As 2003 came to a close the company again insisted on compulsory overtime which the union maintained violated the Factories Act. The findings of an inquiry which had been running for some time were released which upheld the suspension of two workers previously suspended from work. According to union sources this result was met with another wave of worker suspensions without wages by management. Both workers and union office bearers were punished by suspension without wages from one to 15 days. Workers reacted by refusing compulsory overtime as a token protest, boycotting lunch, and not attending morning meetings. Management refused to continue negotiations with the TKMEU and in February 2004 suspended 15 workers pending an inquiry, including the union Vice President and General Secretary, four members of the executive committee, and nine union activists. It was claimed that the workers were suspended on 'flimsy' grounds such as not participating in warm-up exercises before the commencement of work, or wearing black badges as a symbol of protest (Shetty, 2006). Four months later the company management announced a unilateral wage increase of R1800 per month and refused to negotiate on the charter of demands

submitted by the TKMEU. At the same time many trainees were terminated on the grounds of poor performance.

In late 2004 TKM added two new product offerings to its stable – the fifth-generation Camry and the Land Cruiser Prado, both fully imported. Vehicle production for 2004 was 47,600, full capacity for the plant. TKM announces plans to expand the capacity of the plant to 60,000 vehicles per annum.

2005

In early 2005 TKM dropped a bombshell by announcing that the Qualis would be withdrawn from the market, thus contradicting its denials made six months earlier. Changing needs of the customer was given as the reason: ‘the new vehicle will enable TKM to achieve volume and market share objectives in India in future...the new model will provide MPV performance along with the comfort of a passenger car, thus satisfying the requirements of two markets’ (DriveInside.com, 2005). The replacement vehicle, called the Innova, was launched in February 2005 with a sales forecast of 45,000 per annum. TKM repeated its vision of achieving 10% of the Indian car market within a few years.

In February 2005 the union filed a demand for conciliation with the District Labour Court over the issue of its charter of demands. However, company management refused to sit in the conciliation with authorised union representatives. In consequence the union mounted a large-scale community campaign protesting against the anti-union policies of management and the appeasement policies of the State Government towards multi-national corporations. The protests occurred widely throughout Bangalore. In March 2005 the union issued a fresh charter of demands for the period 2005-2006 and again requested conciliation.

Within the midst of this unrest further evidence of TKM’s corporate social responsibility agenda was revealed in April 2005 with the re-opening of the local police station at Kengeri financed by the company. The fact that the opening ceremony was presided over by both the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister of Karnataka again revealed the strong political connections of the company.

Barely had the dust settled on this event than the company was plunged into another round of industrial unrest. In May 2005 TKM unilaterally announced a new wage settlement with its workforce involving pay increases of between 15-18% (R1600 per month and an attendance bonus of R400). In consequence, the union held a secret ballot and served a notice of strike action on 16 May to take effect on 30 May. Union demands related not only to wage issues but also demands that the company take back workers suspended from work on disciplinary grounds a year previously. TKM management threatened that unless the industrial climate improved it would consider transferring its operations to North India. TKM warned the government that it should take 'tough action against those who are trying to disrupt the industrial climate in Karnataka'. The company warned about 'outsiders' who were encouraging workers to disrupt the operations of the plant (Giriprakash, 2005).

According to union sources the company management responded immediately to the strike notice by increasing the number of contract workers with a view to maintaining production should the strike occur. Workers were harassed by politicians and management not to associate with CITU and its communist leaders. Allegations were made that local 'goons' (politically-inspired thugs and ruffians associated with the ruling party) were also threatening workers within their residential communities in and around Bidadi. The mass protests organised by the union continued in the form of pamphlet distributions and demonstrations aimed at pressuring the State Government to implement the law and protect the right of workers to form trade unions. The State Government gave an assurance that it would lend assistance to try and settle the unrest. The Labour Commissioner instituted a Committee of Inquiry into the suspension of workers. The union also mounted a High Court action to challenge the notification of the automobile industry as a public service utility. In October 2005 this action was dismissed by the High Court, and the union filed an appeal.

The months of August – September saw TKM active on several fronts. First the company announced another development in its corporate social responsibility programme by donating an Innova vehicle to a local Ananda hospital for use as a mobile clinic. Second, TKM appointed Aamir Khan, described as India's most innovative film celebrity, as its brand ambassador to promote the Innova in India.

This was something of a novel move for the company because Toyota has rarely used celebrities as brand ambassadors. Third, TKM senior management met with the Karnataka Chief Minister and the Industries Minister to discuss TKM's expansion plans in the State, mooted to be the establishment of a second manufacturing plant. This meeting provided the occasion for a well-orchestrated photo opportunity, again illustrating the close political connections between the company and the State Government.

As 2005 came to a close the Indian media reported derogatory comments made by a visiting Japanese management 'guru', Kenichi Ohmae, whilst attending a seminar in Mumbai to the effect that Indians are not good at manufacturing:

'Indians are not good at manufacturing. Even if they do what we tell them to do, they always need to understand why they are doing it that way. They are more inquisitive than the Chinese...in manufacturing when you have a successful formula what you look for is implementation, right? Indians always ask these fundamental questions.

(Question) But isn't asking 5-whys a manufacturing concept?

(Smiles) Yes, that's right. At the management level it's good. But at the shopfloor level it's a bit too much' (RediffIndiaAbroad, 20 December, 2005)

2006

2006 started dramatically for the company with a fresh round of unrest that heralded the commencement of an intense period of industrial conflict. The trigger for the unrest was the release of the findings of an independent inquiry into the dismissal and suspension of workers over the previous years. Three workers were found guilty of gross misconduct and dismissed on disciplinary grounds for attacking a supervisor. However, it is claimed that the inquiry was not an independent one but was instituted by management, and that the findings were made despite the fact that the issue of the workers' suspension was pending before the Bangalore Industrial Tribunal (Shetty, 2006). The union Vice President commented 'The issue is not of wages but job

security. The inquiry had to be completed in three months according to the Industrial Disputes Act but it has dragged on for two years' (www.newindpress.com, 9 January, 2006). But the union was also keeping up its attack on the company on many fronts. For example it drew attention to the disrespectful and 'illegal practice' of making skilled workers mop the floor, which the union demanded 'should be ended forthwith' (Nair, 2006). Fears were expressed that the remaining workers still under suspension would also be dismissed. In consequence, strike action immediately ensued in the plant and workers occupied the premises. Management condemned the strike as illegal in the absence of the mandatory 14-day notice. One day later management declared an indefinite lockout claiming safety concerns for workers after they had congregated within the plant and also that workers were indulging in 'violence and destruction' (ICMR, 2006). It was claimed that management had been forced to take this action 'because the workers threatened to commit suicide by entering the LPG zone' (business-standard.com, 10 January, 2006). According to the company, striking workers were threatening to blow up LPG gas cylinders on the premises, obstructing the outward movement of manufactured vehicles, illegally stopping production, and manhandling non-union members (ICMR, 2006). A large police contingent gathered at the factory site and food, water, and toilet facilities were denied.

Workers described the Toyota Production System as 'inhuman', 'anti-worker' (Business Line, 10 January, 2006), and 'slave-like' (ICMR, 2006). Trade union sources were equally scathing, describing TKM as 'a Nazi camp' (interviewee 11). The Labour Commissioner arranged an immediate conciliation meeting between the TKMEU and the company management. However, management did not turn up for the meeting claiming that 'the situation was not conducive enough to hold talks' (Business Line, 10 January, 2006) and that the union was 'in a violent and agitated mood' (ICMR, 2006). Hundreds of workers had congregated outside the premises of the Labour Commissioner in a ritual display of dharna (a fast conducted at the door of an offender as a means of obtaining compliance with a demand). Management claimed that they had been 'scared' to attend the meeting because of this show of solidarity (business-standard.com, 10 January, 2006). A journalist who was present on site at the time described the scene as 'unnerving', although workers did disperse after management failed to turn up for the meeting (rediff.com, 12 January, 2006). Management also claimed that 25 cases of assault had occurred both inside and

outside the factory, and that a security car belonging to the company had been attacked. In statements issued through the media, management strengthened its resolve not to take back dismissed workers: ‘we will not compromise on discipline; we are efficient because we are disciplined’ (Business Line, 10 January, 2006).

The media gave prominence to the views of a leading HR consultant who blamed TKM management (as well as other Japanese company managements in India, eg Honda) for causing industrial unrest by failing to handle issues in a more sensitive manner and also by issuing periodic threats to transfer its operations out of Karnataka if the industrial climate failed to improve: ‘the management goofed up on both the PR as well as the HR front...Japanese managements have hardly made any effort to learn how to deal with India’s highly politicised unions’ (Majumdar, 2006).

When the conciliation meeting did eventually start a few days later, the Labour Commissioner had to meet with the union and management separately. Management had refused to sit jointly with the union since it refused to recognise the legitimacy of the CITU officials sitting with the union on the grounds that they were outsiders. Media reports speculated that problems between the union and the company had really intensified since TKMEU affiliated with CITU in 2005 (Jayaramiah and Jose, 2006). A senior company manager was quoted as saying ‘we never encourage outside arms to be involved in our company matters...Only because of CITU’s instigation, a few union members are involving in irrelevant activities driving other workers into the wrong path’ (ibid).

The Commissioner’s recommended solution to the dispute was that the dismissal of the workers should be set aside on condition that the union and management respectively and unconditionally lifted their strike and lockout. The union accepted this recommendation but management refused – ‘The atmosphere is still grave, tense, and there is no safety for non-striking team members and company’s property. The company requested the Labour Commissioner’s office to advise the union to stop violence, threats, etc and restore normalcy and discipline without any preconditions’ (Business Line, 17 January, 2006). In view of this continuing stalemate the Commissioner handed the matter over to the State Government to resolve. The union threatened that ‘the agitation would be intensified’ (Business Line, 18 January, 2006).

The company continued with partial production of vehicles with the assistance of non-union workers and management staff 'who were specially trained for these kinds of emergencies' (ICMR, 2006). However, production fell from 92 vehicles per day to 30 during one shift only. In an unexpected turnaround TKM management solicited an advertisement in local newspapers to announce that it would lift the lockout with effect from 21 January, ostensibly at the request of workers and their families. The union decided that it would allow the workers to re-commence work on the morning of 21 January by hiring buses from the Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation which would ferry workers to the plant where they would report for duty and also hand over a letter to the company management. Arrangements were made with the bus company on the preceding evening. However, when the union requested the buses to be made available next morning the bus company refused. The union suspected a conspiracy between TKM and the bus company aimed at avoided the symbolic mass arrival of the previously striking workers: 'it is clear that the management wanted the plans of the union/workmen to fail on the 21st, as they wanted individuals to report to work and not in a collective' (Nair, 2006). Thwarted in its original plans the union considered other options (such as marching to the factory) but decided to protest by assembling workers in a park opposite the offices of the State Department of Labour. According to union sources about 800 workers gathered as from 8.30 in the morning, although media sources put the number at 1300 (libcom.org, 22 January, 2006). Within thirty minutes 'the police swooped down on the workers and started rounding them up' (Nair, 2006). It was alleged that the union (external) organiser was assaulted and dragged to a police van. All the workers were removed from the area to a police holding area where it was alleged that they were not fed. Other union activists provided food to the workers during the day. This prompted spontaneous union agitation at several other factories belonging to other companies. Gate meetings were held and demands made for the arrested workers to be released. Later that day all the workers were released on bail.

Because of the momentous events that occurred on 21 January the Karnataka Government took immediate action the same day. The strike was banned on the grounds that Toyota was a public service utility, thus forcing workers back to work (although the lockout was not prohibited on the grounds that the company had already

lifted the lockout), and the dispute was referred for adjudication to the Labour Court. On Monday 23 January the union held a General Body Meeting, also attended by other workers from throughout Bangalore plus delegates from the Honda factory who had also been in dispute with their company. In the meantime it was learned that a further 27 workers at TKM had been suspended by the company because of acts of vandalism committed during the unrest. The decision was taken to resume work as from 24 January. However management insisted that workers should sign a good conduct declaration 'to maintain discipline and ensure full production' (India Annual Survey 2007) before they re-commenced work, leading the union to threaten that it would not allow workers to start work whilst this stipulation was in force. According to the union, if the company did not allow the workers to re-commence work this would constitute a lockout. However, company management insisted that the signing of such a declaration was normal industrial practice when workers reported for duty after a strike (Majumdar, 2006).

At first management refused to take any worker without the undertaking. They then relented and invited the four remaining office bearers to talks. The union alleges that management then got one of these officials arrested and detained by the police. It is also alleged that the management had hired large numbers of goons to attack the workers and hundreds of police were ready to 'lathi charge or fire on the workers' if they decided to march to the city or attempt to commence work without signing the undertaking (Nair, 2006). Workers had massed at the factory gate and their leaders were being guided and advised over mobile phones by CITU officials (who were not allowed in the factory or at the factory gate). CITU officials were only able to address the workers en masse by mobile phone loudspeaker. Eventually some concessions were obtained to the wording of the good conduct document. A clause in the document stating 'the strike was illegal and management would take disciplinary action in case of the occurrence of such incidents in future' was removed (Mikkilineni, 2006). In response, the union approved its members to commence work immediately on the 24 January, even though conditions in the undertaking still remained unchanged in relation to accepting standing orders, maintaining discipline, following instructions, and complying with safety rules. As workers commenced work they were refused to carry mobile phones into the factory. In the period following the return to work the union endorsed a programme of external agitation 'to carry on the

struggle outside the plant in the City' (Nair, 2006). This involved such actions as mobilising support from all trade unions, civic campaigns, and relay hunger strikes.

After the return to work the union claimed that the situation became worse. It is alleged that actions commenced to divide the workers and 'a campaign was unleashed to get the CITU affiliation removed' (Nair, 2006). When no progress had been achieved by early February in securing the re-employment of dismissed and suspended workers union members commenced a hunger strike. TKM management was reported as saying that the company would not take back dismissed workers (as Honda had done) on the grounds that this would 'send the wrong signals to the workers' (Business Line, 11 February, 2006). The TKMEU obtained a boost when the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) and seven other trade unions formed a forum called the Bangalore United Trade Unions' Forum (BUTUF) to campaign against the 'anti-worker' policies of TKM as well as other issues facing workers of multinational companies in India (Business Line, 11 February, 2006). This continuing unrest was attracting international attention with significant effects. The General Secretary of the World Federation of Trade Unions sent a message of support. Japanese trade unionists held a rally and demonstration in Toyota City Japan after which they marched to the Toyota Headquarters and handed in a letter of protest about the company's treatment of workers in India. However, repercussions were not far behind. A visiting Japanese trade delegation commented that 'labour-related trouble' at TKM and a 'rigid labour policy' were delaying a decision about a second Toyota plant in Bangalore (Business Line, 10 February, 2006). The Karnataka Government was also reported as being worried about how these events would adversely affect its efforts to attract Volkswagen to establish a plant in Karnataka. Additionally, the Japanese Ambassador to India stated that such actions of industrial unrest 'would show India in a poor light' (ICMR, 2006).

On 22 February TKM management confirmed that it was dismissing the 27 suspended workers because of vandalism during the previous strike. The union responded by declaring strike action as from the third week of March, to be preceded by a one-day strike on 7 March involving a procession to the Chief Minister's office along with other trade union bodies. Following a union delegation to the Chief Minister on 7

March the proposed strike was called off after he promised the union that he would hold talks with the company with the aim of resolving the issues.

However, TKM still pressed ahead with its programme of corporate social responsibility. In July the company announced that it was initiating a rural drinking water project for the residents of the nearby Ramanagar Town in collaboration with the Karnataka Government. Despite the industrial unrest TKM was still publicly reiterating its vision of capturing 10% of the Indian market by 2010, even extending its optimism to 2015 with a forecast market share of 15%. Media analysis however was sceptical, strongly questioning the viability of these plans. Market share in 2005 was less than 4% and TKM's words 'seem to ring hollow' (domain-b.com, 2006). TKM was basing its faith in its 10% target on the introduction of a new small car which would form 'a major chunk' of the increase (domain-b.com, 2006). However, plans for this had not yet been finalised and TKM was still speaking vaguely of a timeline in 2-3 years time. TKM's expansion plans were not helped when an announcement was made in September 2006 that sales of the Corolla had halved since the launch of the Honda Civic (down from 900 to 450 per month). The Civic was selling at the rate of about 1800 vehicles per month. This continuing uncertainty was exacerbated in December when a statement was made attributed to the TKM MD that the company 'was in the process of studying how to grow in the Indian market' (Tribune, 2006). This appeared to indicate the ongoing confusion within TKM about how to read the trends within the Indian car market.

At the end of 2006 TKM initiated a significant change in its wage policy. It adopted a strategy of revising wages every year in line with productivity, breaking with the wage policy of its two other Japanese counterparts (Honda and Suzuki) which adjusted wages every 3-5 years. In November TKM announced a 16% wage increase for its workforce.

2007

Mid-2007 saw TKM still actively pursuing its programme of corporate social responsibility. This time it initiated the Toyota Safety Education Programme (TSEP), aimed at educating school children about traffic safety. Again, the opening ceremony

was attended by senior politicians and important dignitaries. Perhaps of even more significance was the opening in August 2007 of the Toyota Technical Training Institute (TTTI), touted as another example of corporate social responsibility, but cynically regarded in some quarters as a training school for youngsters to be indoctrinated into the Toyota Way.

Meanwhile by August 2007 TKM was still stalling over the details of the launch of its new small car. The company was still issuing statements that the car would be launched in India within the next two years but plans had not been finalised. Other companies seemed to be far more decisive in their actions. For example, Tata Motors announced that it would launch its Nano small car in 2008, selling at R1 lakh (about \$AUS3000).

2007 marked the commencement of a momentous change in direction at TKM with respect to human resource management and industrial relations. Wary of the effect that the on-going industrial unrest was having on the reputation of the company, TKM took steps to formally recognise the trade union, TKMEU. Elections were held in July which showed overwhelming support for those senior union officers who had previously been suspended and were currently 'outside' the plant. Support was estimated at 80% (interviewee 27). Simultaneously, the General Secretary of CITU (the Communist-inspired external trade union grouping) made a public undertaking to the company that he and his organisation would withdraw into the background and cease its front-line visibility and activities at the plant on condition that TKM recognised the TKMEU and took back those workers who had been suspended. These mutual concessions appeared to have their impact and allowed a settlement to be reached where both parties managed to preserve their respective 'face'. TKM recognised the results of the election. Most suspended workers were re-instated but some chose not to return and as a result accepted a severance package from the company. The newly-elected President of the union had spent over four years on suspension outside the factory, and the newly-elected General Secretary had been outside for over two years. As part of the climate of reconciliation all court cases were dropped between the two sides.

2008

In January 2008 Toyoshima stood down as TKM MD at the end of his 5-year stint and was replaced by Hiroshi Nakagawa. Finally, in April 2008 the long-awaited news came through that TKM would build a second plant in Bangalore next door to its existing plant. Production would start in 2010 and specialise in a 'new strategic small car' (Business Line, 2008). This fillip however was soured by the news one month later that Deputy MD K K Swamy was leaving TKM to take up the post of MD at Volkswagen India. Swamy had been with TKM since 1996 and had been an influential figure in the establishment of the joint venture. But Swamy was not the only senior management departure from TKM. Media reports stated that the past twelve months had 'witnessed some high-level exits including some senior general managers who have shifted to auto giants such as General Motors, Ford, Volkswagen, and Mahindra and Mahindra' (Indiacar.com, 2008). Reputably seven senior and middle-level managers had exited TKM between November 2007 and July 2008. They previously occupied positions in product design and development, production, sales, advertising, and customer relations (Ramanathan, 2008). However, this drift was not only one way: TKM head-hunted back to the company a former senior manager who had left the company in 2003. He arrived on promotion as Deputy Managing Director (Marketing), fulfilling a policy change by the company to promote Indian managers to more senior levels at TKM.

By mid-2008 the new MD was making his mark on the company. Between 2001 and 2006 he had been the leader of the IMV programme in Thailand. He now announces that the small car platform currently being developed for India would be used to build multiple cars in the future, including a sedan. Contrary to previous speculation the new small car will not have any association with Daihatsu. He is confident the new plant will be ready by mid-2010. However, in Sept 2008 he announces that TKM's target of 10% market share by 2010 has been put back to 2015. He admits that 'we did not have much experience in the past ten years; now is the time for us to jumpstart' (Business Line, 2008). Soon afterwards other TKM executives are quoted by the media as adopting the new slogan of a 'jumpstart decade' for the company (Financial Express, 2008). As a sign of this epiphany TKM announces the introduction of the new tenth-generation Corolla Altis, launched with a sales target of 2000 per month to

replace the existing Corolla badly impacted by competition from the Honda Civic. However, 2008 ends poorly for TKM. First, a price increase of 3% is announced for both the Innova and Corolla Altis. Second, TKM cuts its production by 30% in reaction to the worldwide slowdown in car sales. However, the new second plant would still go ahead. India is the only country in the world where Toyota has not put on hold all investments for expansion.

2009

TKM commenced 2009 with a further development in its new policy to promote Indian managers to higher levels of seniority within the company. A new Deputy Managing Director (Commercial) was appointed with responsibility for human resources, finance, purchasing, information systems, external affairs, corporate planning, and legal operations (Press Trust of India, 2009). This appointment supplemented the appointment of a new Indian Deputy Managing Director in the area of Marketing in the previous year, bolstering the local influence at the strategic level.

However, 2009 starts with TKM still in the doldrums. The 30% production cut continues. However, the company persists with its two-shift system, but reduces the speed of the assembly line to allow its workers the opportunity to multi-skill by carrying out multiple tasks. The size of the permanent workforce is not reduced, but contract workers are reduced in numbers as their contracts are not renewed as and when they expire. Despite the production downturn, TKM continues with its strategy of introducing new models into the Indian portfolio. Five such announcements are made within the first seven months of 2009: the hybrid small car Prius will be rolled out at the end of 2010; a CNG (compressed natural gas) version of the Innova is introduced; the Fortuner (a sports utility vehicle) will be introduced by September in the form of an imported knock-down unit assembled in Bidadi; the introduction of the Land Cruiser, another sports utility vehicle; and the launch of a new version of the Camry, called the New Camry, after existing Camry sales slumped to only 44 units per quarter. In addition the TKM MD goes on record as stating that the new small car rollout will definitely occur by December 2010.

Output at the Bidadi plant returns to full production of 5000 units per month in July; and at the same time TKM announces that it will put extra investment of about \$AUS266Million into the existing plant between 2011 and 2016. Once again the active role of the State Govt is prominent in facilitating this decision. The Industries Minister states: ‘after losing Tata Motors’ Nano car project last year we met Toyota officials in Japan and offered them several concessions and convinced them to increase their investment in the Bidadi plant’ (Indian Chronicle, 2009). This act of optimism in the future is matched by the MD’s rhetoric as he attempts to draw a clear line between the first ten years of TKM’s operations in India and his vision for the upcoming years. He states that the company used the past ten years to ‘usefully stabilise the Indian business and put it in order’. In contrast, ‘the next ten years will be different from the last decade. It is now time for a new vision and mission’ (Business Line, 2009). The MD was the leader of the IMV project in Thailand between its inception in 2001 and 2006 and it would seem that experience has been put to good use in building India as a future manufacturing hub.

2010

2010 starts with TKM naming and unveiling its new small car for India, the Etios, on which it is pinning its future expansion plans. However, simultaneously, Tata unveils its newest low-cost car, the Magic Iris, a 5-passenger van, on the road for \$US2000, and aimed at existing bike and rickshaw owners. Toyota is rocked by a mass recall of defective cars in USA. However, TKM denies that India is affected claiming that cars manufactured in India use different suppliers and are safe.

TKM continues with its policy of mending fences within the Indian context to overcome the tumultuous events that characterised its early years in Bangalore. Reconciliation is sought at the highest levels. Thus, in June the Japanese Ambassador to India was quoted as asking ‘his countrymen-industrialists to rework their perception of India’ (Surendran, 2010), a subtle admission that inter-cultural relations were in need of repair. ‘I’m advising them (Japanese entrepreneurs) to bring the best technology and form good partnerships with India, making India the hub for their global strategies’ (ibid), again an admission that Toyota (in particular) had not introduced its latest technology into India nor cultivated the best relationships with its

Indian hosts. This impression is reinforced when it is realised that his speech occurred at the Bangalore Chamber of Industry and Commerce (BCIC), the location of the Toyota plant, plus the fact that the newly-appointed Deputy Managing Director (Commercial) at TKM had also been appointed President of BCIC.

Other high level reconciliation statements were also appearing in the press at this time. Shortly afterwards, in September, the (Japanese) Managing Director of TKM continues the theme of developing mutual respect in a press interview – ‘The cultures may be different, but the key to success of this joint venture is based on mutual respect. We’re humans after all, and what shores up this mutual admiration is very deep and frequent communication’ (Mitra, 2010).

It is this emphasis on respect, how it is gained and how it is lost, that forms the driving direction of this thesis.

Chapter 8

Disrespect at Toyota Kirloskar Motors

This chapter provides the findings of the thesis in regard to the experiences of disrespect at TKM. The nature of disrespect is analysed under five main headings: pre-production disrespect; post-production disrespect; strike-inducing disrespect; strike-perpetuating disrespect; salvaging respect. This categorisation is presented in a processual form as a sedimentary-type flow of disrespectful actions and attitudes which cumulatively impacted each other over a sequential period.

The argument in this chapter runs along the following lines. Initially in India there existed high respect for anything Japanese. Workers looked forward to finding and commencing employment with Toyota. However, these expectations were dissipated within a short period of time of TKM commencing production. All subsequent actions and strategies of TKM must be seen within the light of company management attempting to salvage itself from this initial situation.

Working for a Japanese company such as Toyota would have been regarded as high status prestigious employment. Workers would have been proud to join the company, harbouring high expectations of learning cutting-edge skills, in a highly paid job, for a multinational company. ‘Indians have always held the Japanese in extremely high esteem. We have always been told that Japanese products are fantastic, and the progress they have made in technology. So imagine somebody working for something like that at some point in time?’ (interviewee 2). This interviewee quoted the example of a 3-in-1 electronic product consisting of a radio, tape recorder, and a light which had been available on the grey market in India during the pre-liberalisation era. This product was extremely popular for which Indians paid a premium price.

However, the reality of working for TKM proved to be something different. A number of factors occurred during the early period of establishment and production in the plant which in combination acted to deflate the expectations of workers. I argue that TKM displayed various *forms of disrespect* which led to a perception amongst Indian workers of feeling ‘let down’. Despite the eagerness with which Toyota’s arrival in India was greeted, Bagla (2008: 20) argues that ‘the Indian psyche still

equates foreign companies with subjugation and injustice'. He contends that India's first experience with a foreign company (East India Company) was painful and unpleasant, the memory of which 'casts a shadow even today' (2008: 17). However, this problem is not insurmountable. Bagla's remedy is for each foreign company to expend time in creating trust and ensuring that efforts are framed in terms of building a relationship or partnership. He quotes an old Sanskrit saying – *Atithi Devo Bhavah* – which equates a guest with God: 'if you invest time and effort in relationships, Indians will befriend you' (Bagla, 2008: 64).

I argue in this chapter that TKM's policies and approaches towards its Indian workforce in the period from 1999 to 2006 were epitomised by the perception of disrespect on the part of the host workers. Only after 2006 did this situation begin to change. As a result of a planned and coordinated change of direction TKM management commenced a process of salvaging the situation in order to restore some measure of trust into working relationships.

Pre-production disrespect

TKM exhibited various forms of disrespect towards its Indian host which acted to undermine its guest status. These forms of disrespect manifested themselves even before production commenced at TKM. I have identified three specific instances of such initial disrespect:

- Foreign favouritism
- Environmental degradation
- Scrap technology and an outdated vehicle

Foreign favouritism

We have seen how TKM was extensively courted by the Karnataka Government and offered a string of incentives and exemptions to invest in the State pertaining to entry tax, sales tax, investment subsidy, land acquisition, power and water supplies, and relaxation of pollution controls. These perks remained unavailable to local companies. Consequently, the perception began to emerge that one rule existed for foreigners and

one for locals. This favouritism and unfairness was commented upon in our interviews with trade union officials.

Environmental degradation

The act of levelling a hill to construct the TKM plant at Bidadi would have been regarded as desecration by the local people. Gulati (2008: 30) quotes Mahatma Gandhi that the chief value in Hinduism holds that ‘all life is one...coming from the One Universal Source’. Stemming from this is the belief that humans should not dominate or exploit nature, but rather co-operate with it for aiding and enhancing our mutual welfare. The concept of Mother Earth is not an object for exploitation but for adoration. Peace and harmony with earth and nature are considered essential for human survival. Earth is regarded as sacred and inviolable (Chaubey, 2010). Hindus regard rivers and seas as the embodiment of the primeval elements of nature. They purify everything that comes into contact with them. Similarly, mountains are looked upon with ‘awe and reverence’ as being the abode of gods and goddesses (Gulati, 2008: 33).

During 2010 local news media reported how a long protest by local tribespeople in Orissa had successfully stopped environmental clearance in the Niyamgiri Hills to establish a bauxite mining project. Tribal youths were reported as stating they ‘worshipped the Niyamgiri Hills and that their God was being snatched from them’ (NDTV.com, 2010).

Scrap technology and an outdated vehicle

We have seen how Toyota’s entry into India was accompanied by old, scrap technology and a re-modelled motor vehicle already phased out of Indonesia (where it was called the Kijang). Even senior TKM managers had their reservations about the appropriateness of the Qualis vehicles introduced in 1999: ‘there were many of us who did feel at that point of time that maybe Toyota could have introduced a better looking model because this was the first time Toyota was coming here and if you want to gain a market you could in with your most attractive piece, not with something that is very dull’ (interviewee 13). Indians have generally viewed with

suspicion any items which are old, worn, or second-hand especially if handed out free of charge. Bringing in old things could be interpreted as a mark of disrespect. Old things are given to needy people as alms. To the Indian psyche gifts are always brand new items. Used goods are not given as gifts. Such actions are seen not only as dehumanising – ‘being treated like beggars’ (Roy, 2006:314) – but are intimately associated with practices of submissiveness and subjectification stemming from colonial domination.

Missionary work in India has been associated not only with converting people to the Christian faith but also with providing welfare to the poor and needy. This has often involved the practice of distributing old and used clothing to those perceived as being most in need (Voice of Jesus, 2010). Portuguese colonialists in Goa used to offer donations of rice to the poor and often insisted that the local Indians should convert to Christianity and adopt foreign food habits and dress. Accordingly, many local people became opportunistic Christians – known as *rice Christians*. This term subsequently took on a pejorative connotation as somebody who formally declared themselves to be a Christian for material benefits (www.Wikipedia). A more sinister perception related with missionary work concerns the practice of using Indian Christians to divide and rule the local population in pursuit of colonial domination: ‘segregating Indian Christians and training and using them for the purposes of political or religious blackmail on behalf of foreign interests in moments of crisis’ (Christianaggression.org, 2004). Thus, it is reported that the Christian Missionaries of Chhota Nagpur offered to the British 10,000 armed converted Kols, and Dr Mason offered a battalion of converted Karens to put down the 1857 War of Independence: ‘Christian missionaries virtually held a licence during British Raj to trade in human souls and to proselytise by force, fraud, inducement, and deceit’ (www.christianaggression.org, 2004). Mahatma Gandhi has referred to such conversions as *denationalisation*, by forcing the people of India to hate India (Meadowcroft, 2006).

Thus, institutions such as the church, missionaries, and the Salvation Army have come to be regarded as agents of colonial suppression using charitable work and hand-outs to pull local Indians into the fold. Their activities were seen as subversive, working according to a hidden agenda to discipline and control Indians on behalf of the colonial rulers. The aim was to instil typical British Victorian values into Indians

in order to create submissive and obedient subjects (Tolen, 1991). For these historical reasons the link between foreign ‘invaders’, charity, second-hand items, and subjugation still looms large in the perception of many Indians. As a result, even when modern humanitarian agencies react to natural disasters (such as tsunamis) the practice of handing out old clothes is ‘not acceptable’ to Indians (Murty et al, 2006: 744). It is for this reason that we postulate that the arrival of Toyota in India accompanied by used technology and an old, re-designed, and phased-out motor vehicle was treated as an act of disrespect by the host culture.

Post-production disrespect

Once TKM commenced production in 2000 the initial foundation of disrespect which had already been laid was compounded by the addition of several other on-going examples of disrespect. These have been categorised under three headings:

- Regional patriotism
- Abuse of local workers
- Nature of work and the workplace

Regional patriotism

We have seen how TKM was initially perceived as favouring employees from the State of Maharashtra over local workers from Karnataka in terms of managerial appointments and promotions to team leader positions: ‘there was groupism and different lobbies, mainly based on which regions workers and supervisors came from’ (interviewee 1). During colonial rule one of the major policies found to be successful in India was that of divide-and-rule. It could be argued that Indians are still sensitive to such strategies especially when practised by foreign entities on Indian soil. Such strategies could be interpreted as a sign of insensitivity to historical events.

Abuse of local workers

We have seen in the previous chapter that soon after production commenced, stories began to emerge from the plant of disrespect towards local workers and their customs

and culture: ‘so many arrogant Japanese people came to India...they didn’t want to listen to anybody’ (interviewee 28). One instance involved a Japanese trainer seizing a worker’s cap, throwing it to the floor, stamping on it, and abusing the worker (interviewee 2). In India, a headwear, called by different names in different states, is a symbol of status. It is worn with respect and others are not even allowed to touch it. Touching it or desecrating it is an insult to the person, and disrespectful to the person wearing it.

The State of Karnataka in which TKM is situated has a long history of a certain type of headwear being worn with pride as a sign of status. The *Mysore Peta* is a colourful turban that for centuries was worn by men who exercised considerable influence in matters of state administration. An individual’s position in the social hierarchy was reflected by a particular type of turban. These turbans still occupy a place of significance in modern Indian society and are worn at social and cultural gatherings such as weddings and religious ceremonies as an indication of wealth or status. Bangalore is renowned as being the location for the making of the *Mysore Peta* worn by the Maharajah of Mysore. Because of the significance of this type of headwear in the history of the region, the nine universities in the State of Karnataka now allow graduating students to wear either the traditional mortarboard or the *Mysore Peta* during the ceremony. Although it might be argued that a worker’s cap is far removed from a *Mysore Peta*, there still exists the notion within the psyche of the local people that forms of headwear are to be respected as a sign of pride and status. The act of stamping on a worker’s cap could be interpreted as demeaning his status and worth within the company.

The widely regarded father of TPS, Taiichi Ohno, has authored two books on the Toyota system (Ohno, 1982, 1988), during which he makes frequent reference to his personal leadership style. He relates several examples of him scolding other people, shouting at them, and becoming impatient with them. He admits that when he was trying to implement the so-called Ohno System it was difficult for him to make people understand the new ways of thinking. In such situations he admits that from time to time he would say ‘if you can’t do what I say, get out of my sight’. In view of Ohno’s iconic stature in the folklore of Toyota it could be argued that such displays of petulance have been absorbed by subsequent generations of Toyota managers and

trainers as being acceptable within situations where workers are slow to learn new attitudes or apply new techniques. However, such an approach within the context of the early operations of TKM could be interpreted as disrespectful. The company had not yet developed a sound partnership based on trust. Relationships were still evolving and the in-group psyche of the local TKM workers was yet to admit the veracity of the foreigner out-group unit. Overt displays of shouting and scolding, especially of a personal or ethnic nature would be interpreted as arrogance or superiority.

Nature of work and the workplace

We have seen in the previous chapter how various aspects of Toyota culture came as a shock to the local workers. The nature of the work and the workplace was perceived as alien to traditional Indian culture, practices, and expectations. First, trade unions have been a strong feature of the Indian industrial relations system for many decades, but TKM refused to recognise any external trade union. Second, the pace, discipline, and intensity of work have traditionally been quite relaxed in Indian workplaces, but TKM's production culture was experienced as far more demanding and frenetic. Third, Indians have traditionally regarded their boss and their workplace in a kind of welfare-paternalistic relationship where loyalty is rewarded with job security, but at TKM all production jobs were extremely insecure and constantly monitored through personal appraisals. Fourth, social status was ignored within the plant and all workers were required to do certain demeaning jobs such as mopping the floor and cleaning their workspace.

It would be foolish to argue that Indians are incapable of performing work techniques or acquiring attitudinal habits that lie outside their traditional context. However, many commentators have argued that the most important aspect of introducing new concepts into Indian society and workplaces is dependent more on 'how' this is done. Bagla (2008: 83) states that foreign management teams in India are often guilty of placing too much reliance on 'inflexible processes' to accomplish things. Experienced managers in India often give the advice that more focus should be placed on people issues than process issues (Neumann, 2010). The caution against being too inflexible in one's operations in India is also advanced by Bagla (2008: 52):

‘If you assume that you have the solutions before understanding the problems, and if you like to tell people how things should be done rather than asking sincerely for input by way of honest advice, you are doomed to fail (in India)’

It could be argued that Toyota’s on-going success in establishing manufacturing plants around the world prior to 1999 led to a certain hubris that its ‘proven’ system could be implemented in an inflexible manner within any context – a kind of ‘acultural one-best-way’. Within the Indian context this may have been a dangerous assumption.

Below I analyse seven aspects of Indian culture in relation to the nature of work and the workplace that TKM does not appear to have fully appreciated or understood, and accordingly may have disrespected when conducting their initial operations.

(i) Attitude towards work

In 2000 TKM raised the intensity of work in the plant by increasing production levels, introducing a second shift, and making overtime compulsory. ‘Indians have never worked like that before...it is very difficult to work in those kinds of conditions’ (interviewee 27). Indians are typically regarded as possessing a less disciplined approach to their work in comparison to the Japanese. Work is not an activity that can be divorced from social and family issues. However, Indians cannot be regarded as lazy or work-shy. They will willingly work for long stretches of time. But the idea of being tied exclusively to a single task without relief, and to the exclusion of everything else (for example, an 8-hour shift on an assembly line) is an unaccustomed event for most Indians. They love to break up their work by wandering away from their desk or machine in order to pass the time of day with others by gossiping, smoking, or attending to family matters, before wandering back and resuming their work. An exclusive devotion only to work, ignoring other aspects of life, is a novel and somewhat unacceptable idea. It introduces an artificial demarcation in life between work and family, social, cultural, and religious aspects.

(ii) Perception of carelessness and indiscipline

Chalta hai is a Hindi phrase meaning ‘it goes’, ‘it will do’, or ‘anything will do’. It refers to the typical careless Indian attitude (www.vsubhash.com/desienglish.asp). One interviewee described *chalta hai* as the antithesis of a concern for quality, an attitude that says ‘things are acceptable as long as the heavens don’t come down’ (interviewee 30). In practical terms this translates into a laid-back and relaxed attitude towards the immediate problem or task at hand. Thus, ‘men don’t like to clean anything, they think cleaning is left to women...they don’t keep everything in order, but that is a mental block, a cultural thing’ (interviewee 16). Complacency and lack of urgency seem ubiquitous. Sometimes this appears to come across as a lack of caring. Young workers especially seem to ‘lack discipline of coming on time, taking leave without permission, work within certain times, and behave in a particular way, this is a challenge’ (interviewee 16), as well as unauthorised absences for religious and cultural festivals, holidays, and family matters (interviewee 17). Foreigners often interpret this as indiscipline and a lack of preciseness. Tully (2008) ascribes the attitude of ‘all will come out right in the end’ to India’s long argumentative history (see Sen, 2005) and its delight in debate. This tendency towards discursiveness means that Indians are reluctant to close debates with a firm conclusion. Tully ascribes this to Hinduism’s intellectual tolerance and its suspicion of certainty.

(iii) Mindset of improvised solutions

Jugaad is a Hindi word that refers to an improvised solution to a pressing need. Jana (2009) describes it as a colloquialism that has existed for decades in India and has acquired the status of a mindset, even a philosophy. Chadha (2009a) suggests the possibility that *jugaad* is a gene that has become hardwired into Indians as an evolutionary adaptation over many years. The *jugaad* mindset thrives within a context of scarce resources, necessity, and personal survival, where more often than not things fail to work, and where systems and processes are poorly designed and executed. If people want to get things done they have to learn how to reconnoitre around these barriers (Chadha, 2009a). Such an environment makes inventors and innovators out of ordinary people. People do what they have to do without regard to what is supposed to be possible or allowed: *somehow get it done any way you can* is the mantra.

Within this context, *jugaad* literally means an arrangement or to ‘work around’ something. It implies alternatives, substitutes, make-dos, good-enoughs, and plan Bs...an alphabet soup of options that work (Jana, 2009). It possesses the characteristics of being an innovative quick-fix solution to the problem at hand, which is informal, idiosyncratic, small, on-the-ground, inexpensive, fast, and provides an answer to a customer’s immediate dilemma. The concept has a class component to it (Wikipedia). *Jugaad* are things that poor people do to survive in an environment where they have to make the most of the resources they do have: a tribute to native inventiveness, ingenuity, cleverness, and lateral thinking where they have to get around or deal with a lack of resources. However, *jugaad* possesses a strong pejorative connotation. It carries implications of attitudes and actions that could be dangerous, illegal, unethical, or corrupt: bending the rules, cutting corners, disregarding safety, or providing shoddy service by emphasising rough-and-ready, on-the-fly, and cobbled-together solutions without a scientific approach.

From the perspective of TKM we must remember that their production workforce was initially comprised of young men recruited from village areas who were invariably imbued with the aura of *jugaad* (even though the Hindi word *jugaad* might not be extensively used in Karnataka, the concept is still widespread). Such a mindset runs counter to the disciplined, standardised, systemic, planned, process-driven approach for which Toyota is renowned. *Jugaad* is predicated on the notion of going outside a system or process to solve a problem. It celebrates an improvised fix-it approach which does not attempt to solve the root cause of the problem. TPS, in contrast, seeks systemic change rather than short-term fixes. *Jugaad* does not lend itself to a process and does not represent strategically-tailored innovation (Chadha, 2009b). It may accomplish the immediate objective but ignores the bigger impact. In many ways it is the antithesis of quality, reliability, longevity, and robustness with a high propensity to long-run failure. People who have been socialised in more organised and process-driven environments are likely to flounder in a *jugaad* context, and vice versa.

(iv) Punctuality and the notion of time

Bagla (2008) explains that Indians have a much more relaxed attitude towards time, and punctuality is not a strong point. He describes India's culture as 'polychronic, where time is viewed as a flexible, cyclical commodity in plentiful supply' (p. 56). This attitude has significant ramifications within the workplace. Neumann (2010) relates an example from a German company in India when he informed his management team to meet him at 9 am the following morning. He was in the room exactly at 9 am but nobody else was there. The first person arrived at 9.05 with no apology for being late. The rest trickled in over the next 15 minutes. Neumann explains that in Germany his boss would have left the room if no one appeared on time, regarding this as a mark of disrespect and an insult to the person you are meeting. Not so in India.

(v) Hierarchy and the paternalistic boss

We have seen in previous chapters that the concept of an employer or a boss is located within a hierarchical context. Strong social hierarchical thinking is deeply embedded in most Indians. According to Bagla (2008: 57) 'seniority and age count more than merit, sometimes at a subconscious level...respect for elders sometimes inhibits open discussions'. Because of this Indians are invariably reluctant to question authority. Within the workplace, a boss is usually older, wiser, and more experienced. In addition, a boss has traditionally been male. He is regarded as possessing the knowledge to give all the right answers to difficult issues and therefore possesses the authority to make decisions. He is not to be questioned. Bagla (2008: 60) states 'disagreeing with a superior is considered disrespectful and even disloyal, particularly in the presence of third parties'. This seemingly deferential relationship occurs within a context where the employer-boss is regarded as occupying a father-figure role. He is expected to look after his workers and care for them. In return workers invariably try to please the boss and do not like to say 'no' to him. They respect and obey him. Thus the relationship is a two-way one. In the presence of their boss, Indians may tell him 'yes' because they sense that he wants to hear this answer. There is a strong tendency to deliver only good news to him, things that are going well, whilst ignoring what is

going badly. The boss is invariably told what people think he wants to hear, not what people actually think about an issue (Bagla, 2008).

(vi) Family and the paternalistic workplace

Whereas Japanese workers are renowned for the importance placed on work, this is a secondary consideration for most Indians. Family issues rank far more importantly than work. One manager (interviewee 16) related the story of how a worker took two days leave to return to his family who lived many kilometres away from the plant. He did not return to work as promised after two days. He eventually returned three days later. The worker explained that his father needed him to gather in the harvest on their land. For the worker this was a perfectly acceptable excuse. Family comes first. Such examples are common. Workers regularly take time off work for religious ceremonies and family occasions.

Associated with this argument is the observation that in India workers tend to involve the company in personal issues and look to the company as being able to solve potential problems. This expectation relates to the perception of the workplace as occupying a paternalistic role. Within the context of a German company in India, Neumann (2010) relates how two colleagues fell in love much to the displeasure of the two families. The situation became very tense and the colleagues approached the company to assist them in their plight. The company sent them on assignment to Germany in order to remove them from the tension and allow them more space to think and communicate with their families. Neumann makes the point that in Germany people would not approach their company with personal issues like this in the expectation of the company intervening. However, in Indian workplaces relationships with workers often go beyond the individual worker to embrace the whole family, especially in the case of younger employees. Extended families exert a strong influence on individual workers that also extends into the workplace. Thus, Bagla (2008) relates an example of how he met a young engineer who was quite excited about working for his (Bagla's) small company but also had an offer from a larger company (Intel). The engineer was concerned that his father-in-law knew all about Intel but had never heard of Bagla's small company. Accordingly, in order to persuade the engineer to join his company he had to speak directly with the father-in-

law who, once convinced, gave his blessing to the young engineer to join the company.

(vii) Job insecurity

TKM's attitude towards its first intake of workers (mainly young, male, and inexperienced) was riddled with the spectre of job insecurity. Such workers were hired under the guise of trainee associates for a three-year period with little or no guarantee of job permanence. Their employment was tenuous, predicated on continuous displays of competence, and subject to the vagaries of regular individual performance appraisals. Non-compliant workers could be easily replaced with fresh recruits. Within Indian culture this violated the notion of the paternalistic workplace where employers are expected to cherish and take care of their employees within a family-type environment.

The notions of 'replacement' and 'separation' are painful when applied to human relationships within the Indian context. Because the family bond and structure is viewed with esteem, the concepts of 'replacement' and 'separation' are not well received or much appreciated. The concept of the extended family is very strong in India, with married children and their children often living together under one roof under the patronage of the eldest male. Males are uncomfortable with any deviations from the ideal of joint family living and go to some length to focus on continuing family harmony (Derne, 1992). Because men are emotionally attached to joint family living, and because men see joint family living as important for maintaining the honour that facilitates family alliances, most men are reluctant to separate from joint families in the early years of married life. Men invariably focus on the strength that comes from joint family living as important. Derne (1992: 279) quoted a male respondent who felt 'very bad' because two of his five brothers lived separately from the family home headed by his father and included his other brothers and their families as well as the respondent's wife and children. When people live separately there is a strong sense of insecurity and weakness, but if all five brothers lived together 'everyone is afraid of them and no one dares to stand up to them' (Derne, 1992: 279). This was emphasised by the respondent clenching his five fingers into a fist to highlight the strength of five brothers living together.

When workers were separated from their colleagues and replaced by fresh recruits the process may be considered to resemble that of a death (bereavement) in the family. The remaining workers felt a sense of loss and would have grieved for their colleagues who had been terminated from their job (and dispelled from the family). Within the Indian context, bereaved persons are not expected to grieve alone: 'the extended family and indeed the entire community usually stand by the bereaved persons and offer whatever help and support are needed during the crisis' (Laungani, 1996: 196). Bereaved people are expected to express their sorrow in public: 'one must be seen and heard to grieve' (Laungani, 1996: 195). On a social level this provides security and comfort for the bereaved persons. They are not alone. Such communal support provides a vital social function. If we translate this process to the workplace, we can expect colleagues of the terminated workers not to allow them to suffer alone, but to rally to their cause and provide them with communal support and assistance, often loudly and in public (a process regarded as indiscipline by TKM). Nor are such workers ever considered to have been replaced and lost indefinitely. When a person dies his family chant the slogan '*X amar rahey*', which means the person X lives eternally. Thus, in workplace terms a worker who has been suspended or dismissed is rarely forgotten and his colleagues will keep his name alive, and any perceived injustice will remain an active issue.

Strike-inducing disrespect

TKM experienced its first industrial unrest in 2001. In this section I analyse various aspects of disrespect which, I argue, were responsible for inducing the strike action and were perpetuated in a series of retaliatory actions taken by the company in an attempt to end the on-going unrest and restore order and harmony to the plant. I discussed in the previous chapter that in April 2001 TKM management unilaterally imposed a very small wage increase without consultation or negotiation. Workers boycotted lunch as a protest. Management forced workers out of the factory, declared the protest to be a strike, and started victimising workers. Workers commenced a sit-in. The leader of the lunch boycott was dismissed on the grounds of unsatisfactory performance. Management then established an alternative to a trade union in the form of an internal Team Member Association with a restricted range of powers centred

around worker welfare issues. Subsequently, workers went on strike in June 2001.

The aspects of disrespect I discuss in this section are shown below:

- Inappropriate performance appraisal
- Nature of protest
- Role of trade unions

Inappropriate performance appraisal

I have argued in the previous chapter that the TKM performance appraisal system was perceived as an unfair and subjective mechanism that was used, or misused, to victimise potential trade union agitators and divide-and-rule the workforce. Workers were suspended and dismissed under the guise of ‘poor performance’. Whilst this may be a valid argument I have also noted in earlier chapters that the concepts of performance management and performance appraisal have to be carefully crafted to align to Indian cultural traditions. The focus should not be so much on individual achievement and outcomes but on harmonious interpersonal relationships, humane orientation, respect, care, cooperation, loyalty, obedience, and gratitude (Negandhi, 1984). Ego and face-saving are crucial factors that have to be taken into consideration. Bagla (2008) notes that all workplace processes should be conducted in a manner that builds trust and do not attack an individual’s credibility. He observes that ‘you can seldom transfer [overseas] HR processes into India without substantial localization’ (p. 83). Ignoring such factors could be interpreted as disrespectful towards Indian culture.

The paternalistic trait in Indian society catalyses the behaviour of dependence and favours the inclination towards close supervision rather than specifying a goal to workers and setting them free (Kunnanatt, 2007). Supervisors are highly visible. They closely monitor and command the entire process. Workers look for instructions at each step of the process and are reduced to a more mechanistic level. The existence of the high power-distance concept means that Indian workers invariably remain silent during performance-agreement discussions. They are usually not comfortable in such situations and are reluctant to raise questions in front of their superiors. Much goal-setting centres around individualistic notions associated with time and specificity, which have different connotations in Indian culture. Workers will often nod in

agreement or understanding for fear of displeasing their superior, and then jump straight into a job task and end up committing mistakes (Sinha, 2004). The tendency for Indians to answer 'yes' when they actually mean 'no' is emphasised by Bagla (2008), simply to save face or dignity or because they feel cornered: 'any sense of victory or satisfaction you feel should be muted until you can confirm that the yes will stick' (p. 61).

Nature of protest

'Agitations in India are held at the drop of a hat' (www.nobribe.org, 2010). The notion of protest lies at the heart of Indian history and culture. Even for highly educated people it is a concept that defines their very character. Ananya Reed, a senior Indian academic at a Canadian university writes: 'I revere protest. It has been the single most determining factor in my social situation...It is often the only tool people have, especially when institutional options are non-existent. No substantive social change has ever come about without protest. To dismiss protest is therefore to dismiss human agency (2004).

Bayley (1962) writes that both before and after independence in 1947 large portions of the Indian population have believed that institutional means of redress for grievances and wrongs are inadequate. There still exists a basic suspicion that governments are 'alien and elite', although the basis of separation is now due to 'indigenous social division rather than upon foreign conquest and race' (p. 663). Nobribe.org (2010) writes that 'for a country that prides itself for having successfully used non violence to fight the foreigners, it now freely uses violence and arson to fight against its own'. The art of protest takes a bewildering variety of forms all based on a tradition of protesting injustice, such as strikes, boycotts, hunger strikes, slogan shouting, obstruction, courting arrest, effigy burning, dharna, public meetings and rallies, protest marches and processions, burning tyres, damaging property, sabotage, obstructing railways, damaging cars and buses, throwing stones, gherao, bandh, satyagraha, Gandhigiri, self-wounding, self-immolation, looting and rioting, and defecating on an oppressor's doorstep (Bayley, 1962; Mitra, 1993; www.nobribe.org, 2010).

These various forms of protest range along several continuums: legal to illegal, passive to active, non violent to violent. For example, a *dharna* is defined as a method of seeking justice by sitting at the door of a wrongdoer, traditionally a debtor, and fasting until justice is obtained (thefreedictionary.com). It can be conducted either by an individual, a group, or a community. It is inherently a peaceful demonstration. *Dharna* has its origins in colonial India. Mitra (1993) quotes the Kathiawar Gazette of 1884:

‘If a man had a large claim against a chief or another individual of social importance, and all other means of obtaining his rights failed, he would post himself at the door of his debtor and vow to fast until his claim was satisfied. In extreme cases, the creditor was allowed to starve to death, but generally his importunity was rewarded, as few liked to take upon themselves the odium and discredit of causing their creditor’s death’.

Mitra (1993) further explains that such protests would be undertaken not just by individuals but sometimes by large groups and entire villages, and not just in response to credit matters. Collective hunger strikes would be undertaken against tax collectors, rapacious landlords, exacting moneylenders, and state policies. The *dharna* is still extremely popular in India and is practiced by all sectors of society. The Times of India (13 July, 2010) recently reported an all-night *dharna* was held by opposition parties within the Karnataka Assembly to protest alleged illegal mining and corruption. The opposition members wore yellow miners’ helmets as a symbol of protest. This was followed up with a 310 kilometre *padayatra* (a journey or pilgrimage by foot) from Bangalore to the site of one of the alleged illegal mines. Supporters wore white Gandhi hats and waved the tricolour. *Dharnas* often go on for long periods of time as epitomised by the student protest claiming justice and reparation for victims of the Bhopal disaster and can be coordinated by extensive ‘blogging’ between participants (www.studentsforbhopal.org/dharnablog2010).

This analysis of the history and cultural significance of protest in India reveals not only its traditional place in society but also the role of different forms of protest. When TKM workers initially boycotted lunch in 2001 and then staged a sit-in on the factory premises they were exercising a traditional form of passive and non violent

protest aimed at bringing their grievances to the attention of management when they believed that all other forms of communication had failed. However, TKM management could be regarded as having reacted aggressively to the protest by forcing the workers from the premises, declaring the action a strike, victimising ringleaders, and dismissing the main leader. Such an ‘over-reaction’ could be regarded as a disrespectful response to a traditional passive form of protest that Indians have exercised for long periods of time when faced by perceived injustice.

Role of trade unions

I have shown in previous chapters how trade unions in India are not confined solely to workplace related matters but have close connections with political and community organisations. The independence movement in colonial India established close ties between political parties and labour movements to the extent that trade unions are seen as inextricably linked to the freedom struggle. For some, however, the end of political domination through colonialism has been perceived as being in danger of replacement by economic domination through globalisation and the arrival of MNCs, including Japanese corporations (Ganguly-Scrase and Scrase, 2009). When TKM refused to negotiate with external trade unions this could be perceived as an attempt to impose a new form of domination over Indian workers by severing the link between labour movements, political parties, and community organisations. Freedom was, once again, being threatened by outsiders. When TKM management attempted to set up an inside Team Member Association as a ‘sweetheart’ alternative to the external trade union, such an action could be perceived as another attempt to divide-and-rule the workforce – a tactic extensively practiced during colonial rule and still regarded suspiciously by Indians.

After India gained independence and embarked on a path of domestic led industrial growth through a closed, centrally-planned economy, trade unions pursued a policy of harmonious relations with employers in order to encourage self-sufficiency. The process was a two-way one: paternalistic employers compromised and worked with trade unions to ensure industrial peace and social harmony, a process enormously influential in persuading Japanese corporations to enter India, even before liberalisation in 1991. However, I have argued that the perception of TKM’s

disrespect and aggressiveness towards Indian workers fractured the spirit of harmony between employers and labour movements and induced the argument of ‘overseas domination’ I have presented above.

Strike-perpetuating disrespect

From 2002 until 2006 industrial unrest continued at TKM and appeared to be perpetuated by the same types of disrespect towards Indian culture and history that I have discussed in the preceding sections. In this section I will discuss how events during this period served to provide an additional sedimentary layer of disrespect overlying the previous episodes of disrespect. The major types of such disrespect are shown and discussed below:

- Work intensification
- Less disciplined approach to work
- Notion of time
- Importance of family
- Paternal workplace
- Significance of protest
- Role of trade unions
- Job insecurity; suspension and dismissal of workers; notion of replacement
- Foreign exploitation
- Criminalising Indians on their own soil
- Divide-and-rule colonial-style tactics

2002: At the commencement of 2002 workers again complained of *work intensification* and being forced to perform overtime, often at short notice. This was necessitated to meet the demands of the TPS ‘pull’ method and quickly ramp up production to meet sales orders. However, as we have argued earlier, Indians have a different *notion of time*. They will voluntarily put in long hours at the workplace, but this is invariably of a *less disciplined nature* and more married to tie in with the demands of traditional *family duties*. Pressuring workers to work overtime at short notice sends a message to the workforce that the company is not bothered about the workers’ personal lives. This, in turn, causes dissent.

Protesting workers were suspended, terminated, or had their training periods extended. TKM's performance appraisal system classified such behaviour as indiscipline, misbehaviour, or poor performance. However, as we have seen such *protest* is ubiquitous within Indian culture and is meant to communicate a message of grievance. Treating such protests as misbehaviour could be regarded as a cultural over-reaction. Dismissing senior trade union officers is also seen as disrespectful to the traditional *role of trade unions* in Indian society. Such actions also violate the role of the *paternal workplace*, introducing the spectre of *job insecurity* with its associated notions of separation and *replacement*.

The State declaration that the strike was an illegal action, followed by the banning of public gatherings in terms of the Indian Penal Code, made workers feel that they were *criminals on their own soil*, perpetuating the perception of Government as alien and of *foreign companies as exploiters*. Again, the *role of protest* in Indian society seems to have been misunderstood. These perceptions of exploitation and criminalising normal behaviour can reignite old tensions associated with colonial rule, as can the use of systems such as performance appraisals which can be seen as attempts to *divide-and-rule* the unity of the workforce (again a colonial tactic).

When the trade union turned to the Centre for Indian Trade Unions (CITU) for support this could be regarded as a tectonic shift in *paternal relations* at the company. CITU enjoys a national reputation for caring for the workers and a successful track record of industrial action. Within Indian culture the workplace is traditional regarded as providing this paternal role but because TKM was perceived to have failed in this role, the workers were forced to look for a new entity that could act as a responsible *father*. Since CITU is regarded as politically left-wing, a split had been created at the company which would probably prove to be difficult to resolve.

2003: *Work intensification* was again on the agenda during 2003. A new managing director was appointed who strongly pushed the idea of ramping up production and strengthening the operation of the Toyota Way in the plant. Toyota's vision was to capture 15% of the world market by 2010. TKM aimed to acquire 10% of the Indian market within a few years, most notably through new car models, including a compact

car. Within the prevailing industrial climate at TKM this was always going to be a tall order.

2004: 2004 came in with more of the same at TKM in the form of more *work intensification*, compulsory overtime, higher production targets, addition of new car models, and refusal to take back suspended and dismissed workers. Token *protests* took on more novel forms such as wearing black badges and refusing to participate in morning warm-up exercises. Such behaviour was again met with more suspensions and dismissals, including the termination of trainees on grounds of poor performance, adding to the atmosphere of *job insecurity*.

2005: The most significant event at the commencement of 2005 was the announcement that the Qualis vehicle was being withdrawn from the market and replaced by the Innova. This contradicted several denials made by the company, the latest one made only six months previously. Not only did this add to the perception that the company was not to be believed in its statements but also constituted another aspect of ‘*separation*’ and ‘*replacement*’, which we have earlier argued sit uncomfortably in the Indian mindset. One interpretation is that such an act shows disrespect to the subjects from the head of a family, equivalent to forcefully terminating a relationship. Some would argue that in India a relationship with a brand is similar to a relationship with a human. A bike, car, scooter, domestic goods and animals are treated as members of a family. It is common to see a person performing *puja* (a kind of worship) on the domestic goods and vehicles. Even in factories they perform *puja* at the start of the workday, and once every year they celebrate by cleaning all the machinery in a ritual *Vishwakarma puja*. It is an arguable point that TKM showed disrespect by replacing the Qualis all of a sudden. Other vehicle manufacturers appear to be more cognisant of this aspect. For example, Maruti-Suzuki is keen to stress that it does not replace models, but rather adds to them in the form of constant improvement. This is a more acceptable concept in the Indian context where ‘*addition*’ is celebrated (eg, an addition to the family in the form of a new baby) whereas ‘*replacement*’ is a more difficult concept to embrace.

2005 – 2006: I contend that disrespect finally became transformed into alienation over the period 2005-2006. Worker protests and management reactions took on more

extreme forms. Following the events of 2006 both the TKM management and the workers seemed to have adopted an uneasy stand-off which bode badly for the future viability of the plant and even for Toyota's continued existence in the Indian market. Unrest and protests continued throughout 2005 based around the same issues that had been simmering unresolved for several years: reinstatement of dismissed workers, refusal of TKM to recognise an external union, and imposed pay increases. The protests took on more severe forms such as community rallies, civic demonstrations, and marches. In retaliation, TKM responses also took on a more severe form, such as threats to relocate the factory to north India, increasing the number of contract workers, political harassment in the townships, and derogatory comments made by a visiting Japanese management guru that Indians were not good at manufacturing. During 2006 there was a dramatic escalation in events sparked by the release of a management investigation confirming the dismissal of certain workers. Once again job insecurity was a major factor for workers. Protests escalated in intensity incorporating a factory sit-in and allegations of violence and destruction of property. Management's reaction was equally forceful in the form of a lockout. The war of words intensified. The TPS system was condemned as inhuman. TKM management still refused to sit down with external union officials. Public rallies and marches took place and culminated in police action and arrests. The Karnataka Government banned strike action. Hunger strikes commenced. Other trade unions joined forces with the TKM union and support came in from overseas. TKM management again threatened to relocate the factory.

Salvaging respect

In this section I argue that a watershed had been reached in TKM-worker relations by the end of 2006. After this time a period commenced during which the company (with the co-operation of the workforce) attempted to salvage the situation and restore normality to a fraught context. The tumultuous events of 2005-2006, compounded on top of the continuing industrial unrest evident ever since the establishment of the plant, convinced the Japanese that a major change in direction was required. India was seen as a central plank in the global aspirations of Toyota. Taken in conjunction with the collapse of sales in the USA and other difficulties in China, the TKM operation could not be allowed to fail (interviewee 27). In an attempt to salvage the situation TKM

management came bearing a new message namely: ‘in the past there has been a misunderstanding, now we are trying to correct this’ (interviewee 27). This attempt to remedy past misunderstandings has resulted in a scenario where the Toyota Production System (TPS) has been modified to suit the specific needs of some significant Indian cultural practices. As a result of these modifications, interviewee 28 described TPS as being changed to TIPS (Toyota Indian Production System).

These attempts to salvage respect have been categorised under six headings:

- Backgrounding Japanese personnel
- Foregrounding Indian personnel
- Recognition of the trade union
- Participative work environment
- Restrictions on work intensification
- Other concessions to the Indian context

Backgrounding Japanese personnel

Direct interaction between Indian workers and Japanese managers and trainers had led to numerous problems in the past. Issues had arisen with regard to showing frustration and anger towards workers, who had complained of being shouted at and abused. This cultural clash has now resulted in a change of policy whereby Japanese managers have ceased to have direct contact with Indian workers and instead operate through local Indian managers. Japanese managers and trainers have lost their direct operational responsibilities and have now acquired the roles of ‘advisers’ and ‘coordinators’ only. This has acted to reduce the tension at grass-roots level. A key protagonist of this development has been the third Managing Director (Japanese) appointed in 2008 who has been described as making a substantial difference to improving cultural communication. Interviewee 28 claimed he was ‘consciously chosen’ to be the new MD because of his shop floor trade union background in Japan and his ability to bridge the gap between management and workers.

Foregrounding Indian personnel

Simultaneously with this development Indian managers began to acquire more senior levels within the company, gradually moving into Deputy Managing Director roles. Indian managers had previously complained about being kept down within the company and having no possibility of promotion beyond their present level (interviewees 25 and 26). This led to decisions to leave the company. Such managers had previously been frustrated that their opinions and views were often overlooked within the company, and that they were frequently outvoted by Japanese managers in the various company committees who possessed the weight of power and who tended to stick together. Consequently, poor decisions were made with regard to industrial relations (interviewee 25), and marketing, model selection, and pricing (interviewee 26). Following the events of 2006, those managers who were perceived to be responsible for the mistakes were moved out of the company and replaced by others with a different mindset. One significant example occurred in human resource management. One Japanese manager widely perceived as causing many conflicts over several years was stood down and replaced. The replacement was described as ‘much better, involves all members in talks and discussions...he has acted as a bridge between Indians and Japanese and is one of the key persons in the changed relations’ (interviewee 28). Other key appointments in human resources include an Indian manager who has progressed from a career in shop floor engineering within TKM, having experience in various functional areas. This person has ‘come up through the ranks [and can] better speak to local workers’ (interviewee 29).

Recognition of the trade union

The incumbent trade union in the company, the Toyota Kirloskar Motor Employees Union, was recognised by TKM in 2007, following union elections which allowed all suspended workers to also stand for election. Overwhelming support was shown for those union leaders who were presently on suspension. These election results were recognised by the company, and all suspended workers were re-instated barring some who chose to take a severance financial package. The charismatic (Communist-inspired) General Secretary of the external trade union grouping CITU promised to take a backseat in the future operations of the plant on condition that the union was

recognised and suspended workers re-instated. Accordingly a compromise face-saving solution was reached at the company. Both sides could claim some measure of victory. The union had achieved its goal of recognition whilst the company had also achieved its goal of not recognising an external trade union. In reality, the TKMEU is still heavily influenced by CITU. Union officials take their guidance from CITU and are in on-going contact and communication with it. TKM is fully aware of this but allows the situation to continue. However, no CITU officials are allowed within the plant and TKM refuses to engage them directly. Interviewee 27 described the CITU General Secretary as ‘our guru, our father, we are all students of [him]’.

Participative work environment

The TKMEU has achieved many concessions from TKM as a result of being formally recognised. The union has its own office within the plant. In total there are ten full-time union officials paid by the company (President, General Secretary, two Vice-Presidents, treasurer etc). The union committee comprises forty elected members who act as shop stewards within their respective areas of operations within the plant. Union membership is 100% and encouraged by the management, although not compulsory. All new workers become members of the union after completion of their training. Union membership is not open to managers. The cut-off occurs at the first level of supervisory management, namely team leaders. When any issue or grievance arises union members are instructed to report directly to their shop steward and not to any member of management or the human resources department. A strong union presence has resulted in fewer flare-ups within the plant caused by cultural misunderstanding (interviewee 27): ‘now the union is recognised and respected we have real negotiations and trust is there. Now the management wants to discuss all issues, on the table, before we were just told what to do, and management only wanted to hire and fire’ (interviewee 28). The work environment was described as now being one of compromise – education, communication, participation, involvement, negotiation, and agreement were now the order of the day. Since 2006 there have been four separate annual negotiations between union and management with regard to pay and conditions. From a situation where pay levels were ‘very bad’ (interviewee 28) in 2002, TKM has now risen to become the second highest paid

employer in manufacturing in the Bangalore region with basic pay approximately 600 rupees per day (about A\$15).

Restrictions on work intensification

Work intensification was previously a running sore in TKM but compromise has now been achieved through union involvement in production decisions. Aspects such as line speed, work task speeds, and work methods are now the preserve of joint decision-making between union and management instead of being solely the result of management prerogative. Team members are now allowed to give feedback and suggestions regarding work methods, time taken to do a job, and so on, instead of being commanded what to do. This results in 'less pressure on team members and more respect' (interviewee 29). The abolition of the two-shift (mirror-shift) system, with a four-hour gap between each for overtime, was an early success of the union in 2002, but this has been built upon with further concessions to the Indian culture of work as from 2006. Line speed and work task speeds cannot be increased at short notice and overtime is only allowed for a short period between shift changes. This allows workers more time with their families, especially as long journeys to and from work represent the norm. There now exists a standard ratio between production volume and levels of manpower, so that when production increases so do manpower levels. Takt time is fixed and so are daily production levels. Significant changes are made only at infrequent intervals, normally every 3-4 months with every change made only after negotiations with the union. Other production-related issues have also been compromised. Culturally, Indian males do not relish cleaning work, especially if they are members of a higher caste or perform skilled work. Such cleaning work is performed by lower castes or is regarded as women's work. Efforts made by Japanese managers to force 'technicians' to undertake cleaning work were strongly resisted and regarded as an insult. Consequently workers are now requested to clean only their machines and tools, but not the floor.

Other concessions to the Indian context

Several other developments have occurred in TKM since 2006 that illustrate this new approach of salvaging respect from a fraught situation. First, the Karnataka

Government has eased the restrictiveness of the definition of ‘public utility service’ which previously acted to criminalise strike activity in Toyota. The restriction is now imposed only for a period of six months at a time and only if requested by local management. However, TKM has not pursued this option in recent years. Second, many local workers spend several hours each day travelling to and from the TKM premises from their homes in surrounding villages. This makes their time away from home extremely lengthy. TKMEU and TKM management have undertaken to open talks about constructing a housing village for their workers and families closer to the plant. Third, TKM management used to be extremely strict about absences from work due to sickness, festivals, family matters etc. Such policies strike at the heart of the Indian affiliation to their family needs. In negotiations with the union local management has now taken a more tolerant stance towards such issues. Fourth, training facilities within the plant have greatly improved with the establishment of the Toyota Technical Institute in 2007. New inductees into the plant can now be assured that they will invariably reach the necessary work standards. Fifth, TKM has expanded its activities with respect to corporate social responsibility in an attempt to establish itself as a stronger community citizen. Sixth, Toyota has taken the unusual step of appointing a brand ambassador to promote its vehicles. This is not a normal Toyota practice, but instead represents a concession to Indian cultural expectations where brand ambassadors (such as actors and sportspeople) are widely engaged to promote a range of products and services.

Chapter 9

Conclusion: Uniqueness, Significance, and Implications

This chapter draws together the significant findings of the thesis and the contribution made to the literature. It concentrates on the uniqueness and significance of the thesis, together with the implications for theory and practice. Some of the limitations of the thesis are discussed, as well as an evaluation of the quality of the findings.

Disrespect and industrial unrest

This thesis advances the argument that the concept of *disrespect* underlies the initial period of severe industrial unrest at TKM. Disrespect within the Indian context occurs when recognition and allowance for traditional Indian cultural practices are refused or withdrawn. Identification of disrespectful actions within Toyota is not a normal finding in any analysis of the company's operations, especially since one of the two pillars of the Toyota Way (2001) is *respect for people*. Nevertheless, the notion of disrespect within Toyota is not completely absent from the literature. Petison and Johri (2007) have noted that the command and control approach followed by Japanese managers at Toyota Motors Thailand (TMT) in the early stages of the company's operations contributed to a climate of mistrust and lack of respect. Consequently, when the company attempted to introduce its Thainisation philosophy at a later stage it found itself having to demonstrate respect for local employees in order to make any sustained progress. Thai employees did not trust decisions made by Japanese managers 'because they doubted the fairness and transparency of the process' (p. 10). This scenario is similar to that experienced at TKM with the exception that widespread industrial unrest has never been observed in Thailand, unlike India.

The Toyota Way (2001: 3) defines *respect for people* in the following manner:

'We respect all people touched by Toyota including employees, customers, investors, suppliers, dealers, the communities in which Toyota has operations, and society at large.

- *Respect*: We respect others, make every effort to understand each other, take responsibility, and do our best to build mutual trust

- *Teamwork*: We stimulate personal and professional growth, share the opportunities of development, and maximize individual and team performance’.

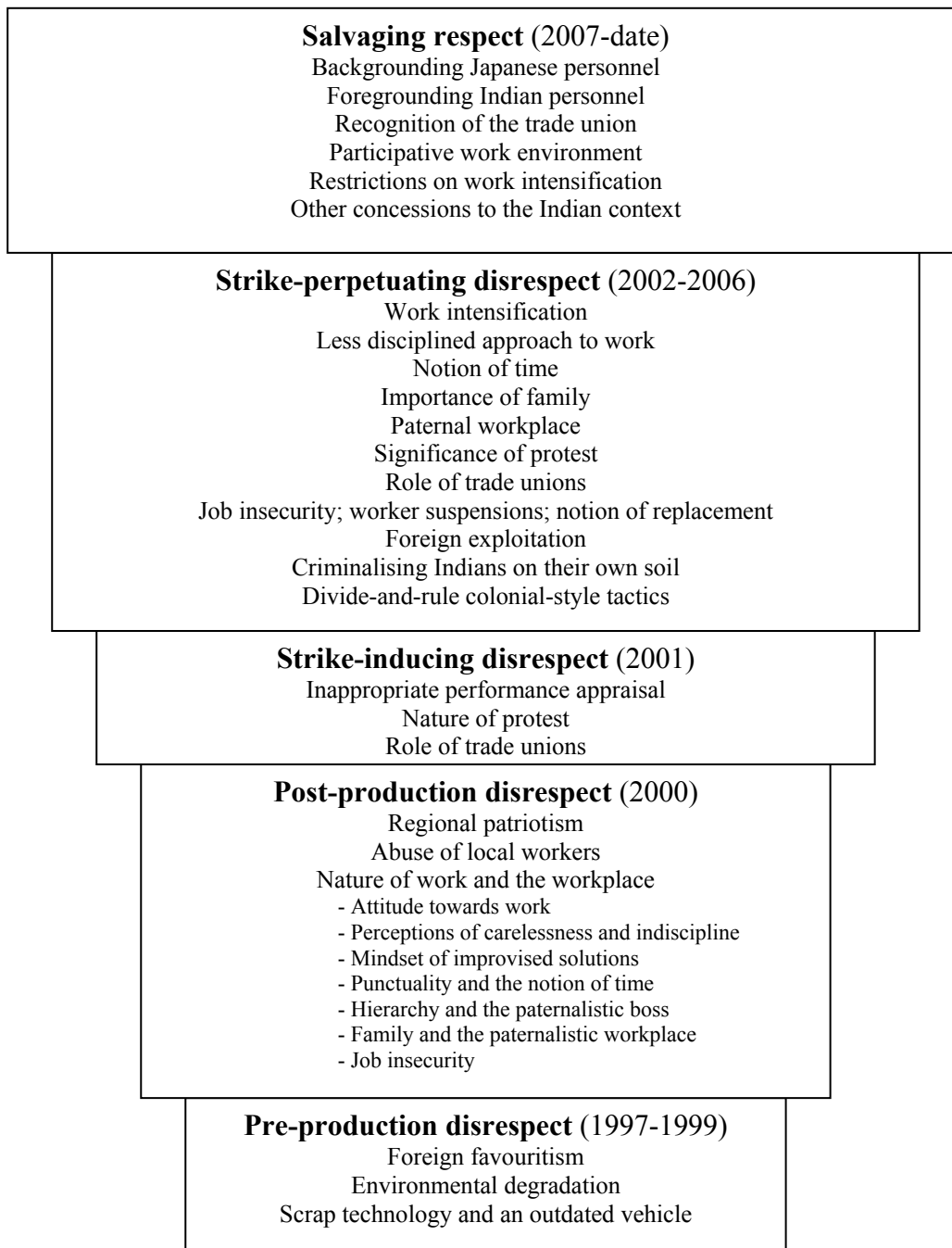
Such a concept may be difficult to apply consistently across different cultural environments. Various important terms are included in the above definition including: respect, understanding, responsibility, trust, growth, development, and performance. All these terms carry significant cultural connotations. As argued in chapter 2, the concepts of respect and disrespect differ between collective and individualistic cultures. An act of respect in one culture may be conceived as one of disrespect in an opposite society. Dictionary definitions of respect include ‘deferential esteem’, ‘an attitude of admiration’, ‘treat with consideration’, and ‘courteous regard for people’s feelings’ (www.onelook.com). However, how each of these definitions is achieved in practice is not an acultural consideration.

Because Toyota promulgates TPS as a universal one-best-way approach to manufacturing motor vehicles it aims to install this system with a standardised approach across its transplanted companies throughout the world. Generally the company is renowned for its track record of industrial harmony in host nations, with one exception, India. As argued in this thesis Toyota Kirloskar Motors (TKM) experienced endemic industrial unrest from its formation in 1999 until 2006. The research question posed by this thesis is ‘*why has TKM experienced such a tumultuous journey since its establishment in 1999?*’

Using a qualitative research methodology based on the technique of conceptual ordering this thesis has proposed a process of ‘dynamic sedimentation of disrespect’ by means of which successive layers of disrespectful actions by TKM management have been laid down over consecutive periods from TKM’s formation until 2006. However, the year 2006 represents a turning point in TKM’s history in that the company has attempted to salvage the situation from that date by undertaking a succession of actions aimed at restoring respect within the company. This sequence, together with the main components of each layer, is shown in figure 9.1.

Figure 9.1

Dynamic sedimentation of disrespect at Toyota Kirloskar Motors



Uniqueness and significance of the thesis

This thesis is unique with regard to three major factors. First, the literature on TKM is extremely sparse. As revealed in chapters 1 and 6, academic analysis of the company

is thin both in regard to volume and quality. In view of the importance of the company in terms of Toyota's global expansion plans this is a significant omission. Second, TKM was plagued by endemic industrial unrest during the initial 6-7 years of its operations. Some scattered sources offer various descriptions of aspects of this unrest, such as case studies (Majumdar, 2006; Mikkilineni, 2006; Ray and Roy, 2006) and book chapters (Mooij, 2005; Das and George, 2006), but in-depth academic analysis is missing. This omission is of significance within a wider analysis of Toyota in the sense that the company has generally enjoyed harmonious industrial relations at its plants across the world and the unrest in India is an enigma that requires analysis and explanation. Hence it is contended that the research question '*why has TKM experienced such a tumultuous journey since its establishment in 1999?*' is both timely and relevant. Third, the main finding of this thesis emphasises the importance of the role of disrespect in explaining the sustained industrial unrest at TKM. Although the literature on international business and human resource management is not silent on the importance of harmonising transplanted overseas norms with the cultural norms of host nations, the link to the extant theory and practice of disrespect has been under-emphasised.

In order to concentrate the analysis on the significant elements of addressing this research question, the discussion below condenses the five layers of sedimentation in figure 9.1 into three major segments:

- 1997-2001: build-up to industrial unrest
- 2002-2006: escalation to industrial violence
- 2007-2010: recovery to industrial peace

This demarcation enables the analysis below to reveal how the findings of the thesis contribute to the theory and practice of disrespect as discussed in chapter 2.

Build-up to industrial unrest: 1997 - 2001

As analysed in chapters 7 and 8 this thesis has argued that disrespectful actions were perpetrated even before production commenced at the TKM plant. Perceptions of

favouritism towards foreign companies were aired, especially by trade union sources. TKM was also accused of showing little respect towards the environment by levelling a hill during the construction process. And the company was believed to have acted disdainfully by not bringing its up-to-date technology into India or the latest models of its passenger cars. Once production commenced in late 1999 the Indian workforce soon found other aspects to criticise about the Toyota manner of conducting its operations. Workers from outside the state were perceived as obtaining better promotion prospects simply because of their prior connection with the joint venture partner, Kirloskar. Japanese trainers and managers were accused of abusing local workers. And the nature of work and the workplace within TKM was totally unfamiliar to anything most of the workers had ever experienced. The pace, intensity, and discipline of work was relentless. Job insecurity was high and no external trade union was recognised. Every indication was that the situation was only going to get worse within the plant. The Deputy Managing Director warned during 2000 that productivity had to improve and that the company was pursuing a strategy of 'more work in lesser time' (Business Line, 2000). For the young and inexperienced workforce such conditions were an immense shock. Trade union sources were quick to isolate the source of the problem as lying in the manner that Toyota management treated its workers: 'the burning issue is the treatment of the workers, that is the problem here' (interviewee 11).

The first round of industrial conflict commenced in 2001 after a small wage increase was unilaterally announced by the management. This started a tit-for-tat process of reprisals. Workers boycotted lunch in protest. Management responded by forcing the workers out of the plant and declaring their action a strike. Alleged ringleaders were questioned and targeted. Workers commenced a sit-in. The leader of the boycott was dismissed. Management tried to form an in-company Team Member Association. Finally workers declared a strike in June 2001. The Karnataka Government responded by declaring Toyota to be a public utility service, thus effectively outlawing strikes. The workers counter-responded by registering a new trade union at the plant.

In chapter 8 this thesis has argued that disrespect within the Indian context occurs when recognition and allowance for traditional Indian cultural practices are refused or withdrawn. The social environment in which managers and workers are brought up

has a strong impact on their attitudes and behaviours (Bourdieu, 1991). In terms of an organisational context there can occur conflictual scenarios between respective systems causing lack of faith amongst both parties. In this case there are two systems to be considered, the Toyota Production System and the socio-cultural system of India. Resistance against TPS could be viewed by Japanese managers as disrespect towards the organisation, whereas failure to acknowledge and accommodate the social and cultural system of India could be viewed by Indians as disrespect towards the mores of the host nation. It is possible that Japanese managers and trainers at TKM may have harboured a prejudice of deviant behaviour in the Indian workers, prompting them to resort to controlling forms of behaviour. However, it could be argued that the control measures adopted by the Japanese managers represented acts of disrespect in the Indian context in the sense that they contributed to negatively impacting the hard earned social status of the workers. Public acts of disrespect such as shouting at workers and using belittling words can seriously dent the image of 'face' in India.

From the Indian point of view it is claimed that Japan had always been held in high esteem because of its reputation for advanced technology and producing superior products (interviewee 2). Indian workers initially applied for employment at TKM with high expectations. However, they soon discovered that their actual experiences within the plant contravened their prior cultural values and beliefs. Their treatment was increasingly viewed as disrespectful. On the other hand, one must also take cognisance of the prior expectations of Japanese managers when they were sent on secondment to the TKM plant. As we have seen in chapter 8, many aspects of Indian cultural and industrial life would undoubtedly have caused frustration amongst Japanese managers and trainers. Their annoyance may have been tempered by extant attitudes of superiority towards Indian workers, and a natural arrogance resulting from the worldwide success of the TPS. Such prejudicial views may have led them to adopt opinions that Indian workers should be regarded as inferior, thus prompting them to use coercive measures to secure compliance.

The chronology of events at TKM as outlined in chapter 7 suggests that during the early period of operations at TKM the managerial agents of TPS aggressively coerced the workers to conform to the requirements of the newly-introduced system. Various strands of local culture were either ignored or questioned and ridiculed. Given the

antipathy of Indians to past colonisation, such practices could have been seen as a deliberate attempt to colonise the psyche of Indian workers, forcing them to think and act in exactly the same way as demanded by the system. Attempts by foreigners to programme and operate workers as per the demands of an alien introduced system can hardly be expected to sit comfortably within the psyche of workers, given their long history of colonial domination.

Initially TPS was an unknown system to Indian workers. Managerial agents charged with teaching and enforcing the system reacted to mistakes caused by this unfamiliarity in a coercive manner. Rich and Grey (2005) argue that evidence of racially profiling subjects can be perceived as acts of disrespect and result in a loss of faith in the legitimacy of social institutions. Actions of Japanese managers and trainers such as shouting, throwing caps to the floor in frustration, deriding cultural acts of eating, and abusing workers as 'you Indians', all reveal perceptions of racially profiling the workers. Loss of faith in TPS may be expected to follow in consequence. Chapter 7 of the thesis chronicles some of the effects of this loss of faith. Various sources began to use extreme terms to describe the TPS system at TKM, such as 'inhuman', 'anti-worker', 'slave-like', and 'a Nazi camp'. The working environment at TKM was alien to the social world with which the workers were familiar. There was no sense of belonging. For eight hours a day, and 5-6 days a week, they were transplanted into a system which they regarded as unacceptable. In such a situation workers invariably perceived every instance of disrespect as an offence to their social status, initially protesting through passive means but eventually escalating into aggressive behaviour and violence. Suspicion, mistrust and non-cooperation can invariably plague work settings where subjects are sensitive to their social status.

In chapter 2 we have seen that Schorr et al (2010) argue that when people are caught up in disrespectful situations, their motivation is to save face rather than engage in productive outcomes. Loss of face is a hyper concern in the status and class conscious Indian society. Attempts to save face in the TKM situation may have resulted in quality compromises by the workers. The natural reaction to disrespectful acts such as shouting and abuse is to restore their social standing in the group, but not through extra effort devoted to production related outcomes. Such coercive measures adopted by Japanese managers would therefore have been ineffective.

We have seen in chapter 2 that the TPS system regards free time as waste that can be potentially re-engineered into productive work effort. However, in the Indian context such time is not perceived as idle. Indians value any time spent on maintaining and accelerating social relationships as productive, non-allowance of which may be viewed as an attempt to colonise even their idle time. Indians adore the concept of work-life balance and emphasise a devotion to their family. Whilst the Japanese context may tend to override the quest for current happiness in the pursuit of more, which may glue the individual to the concept of work, Indians are content with whatever they have achieved and further improvements will not be pursued at the cost of family and societal obligations.

Indian workers may have simply accepted or agreed to the new system just for the sake of securing membership in the world-renowned system of TPS. However, the sustainability of this scenario depends on social acceptance and whether the process motivates or discourages the participants. Every act of disrespect sends a message of social misdemeanour which can eventually kill any initial enthusiasm (Kohlberg, 2008). It was argued in chapter 2 that the credibility of a communication source depends on the degree of trust the receiver has in the sender (Kreuter and McClure, 2004). This credibility may be preconceived on the basis of historical factors. If we apply this to the case of TKM in India, this historical preconception may comprise of two factors: all foreigners as exploiters (Bagla, 2008) and Japanese as pioneers of technology and superior products (interviewee 2). Here, there is a clear conflict between the two. Let us assume that Indian workers at TKM had initially built up their individual self based on the second factor, resulting in positive preconceptions. However, when this preconception was subsequently corrupted through a failure in communication channels, wrong inferences would have been generated (Clyne, 1994), forcing the subjects to withdraw and take shelter in the first preconception - all foreigners are exploiters.

It has been argued throughout this thesis that Indian workers cannot be decoupled from their cultural and social system. Indians also mix their social and work lives. Therefore, arguments around social identity within the Indian context need to be expanded to accommodate the need for pre-existent social status to be recognised and

respected at the workplace. It was argued in chapters 2 and 3 that India is a country steeped in familial relationships. This feeling of closeness forms the basis of dignity especially through social recognition. However, complete subjectification to the needs of a corporate culture, for example through attempts to create a 'Toyota person', can be perceived as an act of disrespect by way of de-dignifying an individual.

Chapter 3 has discussed in some detail the in-group characteristics prevailing in Indian society. In-groups can be defined according to birth, when a person automatically forms part of a group or by voluntary association such as in social, political, or personal associations. However, Indians are invariably averse to induced or forced in-group membership. Even worse would be a scenario where the norms of the forced in-group members demand them to detach from out-group members. The Toyota discourse of a unitary family demands compliance from all its members. Accordingly, TKM practices the same policy. TKM's refusal to recognise an external trade union, and its insistence on in-company enterprise bargaining, are examples of induced in-group membership. Coercive actions were initiated to maintain this in-group identity and its activities. For example, TKM workers who campaigned for recognition of an external trade union were demonised by the company and sometimes suspended or dismissed. Brubaker and Laitin (1998: 433) call this phenomenon 'in-group policing' which involves initiating sanctions against in-group members to enforce a certain line of action vis-à-vis outsiders. Such actions could be regarded not only as being disrespectful to Indian culture and its characteristics of in-group collectivism, but also self-inflicting harm on the organisation by psychologically alienating workers from it (Organ, 1988).

It was argued in chapter 2 that undue adherence to the cultural mores of a foreigner could be interpreted as disrespectful to one's own culture. For example, undue bowing by an Indian to a Japanese manager could be interpreted as disrespectful to Indian culture, especially in the presence of other Indians. However, not bowing in front of a Japanese manager could be interpreted by him as disrespect, prompting retaliatory actions and sanctions. This was the situation that occurred at TKM where such omissions as refusing to sing the company song, perform morning exercises, attend morning meetings, or address colleagues through the respectful Japanese greeting 'san' were perceived as punishable acts by TKM, despite being regarded as merely

passive forms of airing grievances by Indian workers. We have seen in chapter 2 that the concept of ‘apology’ differs between Japanese and Indian culture. It could be possible that the Japanese managers on the shop floor might have felt disrespected when Indian workers did not offer an apology after committing mistakes in their job. Standing with their heads down or immediately venturing into the next best work process would have been perceived as acts of irresponsibility by Japanese managers whereas for Indians that was a figurative action of expressing apology (Madan, 1985). The TPS concept of Andon underpins the idea of ‘stop when there is a fault’ and find and implement the remedy before proceeding. In contrast, in Indian culture there is no such stopping. A person continues with whatever *jugaad* one can lay hands on.

We have seen evidence in chapter 7 that after 2006 Japanese managers began to progressively realise that there was an urgent need for change at TKM. The company saw the need for a new ‘jumpstart’ approach. TKM’s managing director started to employ new rhetoric emphasising a new vision and mission and that ‘the next ten years will be different from the last decade’ (Gopalan, 2009). The Japanese Ambassador to India asked his countrymen to ‘rework their perception of India (Surendran, 2010). These admissions seem to imply that Japanese managers had initially made little effort to understand the culture and history of India or to challenge their preconceived views of the country. Accordingly, in the face of frustration they had resorted to coercive measures to secure compliance. As decision-making models suggest, an individual’s ability to compare the costs associated with a decision with its benefits is often constrained by the availability of information and the ability to process it (Simon, 1979). Therefore, it could be perceived that Japanese managers may initially have depended more on vicarious experience and were less able to process information by verifying it against real-life experience. An open approach to learning would have helped them to obtain a deeper understanding of Indian social, cultural, and industrial conditions.

Escalation to industrial violence: 2002 - 2006

After the first round of industrial unrest in 2001 developments at TKM progressively deteriorated into aggression and violence as detailed in chapters 7 and 8. Work intensification, refusal to recognise an external trade union, continuing punishment of

workers, refusal to take back suspended and dismissed workers, and job insecurity were all sources of on-going worker discontent. This thesis has argued that the unrest at TKM had its origin in the disrespect to Indian workers shown by Japanese managers. When workers started to protest and air their grievances they were further isolated and victimised. As argued in chapter 2, this can set in train a sequence of disrespectful actions in a cause-consequence cycle as observed by Blanchard and Lurie (2004) in the case of minority perceptions within the USA healthcare system. Such a cycle is evident in the situation at TKM. Workers who complained were suspended, dismissed, or had their training periods extended. This cycle quickly descended into counterproductive work behaviour (Robinson and Bennett, 1995).

It was argued in chapter 2 that one consequence of disrespect is that it can alienate workers from the workplace. Lack of procedural justice in the workplace can result in the withdrawal of group cooperation (Tyler and Bladder, 2003). TPS as a system envisages an end product based on distinctive qualities and abilities achieved through the concept of kaizen (continuous improvement). The growth hormone for kaizen is respect as stipulated in the Toyota Way philosophy. However, it could be argued that the various acts of disrespect committed against Indian workers prompted a dynamic of group disengagement. If Tyler and Bladder's (2003) hypothesis is taken into consideration such acts of disrespect acted to block the building of a social identity among TKM workers.

In chapter 2 we have seen that retaliation is a natural response to disrespect. Rich and Grey (2005) report that amongst black men in the USA there is a tradition that anybody who does not retaliate after being abused is a sucker or a chump. However, in the case of TKM there is no evidence of instant retaliation. Rather the manner of retaliation took the form of a more harmonious approach, in line with the Indian way of protest. Initial protests started with passive in-house measures, giving ample opportunity to Japanese managers to understand and amend their treatment of workers. Once such measures were shown to have had no effect, the severity of protest action was ratcheted up to a higher level.

One of the arguments advanced in chapter 2 was that within the cultural context of a collective society subordinates may not consider it safe to retaliate instantly.

Consequently, conflictual issues tend to be submerged rather than addressed (Retzinger and Scheff, 2000). This argument is evident in the case of TKM when there were plenty of opportunities to surface and resolve simple issues of misunderstandings and conflicts, which could be resolved. But a failure to make use of those opportunities led to an accumulation of hurt over a span of five years leading to detrimental actions in later stages. Harboring a submerged emotion of hate would then be considered as a safer way of retaliation by less powerful subjects (subordinates) in a situation where direct retaliation such as anger or aggression may be physically or mentally harmful. Contrary to aggression, which may be the end of a response to disrespect, hate could be identified as a forming stage of aggression. And, at this forming stage, an emotional boundary of the self can become erected which in a collective context would invariably resort to expanding the boundary to accommodate more affected individuals, thereby creating an us-versus-them scenario (Blee, 2004). This situation is easily visible in the TKM case. Analysing the chronology of events, a few incidents of individual disrespect such as a supervisor abusing a worker and termination of a trade union official steadily transformed from an individual into a group problem. The issue did not stop there but crossed the gates of the factory and later become a community problem. Eventually the 'we' boundary expanded and the dynamic gathered momentum. The suppressed state of emotion gave way to an overt display of anger and aggression (Fitness, 2000) making the successful resolution of issues correspondingly more difficult.

In chapter 2 it was argued that contrary processing of social information may lead to aggressive behaviour. This argument could be extended to the unrest at TKM. The Japanese managers processed many social actions of workers in an 'atypical manner' (de Castro et al, 2002) prompting them to respond aggressively. Japanese managers shouted and coercively reacted to the errors committed by the workers on the shop floor. They also forced the workers out of the plant and punished them for peacefully protesting. Cultural disrespect by Japanese managers would have provoked Indian workers to react aggressively, though only as a last resort when peaceful protests failed. The same atypical processing may have happened with Indian workers who were quite unfamiliar with the Japanese system and thought processes.

In a collective context like India, moral attitudes act like a wave that resonates through society, thereby attracting a crowd to an individual cause. An outsider will only become involved in a situation when that person or the group feels or witnesses acts of disrespect. In India, a person committing antisocial acts or a thief caught stealing is first beaten up by local members of the public and then handed over to the police. Such actions are often carried out by people only distantly affected by the theft. Such people consider themselves to be fulfilling their social responsibility. In a similar vein, it is a social responsibility for Indians to become involved in the situations of others, including strangers, if those individuals are in trouble or require assistance or support. Similarly, uninvited contributions to a conversation can be induced simply by overhearing, and getting involved in another person's work obligations without being requested are common trends in Indian society, all based on the principle of Indian moral obligation, dharma. Research conducted by Miller, Bersoff and Harwood (1990) found that Indians consider social responsibilities as a fundamental obligation inherent in all interpersonal relationships. This moral attitude of Indians was probably not realised by TKM. Management remained isolated by refusing to talk to outsiders regarding the plight of its workers. However, the outsiders (external union) considered it as a dharma, a moral obligation to one's fellow beings to become involved (Edgerton, 1942). The concept of this moral obligation to be responsive to another's needs is not a mere demand of the society (Miller and Luthar, 1989) but more than that it is a need for the self. As discussed in chapter 3 it is a spiritual discipline, and by practicing such moral obligations one is preparing himself or herself for the next stage of the life cycle. For a good rebirth one needs to do good deeds in the present life (Sivaraman, 1973).

We have argued in chapter 2 that tit-for-tat processes can become endemic in disrespectful situations where subjects and objects can trade reprisals as two sides of the same coin. When situations remain unresolved through conventional remedies then people can take the law into their own hands (Muir, 1977). Various individuals, groups, and communities can coalesce together as was seen in chapter 7 when the trade union at TKM sought and received assistance from external forums and organisations. This action constituted a form of goal-oriented behaviour aimed at righting a wrong and protecting and restoring the social identity of those affected by acts of disrespect (Tedeschi and Felson, 1994). It is argued that this act was in

response to an ‘unholy alliance’ between the TKM management, local politicians, and the police. This would have left the workers with no better option than to retaliate.

Recovery to industrial peace: 2007 - 2010

As argued in chapter 2 the struggle for recognition also encompasses the dimension of a struggle for the institutionalisation of claims (Deranty, 2010). Any struggle for recognition that involves demands for institutionalisation could be perceived as involving a dilution of the system to accommodate the demands of the subjects and ensure adaptation to the environmental context. It could be conceived that there is a mutual recognition process at work, a process in which fundamental social principles are preserved and at the same time compromises are made paving the way for growth as an essential need for survival. It was suggested in chapter 2 that this process of give and take represents a form of de-traditionalisation, a re-construction of a traditional belief system to form a new system in which both the old and the new co-exist (Heelas, 1996). In the TKM context, particularly, it could be seen as the end of a struggle by way of mutual acceptance of various customs and practices which were earlier bones of contention. Therefore, it could be assumed that a new era in the life of TKM emerged after the tumultuous events of 2006 when company management made concerted efforts to salvage the situation by restoring a measure of respect to a fraught scenario.

Disrespectful relations between management and workers cannot be expected to continue indefinitely without having serious adverse consequences for any company. By the end of 2006 TKM realised that its ambitious plans for future growth and market share in the Indian economy were in jeopardy. A new era of industrial cooperation had to be created. As analysed in chapters 7 and 8 this was realised through a series of conciliatory measures on the part of TKM management. The major concession towards industrial peace involved the recognition of the trade union (TKMEU) although only after a conciliated move on the part of the external union grouping (CITU) that it would remain in the background in the future. Such face-saving measures were essential to achieve a settlement. Simultaneously, TKM took active steps to promote Indian managers into more senior positions and also move Japanese managers into the background where they would fill advisory and co-

ordinator roles only. Consequently, a more participative work regime took hold within the company and important agreements were reached around the previously sore topic of work intensification. The claim that TPS had now been transformed to TIPS (Toyota Indian Production System) (interviewee 28) is indicative of the nature of the changes introduced.

Implications of the thesis

A thesis of this nature contains a range of potential implications both for theory and practice. For the purpose of this section I have identified two separate implications which appear to possess broad underlying impacts for much of the analysis in the thesis. These are discussed below:

- Dynamic sedimentation of disrespect
- Trajectory nature of protest

Dynamic sedimentation of disrespect

The conceptual ordering analysis adopted in this thesis has emerged five major categories of disrespect: pre-production disrespect, post-production disrespect, strike-inducing disrespect, strike-perpetuating disrespect, and salvaging respect. These categories have been tracked chronologically and analysed sequentially. As a result, each layer of disrespect has been found to have impacted on previous layers in a cumulative manner creating a sedimentary-type mass of accumulated actions and attitudes. This finding would suggest that the concepts of respect and disrespect should be conceived of as dynamic elements that operate in the form of a processual flow.

As already identified in this thesis there exist various dictionary definitions of respect including ‘deferential esteem’, ‘an attitude of admiration’, ‘treat with consideration’, and ‘courteous regard for people’s feelings’ (www.onelook.com). Such definitions emphasise a static rather than dynamic concept. In contrast, Honneth (1992; 1995; 2007) conceives of respect within the context of a struggle for recognition. The

concept of *struggle* explicitly gives cognisance to the notion of a processual movement in which respect is achieved through a process of struggling to achieve due recognition for one's identity claims. In the case of TKM it could certainly be argued that the workforce struggled for an extended period of time to achieve due recognition for their separate identity claims as Indian workers, duly recognised through their trade union. However, an important implication of the thesis is the finding that disrespect within the workplace, perpetrated by power holders against subjects, may be exhibited in different forms at different time periods, thus building up in the manner of sedimentary layers over separate levels. Tit-for-tat processes can become endemic in the system, taking on a dynamic life-form of their own. Disrespectful actions can chase one another in a cause-consequence cycle, quickly descending into counter-productive work behaviour. Thus the struggle for recognition takes on the guise of a moving feast as power holders re-manoeuvre and re-position their non-recognition strategies, setting in motion retaliatory strategies from subjects. Accordingly, dynamic considerations must be taken into account within a continually shifting set of contextual conditions. This scenario is best captured by flexible use of a qualitative methodology, as in this thesis, so that various nuances can be emerged and captured in a complex situation over a longitudinal time period. This is particularly important in order to capture personal meanings and inter-personal relationships.

Trajectory nature of protest

The analysis above has emphasised the dynamic nature of disrespectful actions. Within such processes the concept of retaliation plays a significant role and has important implications. Retaliatory actions taken against perceived disrespectful behaviours can often be misinterpreted, especially in cross-cultural scenarios as evidenced at TKM. Chapter 8 has emphasised the unique role that protest plays within Indian society. It enjoys an extremely long history and has played a crucial role in expressing discontent and bringing perceived injustices to the notice of perpetrators. It is argued that protest is so readily resorted to in India because of the history of institutional remedies to injustice being absent or inadequate. As argued in chapter 8, the art of protest in India can take on a bewildering variety of forms, and those not versed in the necessary cultural awareness can easily misinterpret the purpose of different forms of protest.

Such a scenario may have occurred at TKM over the period 1999-2006. It is noticeable that as the perception of disrespect amongst Indian workers built up during the early years their reaction basically involved passive forms of protest. When TKM management unilaterally announced a small wage increase in April 2001, the workforce boycotted lunch in protest. This is a very mild form of protest designed as a communication mechanism. Workers were sending a message to management that they found their action to be unacceptable. It could be argued that management misread the workers' intention and over-reacted. They accused the workforce of mounting strike action, forced them from the factory, and began targeting the alleged ringleaders. Workers retaliated by commencing a sit-in, a slightly stronger form of protest, but again passive in nature and still with the intention of sending a message to management that an injustice had been perpetrated on them. As we have seen the concept of *dharna* is ubiquitous in India and practiced by all segments of society (even politicians). It has the main intention of pricking the conscience of a perpetrator by continually reminding this person of their wrong-doing and persisting in this very visible expression of discontent until remedy is received. However, management responded by dismissing the alleged leader of the lunch boycott using the reason of poor work performance. Again it could be argued that this was an over-reaction, an aggressive response to a passive protest.

A similar scenario was observed in 2004 when company demands for compulsory overtime, and further worker suspensions, were resisted by the workforce. Again various forms of passive protest were adopted, such as refusing compulsory overtime, boycotting lunch, not attending morning meetings, not participating in warm-up exercises, and wearing black badges. In reaction, company management suspended 15 workers, including key members of the union committee. As retaliation, workers mounted a community campaign in the form of pamphlet distribution and street demonstrations. Eventually the situation deteriorated to the violent incidents experienced during 2006.

What is observable in this sequence of events is the trajectory nature of protest within the Indian context. Initial perceptions of disrespect or injustice are invariably met with passive forms of protest designed to send a communication of displeasure to the

perpetrator. If recompense is not received then the nature of protest can escalate to involve more aggressive measures. Such a trajectory has implications for the manner in which protest is perceived and reacted to by the other party. Cross-cultural unawareness can have far reaching consequences.

Limitations of the thesis

In this thesis I have endeavoured to interview a wide range of people associated with TKM. These interviewees include people both from inside and outside the plant. I have tried as far as possible to remain true to the principle of theoretical sampling whereby most interviewees are identified by the nature of the emerging themes. However, due to the geographical distance between India and Australia I was able to achieve only three separate trips to India where data was collected 'in a bunch' rather than on a continuous theoretical sampling basis. Nevertheless, despite this shortcoming the principle was followed of simultaneous collection, coding, and analysis of data on an emergent basis rather than relying on preconceived ideas or material from the literature.

It is noticeable that no Japanese interviewees (managers or trainers) were included in the list of thirty participants. This is a limitation of the thesis. By the time the first trip to India was conducted in 2009 the number of Japanese personnel in the plant had diminished to very small numbers and of these none possessed any organisational memory of events occurring before 2006. Instead I have had to rely on the opinions of senior Indian managers for their interpretation of the Japanese attitudes and actions at the time. Another relative omission is that only one interviewee from the ranks of the shopfloor workforce has been included in the list of participants. Ideally a larger number should have been included but reticence of the part of such workers to willingly express their opinions and observations to an outsider was a significant problem. Instead I have had to rely on the opinions of internal trade union shop stewards for their interpretation of events at the time.

A qualitative longitudinal study is ideally conducted in real time so as to take advantage of current memory and increase accuracy in the recall of events. However, this thesis has had to rely in the most part on the recollected memory of participants,

with the exception of events occurring in 2009-2010. Memory can often play tricks on people and interpretations of events are never fixed. They can vary from one time period to the next and according to different audiences and third parties. Nevertheless the thesis has used a large amount of media comments and reports to fix the accuracy of dates and events so that an accurate chronology of events could be constructed. Another limitation of the lack of real time data is that personal observation has not been used to the extent that many qualitative researchers would ideally desire.

Finally, the lack of a comparator study may also be regarded as a limitation of the thesis. Analysis has been undertaken on one case study organisation only. The possibility exists that Toyota also conducts operations in a cultural scenario not dissimilar to India but within which no industrial unrest has been observed. I do not know if this is the case but certainly of the 26 different countries in which Toyota operates it is extremely unlikely that any of these mirror the essential cultural, social, historical, and religious mix that constitutes modern India. Further research comparing India with other countries in the Asia-Pacific where Toyota operates (for example Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia, China, Pakistan) would be beneficial although it could hardly be claimed that, apart from their common Asian heritage, any of these countries bears a striking resemblance to the cultural mix of India.

Evaluation of the quality of the research

Kitto, Chesters, and Grbich (2008: 243) state that the ‘conventional methodological criteria of quantitative research – validity, reliability, and empirical generalisability – are generally not directly applied to qualitative research because of the different frameworks, sampling approaches, size of sample, and goals of qualitative research’. Instead they have developed a set of different criteria for assessing the quality of qualitative research. These criteria take the form of fifteen questions arranged under seven headings, as shown below.

Box 9.1
Criteria for assessing qualitative research
(Kitto, Chesters, and Grbich, 2008: 244)

Clarification

1. What are the aims of the research?
2. What is the research question?

Justification

3. Why is a qualitative approach the best option to answer this question?
4. Why was the particular research design chosen?

Procedural rigour

5. Have the techniques of data collection been clearly documented?
6. Are the forms of data analysis completely transparent?

Representativeness

7. What sampling techniques have been used to answer the research question?
8. Do the sampling techniques support conceptual generalisability?

Interpretation

9. Has a more conceptual discussion of the results and linkage to existing theory or new theory been developed to explain the relevance of findings to a targeted audience or discipline?
10. Have any negative cases been included and discussed?

Reflexivity and evaluative rigour

11. Has a clear statement of the effect on the data of the researcher's views and the methods chosen been included?
12. Has an explicit evaluation of the relationship between the researcher and those under research, addressing any ethical issues, been discussed?
13. Has ethics approval been obtained from an appropriate institution?

Transferability

14. Has a critical evaluation of the application of findings to other similar contexts been made?
15. Has the relevance of these findings to current knowledge, policy, and practice or to current research, been discussed?

In order to assess the quality of the research conducted in this thesis these fifteen criteria will now be examined against the pertinent aspects of the thesis.

Clarification

Questions 1 and 2: The purpose of the thesis, the nature of the research topic, and the specific formulation of the research question are discussed in chapters 1 and 6.

Justification

Question 3: Chapter 6 discusses in detail the reasons for choosing a qualitative approach to answering the research question. In brief, the important issues and

variables were unknown at the commencement of the research and had to be unearthed through an emergent analysis. Because the research question has implications for complex personal meanings and inter-relationships that would probably have developed over a period of time, a methodological approach that is sensitive to dynamic flows over a longitudinal period is most appropriate for conducting the study.

Question 4: Chapter 6 discusses why *conceptual ordering* was chosen as the analytical and organising approach for collecting, ordering, and making sense of the data. In brief, conceptual ordering is a useful design for classifying and ordering data in order to make sense of the data for explanatory purposes.

Procedural rigour

Question 5: Chapter 6 deals in detail with the manner in which the data was collected. In brief, a mixture of interviews, document analysis, and observation was employed using 30 different interviews, media reports, company and other documentation, and sources from the extant literature.

Question 6: Chapters 6 and 7 show the transparency of the forms of data analysis. In brief, media reports and other documentation were initially employed to uncover relevant issues and variables prior to field trips to India being conducted. Data was analysed in an inductive manner and different themes were pursued in more detail as they were uncovered throughout the data analysis.

Representativeness

Question 7: Chapter 6 reveals that theoretical sampling was used as the appropriate form of sampling. This is most relevant to an emergent methodology where concepts are initially discovered through data collection and coding, and are then pursued in more detail through identification of relevant sources and interviewees.

Question 8: Chapter 6 reveals that a total of 30 interviewees were employed during the research from a wide variety of different sources and opinions: journalists,

external trade union officials, internal trade union shop stewards, senior internal managers, senior managers from a supplier company, ex-employees and managers, and regionally-based managers and trainers. These research subjects possess diverse characteristics and variations, and by comparing their experiences and responses against one another it has been possible to uncover important themes and significant nuances that add to the conceptual generalisability of the research.

Interpretation

Question 9: Chapter 2 provides a discussion of the theory and practice of disrespect. The thesis argues that this concept provides the underlying explanatory explanation for the persistent unrest at TKM. The findings presented in chapters 7 and 8 are further analysed in chapter 9 in terms of their linkage to extant theory.

Question 10: A number of negative cases have been mentioned in chapters 6, 7, and 8. Early interpretations of the industrial unrest amongst TKM managers revolved around the arguments that certain workers were ill-disciplined or poor performers and were being misled by outside agitators. As the theme of disrespect began to emerge later in the research certain managers and trainers expressed surprise or even disbelief that this concept could have exercised any bearing on the course of events. Their belief in the 'rightness' of the Toyota approach was unabated. However, as shown in chapters 7 and 8 the change in direction at TKM was pronounced as from 2007 and the various media statements released by prominent Japanese managers, newly drafted into the plant, revealed an implicit admission that previous actions and attitudes had had a detrimental effect on industrial harmony and productivity.

Reflexivity and evaluative rigour

Questions 11 and 12: Chapter 6 mentions that the views of the researcher could have influenced the interpretation of the data on two fronts: first the researcher is Indian and second the researcher approaches the analysis from a critical perspective. Being Indian can have positive or negative influences on the analysis. Insiders to the culture possess the advantage of implicit understanding of cultural nuances. However, this characteristic can also blur objectivity. Additionally, researchers who adopt a critical

approach are invariably looking for power relations within the data and can be accused of seeing emancipatory motives at every turn. These arguments cannot be flippantly discounted. However, all interpretation in qualitative research is carried out through the lens of the researcher. From the point of view of analysing the research question in this thesis I would contend that the twin characteristics of being a ‘critical Indian’ serve to enhance the analysis rather than detract from it. The subjects’ perception of *being disrespected* is something that a cultural insider can readily understand from the viewpoint of Indian mores and traditions. Whereas an outsider might be able to sympathise with the situation, an insider can empathise with it. The concept takes on a more evocative perspective making analysis more insightful. From an ethical standpoint, although I am an insider to the culture I carry no status advantage within the research setting of the TKM plant. Accordingly, participants had no reason to feel threatened or disadvantaged in imparting information during interviews. Finally, as argued in chapter 2, the experience of disrespect often invites a retaliatory posture. Retaliation invariably involves a confrontation between power positions. Researchers who are primed to identify and analyse such power confrontations (for example, critical researchers) are well placed to offer insightful explanations.

Question 13: Ethics approval was obtained from Swinburne University in 2009 to conduct the research process.

Transferability

Question 14: The research carried out in this thesis represents a substantive study. It has strict applicability only within the boundaries of the research setting of TKM. It has been mentioned in chapter 9 that a limitation of the study is that no critical evaluation against other contexts has been undertaken. This would be a fruitful area of further research, especially for other Toyota plants within the Asia-Pacific region. For those undertaking research of a more positivistic nature the hypothesis that ‘perceptions of disrespect within host cultures can adversely impact the nature of industrial harmony and productivity’ is worthy of further research.

Question 15: Chapter 9 has analysed the relevance of the findings with regard to the theory and practice of disrespect. Of particular relevance is the significance of retaliatory measures (such as industrial unrest) which can be undertaken within endemic disrespectful scenarios, especially in cross-cultural settings involving the transference of one cultural policy across national borders.

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Appendix A: Ethics Clearance

To Prof Robert Jones, Mr Sagi Kunju Kunju Mathew, and Dr James Latham FBE

Dear Bob and Sagi

SUHREC Project 2009/126: Hybridisation of Human Resource Practices in Lean Production in Indian Manufacturing: A Comparative Study of Toyota and Volvo
Prof Robert Jones FBE Mr Sagi Kunju Kunju Mathew Dr James Latham FBE
Approved Duration: 24/08/2009 to 31/10/2010

I refer to the ethical review of the above project protocol carried out on behalf of Swinburne's Human Research Ethics Committee (SUHREC) by a SUHREC Subcommittee (SHESC3) on 12 June, 2009. Your responses to the review, as emailed on 13, 18 and 20 August 2009, were put to a delegate of the Subcommittee for consideration and have now been accepted.

I am pleased to advise that, as submitted to date, the project may proceed in line with standard on-going ethics clearance conditions here outlined.

- All human research activity undertaken under Swinburne auspices must conform to Swinburne and external regulatory standards, including the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and with respect to secure data use, retention and disposal.
- The named Swinburne Chief Investigator/Supervisor remains responsible for any personnel appointed to or associated with the project being made aware of ethics clearance conditions, including research and consent procedures or instruments approved. Any change in chief investigator/supervisor requires timely notification and SUHREC endorsement.
- The above project has been approved as submitted for ethical review by or on behalf of SUHREC. Amendments to approved procedures or instruments ordinarily require prior ethical appraisal/ clearance. SUHREC must be notified immediately or as soon as possible thereafter of (a) any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants and any redress measures; (b) proposed changes in protocols; and (c) unforeseen events which might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.
- At a minimum, an annual report on the progress of the project is required as well as at the conclusion (or abandonment) of the project.
- A duly authorised external or internal audit of the project may be undertaken at any time.

Please contact the Research Ethics Office if you have any queries about on-going ethics clearance, citing the SUHREC project number. A copy of this communication should be retained as part of project record-keeping.

Best wishes for the project.

Yours sincerely

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