

REVIEWS

Public Relations in India. J. M. Kaul. Calcutta, Naya Prakash. 208p, Rs. 40.00.

Public relations have come to be recognised in our country as an inseparable component of corporate management function. This is just one reason why everybody in PR business feels that there should be a wholesome, Indian treatise on the subject. Most of today's PR practitioners are in the profession not by their own choice. Naturally, therefore, even the senior managers in the profession, and most certainly the new, breed of young entrants into the field, strongly felt the need for at least a handy reference book. In the absence of any indigenous material, the practitioners had no choice but to fall back on foreign publications, contexts of which were quite irrelevant for India, and there are instances when straight jacketing of foreign prescriptions into Indian contexts have proved disastrous. Against this backdrop, the present volume by Mr. Kaul should be unreservedly lauded as a worthy pioneering effort. The book is a novel attempt of its kind in India, and will surely go a long way to meet the long felt needs of practitioners and students of PR.

The care taken by the author to present the subject in all its dimensions in a neat and succinct manner deserves encomiums not only from his fellow-travellers but from the students of management and readers in general as well. The author's preface appro-

priately points to the neglect of this subject in various institutes of management and universities and very rightly highlights the need for developing teaching material, written in the Indian context.

The book has twelve chapters — starting with the basic principles of PR and ending with PR as a career. The text has been enriched by the inclusion of thirteen tables giving such a wide range of information as lingual distribution and form of ownership of newspapers to growth of public sector during five-year plans and growth of investment and pattern of turnover during early seventies. The last chapter is followed by a select bibliography, useful for a deeper insight into the contemporary aspects of PR. At the end there are twelve art plates illustrating institutional advertising campaigns, House journal formats, technical and dealer journals, PR through informative publications and public service advertising.

Although the author asserts in his 'preface' that 'much of the experience based on the environment in the advanced industrial countries of the West is irrelevant to Indian Conditions', almost in every chapter he makes use of illustrations from the Western countries and quotes the Western authors extensively, to drive home his points. For instance in the very first chapter, to define what is PR, the author quotes at least four Western writers and ultimately ends up with a defi-

dition due to the Institute of Public Relations, U. K. Going by Mr. Kaul's own words that 'PR is a phenomenon that has emerged in modern society because of the nature of that society...', it would probably have been a good idea, if he had gone through the rigour of constructing a definition of PR that is immediately relevant to the Indian societal context.

The chapter on Socio-Economic Environment could possibly be enriched a little more by including figures of income distribution amongst various sections of society. The author has devoted about fifty pages in analysing the profile of various groups of the Indian publics — and he is perfectly justified because the chapter is quite revealing, and fairly educative, even for a person who has no special interest in PR. The next few chapters on methods of communicating with these groups of publics is based largely on author's wide and valuable experience — both direct and indirect. In terms of available methods and techniques, these chapters can be said to be fairly exhaustive. The chapter on 'Tools Techniques Media' could have been made more objective by including selective figures pertaining to latest research on different media.

The last two chapters on 'PR for the Public Sector' and 'PR as a Career' are, in a way, innovative and relate purely to the Indian context. For the new entrants particularly, these two sections should be especially useful.

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Managerial Economics — Concepts and Cases. V. L. Mote, Samuel Paul and G.S. Gupta. New Delhi, Tata McGraw Hill Publishing Company, 1977. 360p. Rs. 28.50.

Over the last two decades continued efforts have been made to apply mathematics to problem-solving in management. Operations Research has emerged as a useful body of knowledge. With this change the structure of and analytical approaches to social sciences have undergone considerable change. Emphasis is being laid more and more on formulation of problems than on discussion of concepts. Increased use of computer has taken away some of the analytical aspects of problem solving from the scope of managerial decision-making.

The body of knowledge most affected by this change, is Managerial Economics. Statistical methods such as regression and time series analysis, linear algebra and operations research techniques like mathematical programming and game theory have changed the processes of decision making in areas like demand estimate costing, pricing, resource allocation and capital budgeting. Accordingly, the need to restructure managerial economics has been growingly felt. This book by Mote et al. is a useful step in this direction.

The book has four conceptual divisions : demand analysis, production and cost pricing and capital budgeting. Besides, optimisation, a linear programming approach, has been discussed as a useful tool exclusively in one of the chapters. There is also an introductory chapter in which the authors have developed the concept of managerial decision making in