*Social Science Spectrum* ISSN 2454-2806
*Vol. 9, No.1, March 2023, pp36-37*

# Book Review

**Kher, Manik (2023) Of Struggles and Joys in Industrial Research: A Memoir. Dr. Manik Kher, Pune. Xiii, 158p. Rs. 695/. ISBN: 978-93-5811-105-7.**

The author, who has worked her entire life for the study of Industrial Sociology, a borderline subject which is rather not taken very seriously by most of the academicians either in industry or sociology, has thought it apt to present her experiences as a 'researcher' in the form of a memoir. Though the initial pages are about her unknown interest towards conducting research for her early days, most of the book is devoted about her personal counters during the course of working in the subject either in academic institutes or in corporate houses.

The book begins with author's experiences while conducting her first 'study' (interestingly came with her desire to see her name in the *Times of India* like one regular columnist Yashodhara Dalmia), with a sample size of 73 girl students of different schools and colleges. Surprisingly, she was issued a 'Show Cause' notice from her college for her persuasion to get the article published. However, thanks to her father, the study found attention of the Director, All India Radio, Dharwad, and she was allowed to present the same in their programme *Yuvavani*. The next chapter which is barely of two pages, is her first unpleasant experience with renowned scholars while trying to conduct a survey of *Lamani* tribals. However, the next chapter describes her ecstasy for getting a chance to do her first research on industrial relations at Mukand Iron and Steel Factory, near Thane.

The following chapter is about her struggle to do a Ph.D. in Industrial Sociology in Sociology Department of any University. She was turned down by all because of her masters' in Social Work and not Sociology. At that point of time, she has decided to approach Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics and regular consult of the resources in the Library boosted her confidence to write a research proposal and get consent from a professor to guide her. This was followed by her a few chapters on her struggle and experiences about getting recognition as a researcher in Sociology. This part also highlights the questions raised those days about the standing of Sociology itself as an independent subject and to some extent the glimpse of academic and corporate house politics she has encountered during her stint at GIPE, NITIE and Times Research Foundation. The Chapters starting from 11 to 15 her observations about study of functioning of labour laws, court battles between labour unions and management in companies, Militancy in TELCO and political dynamics that determine the course of action of trade unions. These are actually based on her practical experiences or studies conducted by the author in some corporate houses. The trade unionism and the influence of Datta Samant that was prevalent in 1980s have also been touched upon by the author. Later, the author also recounts her personal accounts in covering technological change in some of the largest steel plants of India in spite being a naïve in technology. This part also gives us insights into the style of working of Indian companies and multinational joint ventures. The following few chapters contain some anecdotal accounts during the author's stint as a UGC Fellow and a teacher. Special references may be made to her studies on Indo-MNC joint ventures, the integration of technology in the work procedure and the spin-off thereof which were reported as separate books published by some renowned publishers.

One particular chapter "The Culture of Emotional Ownership' represent the author's impressions on academics and corporate sector leaders and the kind of experience and encounter he had with Ahsan Hydari (on whom she mentioned separately in the Appendix II also) and her research guide. Her involvement and engagement as an academician and as an Executive in Tata Steel makes worth reading. The author has narrated her experience as a researcher during her field works at Tata Steel, Jamshedpur, Durgapur Steel Plant and few other companies which give us insights about the conflicts between the HR department and the technical departments. A special chapter in this book

(Chapter 28) is devoted to 'Conferences' in which the author identified the typical behaviour of academicians in a rather humorous way by coining the word 'Conference-its).

The tussle between administrative departments (especially accounts) and the academics has been a perennial problem in all universities because of the paraphernalia involved in the processing of remunerations towards travelling expenses and cost of stationary items and the rigid attitude of persons engaged in settling bills. The author also has recounted several such incidences

In short, a combination of academic encounters and humour makes this book a good reading in spite of being a basically a chronicle of author's journey as a passionate researcher. The beauty of the book lies in author's capability of infusing humour in every experience. One will find that even while describing her humiliating experiences at renowned academic institutions, the author did not forget to see that from her satirical lens. The book also gives some insights to the micro level problems faced by dedicated young researchers which largely remain unaddressed at a wider spectrum. Though some of the chapters look redundant and could have been combined with other ones, the language and the flow of the book is really appreciable and in the style of a story-telling exercise. I would recommend the young researchers as well as veteran academicians to go through the book and relate the contents to their own journey.

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