

A JOURNEY WITH CYBERNETICS IN A CONSULTING COMPANY

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Tata Consultancy Services

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) is a leading IT services, consulting and business solutions organization. Its association with Cybernetics and Prof. Norbert Wiener can be traced back to the 2012 IEEE Founder's Medal recipient, Dr. F. C. Kohli, former TCS chairman and also referred to as the 'Father of the Indian Software Industry'. He was a student of Prof. Norbert Wiener at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1950. This relationship seeded in Dr. Kohli a vision to start the Systems Engineering & Cybernetics Centre (SECC) in TCS. In 1981, he invited Prof. P.N. Murthy, a Ph.D. in Aeronautics and Astronautics from the University of Illinois, then teaching in IIT Kanpur, to lead the Centre. Prof. P.N. Murthy along with a team of researchers developed new models and applied them for resolving complex business and socio economic problems by undertaking consulting assignments from the public sector, governments and industry. Prof P.N. Murthy during his career spanning more than 25 years in TCS alone published articles and papers through which he introduced the science of complexity which have detailed systems models and concepts as theory and their application to real life management problems. This was to make today's managers and consultants feel intellectually elevated and provide stimulation for complex thinking. The work at this research centre has resulted in several models using cybernetics principles. One of the key models is a Cybernetics Influence Diagram (CID) which helps in understanding the cybernetic nature of a system. SECC later re-christened as Business Systems and Cybernetics Centre (BSCC) in 2004 was headed by Prof. Kesav Nori, popularly addressed as "creator of computer cures", due to his love for programming languages, meta tools and derivation of tools for software processes. He contributed to this field by applying the concepts to software quality problems where he articulated newer models. Headed by Mr. M.G.P.L.Narayana for the last five years, the current focus of this research center is in the area of consulting, competence, quality, value, risk and design under an umbrella research program called "Trusted Business Adviser". The center has been instrumental in creating a footprint for work done in the cybernetics area in International Forums and enabling its application to the Management Consultancy context in client engagements.