BOOK REVIEWS


Information Technology (IT) has gained increasing attention and wide acceptance in the developed economies during the past four decades. In India also, significant progress has been made in the past one-and-half-decade in this direction. The importance being given by the Indian government to this sector is reflected in IT action Plan, Telecom Policy, and other policy instruments. It has revolutionised the society in a big way in terms of its contribution to economy, employment, management, etc., and today we are talking about Information Revolution and Information Society. It is not pushing the service sector only but industrial and agricultural sectors as well.

Information systems are useful for enhancing organizational effectiveness. Chief executives and managers are using it to ensure organizational growth in the present competitive world. Organisations and business houses willing to globalise and maintain their competitive edge in the next century have to prepare their workforce to cope with changing knowledge and time. In this context the present book discusses the various dimensions of IT for integrating the resources for achieving the organizational excellence.

The argument put forward by the author regarding conflict between tradition and modernity is an old issue, well debated over time. Generally, a new innovation faces resistance in the initial stages of its diffusion in the society. IT is yet to diffuse in real sense in most of the organisations in India. These organisations are aware of the benefits of adopting IT and the significant advantages they will be enjoying through it. However, due to prevailing gap between traditional and modern technology the switch over process is very slow and it may take some time to finally emerge in India. The cost of failure in adopting IT in organizational setup will be felt very soon in today’s globalized and competitive economy. We may have to pay heavily for this delay and lag behind in many sectors forever. Hence, it is imperative to go ahead with informatization in tune with other developed economies. Kanungo has done commendable job by making this book available to the managers and readers at a reasonable price. The book is divided in nine chapters dealing with the role of IT in organizations, IT Management, IT in Society and Organising IT for Success. Organisations, researchers, and scientists will find the book to be useful and valuable. Numerous case studies, illustrations, and detailed discussions associated with different topics make this book more useful, interesting and meaningful. The book is a timely publication; added with excellent paper and impeccable printing. It will be a valuable collection to the library of those organisations, institutions and individuals who want to make use of information technology in their systems to maintain a competitive edge in the fast changing global techno-economic scenario. Computer professionals may benefit from the book by learning the managerial aspects in handling the organizational activities.


The book titled "Antifungal Agents: Past, Present, Future Prospects" provides a comprehensive account of the antifungal drugs of yester years, present and future, and their mode of action.

The book is divided into six chapters, all the chapters justifying the purpose of the book. The chapter sixth needs special attention since it deals with the 'Natural and Herbal Antifungal Drugs’. The author could have elaborated more on these aspects and included the work done in our country on antibacterial and antifungal properties [National Institute of Immunology (NII) and Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), New Delhi].

Many novel compounds viz., Furanoisoflavone, Solanin, Nimbin, etc., and their antifungal properties need to be mentioned. For this, one may refer to the papers of Suresh Kumar et al. (1998) published in Phytoparasitica and Devkumar and Goswami (1992) in Pesticide Research Journal, Vol. 4, 79-86. It is evident from the discussions in most of the chapters that Amphotericin B,
a polyene derivative, in spite of the Azole drugs being in market, continues to be the most effective and costly but still sought after for thousands of immunocompromised patients, although it develops acute systemic toxicity.

There are several references of Late Prof. Thirumalachar and Dr M C Srinivasan missing from the text. There are also several spelling mistakes which has reduced the importance of the book.

The authors have succeeded in their endeavour to some extent, although several important works are missing from the text. This will be a welcome addition to many young students who are working on antifungal agents.

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**Competition and Economic Integration in Europe**, edited by Saul Estrin and Peter Holmes (Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, UK) 1998, pp 162, Price: £ 49.95  
[ISBN 1 85898 502 1]

Economic Integration of Europe is major economic and political event of the last quarter of the outgoing century. The full impact of the integration would be understood only in the new millennium. The event of integration assumes additional importance because the ongoing effort includes countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The special significance of this inclusion is that most of these countries were under strict control regime as leguey of the erstwhile socialist system. The integration, therefore, not only involves signing Europe Agreement of competition policy but also transition from controlled regime to privatization of enterprises and business. The book under review comprises assessments of problems, prospects and achievements of policy initiative towards emergence of a new economic and political entity.

The book consists of 12 articles by academicians and officials who were either concerned or involved with framing or implementing the regulatory system for European Integration. The first article, which also introduces the volume, by the editors, clarifies the central issue dealt by different contributors to the volume. Regarding economies in transition the editors write, "At the core of transition is microeconomic adjustment, which should lead to greatly increased reliance on market mechanisms for the allocation of resources, associated with major restructuring of the economy."

Such adjustments and reforms, they argued, are to be coupled with establishment and effective operation of a legal system which supports the mechanisms of competitive voluntary exchange. Rest of the contribution deal with different aspects of the legal system and experience of different countries regarding its effectiveness.

Jakob's article draws attention to the fundamental issues like changes in political culture for effective transition from planned economy to market economy. As he hails achievements as commendable and much better than expected, he points out that discussion is essential on issues where EU's experience may not be an ideal basis for transition related policies of the Central and East European Countries (CEEC). Smith, in his contribution, has argued that most point of ongoing process of integration is balancing competition and state aid regime reconciling number of different needs and objectives. He brings out the political dimension of the process of integration. Is a joint political steering mechanism necessary for adopting and applying a uniform regulatory mechanism? By implication, is EU aspiring to emerge as a global political force in a unipolar world after the collapse of socialist pole? This question, in some other form is also reflected in Fox's article. Fox has raised the most uncomfortable question, "Why must they (CEEC) adopt the EU's competition law?" CEECs, under present process, will be admitted in EU as soon as they are ready democratically, institutionally, and economically. "The CEECs' ability to approximate EU law is understood to be a critical factor in reaching the necessary state of readiness for accession." Fox argues that unilateral harmonization has two serious drawbacks: (i) The CEECs lost their freedom to choose and tailor competition law to their needs and (ii) Parts of EU competition laws are inappropriate for CEEC needs.

Rest of the volume is devoted to country specific studies on experiences of transition and implementation of competition law. There are three contributions on Poland, two on Greece, and one each on Hungary, Czech and Slovakia. Marceau's contribution on Poland examines the antidumping laws as strategic tools to counteract the extra-territorial impact of differences in domestic policies, laws and business practices. He argues for the necessity of introducing criteria for balancing trade and competition elements that would stimulate the process of Poland's full integration into the EU. Wolski asks, "What are the implications of these new dynamics of change for relations between Western and Eastern Europe, and more specifically, for the prospects of structural adjustment and reintegration?" Within the general enthusiasm of competition law, he enquires the limits of relying solely on the market mechanism to allocate resources and draws attention to collaboration among firms to spread costs and risks and to gain access to markets. Szymanski has dealt with efficient organization of government expenditure
and issue of direct service and contract state. He has presented the experience of Polish waste collection and efficiency of the contract system. The central point, however, remains in implementing the EU competition law that requires opening up markets to foreign contractors as well.

Frangakis discusses the privatization policy in Greece with interesting elaboration on types of privatization. According to him, EU competition law has provided credibility to the process, both at home and abroad. He, however, suggests that privatization has to take account of social criteria like employment, investment and environment, but not necessarily to the detriment of competition. Baltas article on Greece attempts an overview of how competition law operates in Greece and assesses the impact of EU legislation. The interesting dimension of the competition brought out in this article is that "Firms in Greece tend to compete not on price or quality but primarily in terms of payment methods and amount of credit extended". This may have interesting theoretical implications in studies on market structure.

Vissi's article is on Hungarian competition policy. The failure of the eastern European model has convinced the CEECs to adopt the Western model. He emphasizes that economies with no experience of living in a competitive environment have to take steps to educate individuals, organizations, and institutions to think and act in competition as the operating environment of the society and economy. While Mtachova's article makes an approximation of Czech competition law and EU law, Jurzyca's on Slovakia argues for total isolation of political pressures from economic policies for implementing competition law.

The volume has raised wide-ranging questions relating to integration and transition of controlled economies to market economies. Most of these experiences are useful for countries with bulging fiscal deficit and struggling hard to bring in efficiency in public expenditure. It is interesting to note that some of the experiences have similarity with those of other non-European countries with moderate success. The volume will no doubt be useful for policy makers and researchers of countries in transition.

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