RELEVANCE OF EVIDENCE BASED DECISION MAKING: CASES IN ANCIENT AND CURRENT SCENARIOS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to study what evidence based practice is and how it can help organizations to make better decisions. In all type of organizations like bank, consulting firm, policy making, health sector and startup, it plays an important role as practitioners affecting the lives of so many people have moral obligation to use the best available evidence when making a decision. The current paper discusses the relevance of evidence based decision making in current scenarios. Here firstly relevancy of this concept has been checked in both ancient and current context in selected areas where decision making with evidence plays a pertinent role. The methodology of hermeneutics, i.e., identification, investigation, interpretation and integration, has been utilised in the present paper. Evidence-based decision - making adopted by king in Vikram-Betal story in the ancient scenario and same approach used by the various organizations in current scenario has been discussed in the study. Finally, a framework has been proposed based on the synthesis of various literatures relating to EBDM practices, story and cases taken from current scenario in the medical and judicial areas.

Keywords: *Decision making, Competency, Fastidious and Potential*

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INTRODUCTION

EBM necessitates decision making and creating organizational exercises that are knowledgeable by analyzing the paramount accessible data. The EBDM in management practice has been originated from medicine and offers a reasonable, goal oriented and experimental approach to business matters. It is equivalent to the controlled method, which uses experiments and data collection to advance knowledge. Evidence-based practices have become quite popular during few decades and substantial body of work has been done. Not only various regulatory agencies require proper assessment of the decisions, but expectation is that all organizations should use evidence-based practice with eminence care. Decision-making is one of the vital aspects for executive tasks however often decisions made by managers are under strain with imperfect data. Whilst few supervisors give good reason in concern to basis for choices of evidences, still many work with useless information, individual knowledge and personal observation.

EBDM may emerge as basic and self instructive phenomenon. However it is difficult because 'evidence' proved to be vague and debated. In straight forward term, concept is logical examination and assessment of experiential research conclusions used for decision to further policy making purposes. The 'evidence', for large part means data. It might be founded on numbers and also subjective or expressive. Evidence originates through logical study signifying by and large relevant realities as regards universe, individuals or companies traditions. The strength and significance concerning evidences vary with working practices of different researchers'. The consequence for accepting assumptions impact on facts and relating evidence to familiarity claims cannot be understood when inferring results by means of proof. The subject concerning unfairness in evidence is imperative; it gets deeper our thoughtful of how actually this position individual's explanations. It helps in passing up decisions relied on wrong or unrelated information.

EBDM originates in course of local trade indicators eg. organization measurements or perceptions of training conditions. Indeed, even proficient understanding might be an imperative resource of proof, e.g. an industrialist's earlier involvement in surrounding up a range of organizations ought to show approach that is probably declared to be best. In all organizations and professions evidence plays an innermost role. For example in department of police where evidence is a main constituent. Evidence has been exercised under this profession (police profession) in assorted structures, from observer declarations and witness proclamations to measurable confirmation and surveillance camera pictures. These evidences help person-in-charge in making decision if an individual is naive or not. The similar concept has also been valid in administrative choices. Notwithstanding its cause, all facts might be incorporated if these judged as trustworthy and significant. Here in management decision various types of sources have also been utilized for evidence like scientific, organizational, experimental and stakeholder. There are two different stages of evidence-based practice: first, is concerned with producing proof, that relies on educational body of an occupation, another stage is related to using evidence in practice and building well-versed decisions based on it. The survival of gap between study and practice grasps true in both administration and organizational science. In similarity with evidence-based medicine, EBDM is an approach that attempts to improve excellence of results made for resolving organizational problems through obtaining ideologies from outside, logical study to direct practices by management. Though there is lack of well-built evidence and logical research yet signifying EBDM in fact advances company's performance that assists managers take enhanced decisions, deficiency of evidence cannot be used to discount EBDM benefits to companies.

The creation of proof though, is capable enough for encouraging people that evidence-based management approach can direct to superior decisions in organizations. The disagreement that EBM is

effectual can be drawn from reasonable understanding based on efficacy of evidence-based medicine concerning curing patients and for efficient policies structuring in public health. It has been argued that organizations which support their decisions on facts have a reasonable benefit. This is reason management by perception, alternative approach to supporting decisions on proof, barely justifiable. The conventional decision making approach either mainly relies on individual know-how that blindly pursues guidance from experts or business books which are above all determined by usual beliefs or feeble data. Thus, when there is small or less consistent information obtainable for making choices, managers with evidence-based management way of philosophy, attempt to do something regarding logic and proof, rather than on presumption or anticipation. The concept of EBDM has been existed in India since early times and its correlation in current scenario in different areas have been explained in the paper through the story.

BACKGROUND AND REVIEW OF EVIDENCE-BASED MANAGEMENT LITERATURE

Although EBDM concept is quite emerging, however it has been admired more for last few years. Literature available is largely reflective usually lacking a concrete experimental base. Moreover, great deal of literature depicts on beliefs concerning evidence-based medicine and instances of accomplishment from medical area. Dean and Bowen (1994) has explained that research can be helpful and imperative to note down that suggestions on evidence-based medicine inclined to be context autonomous and absolutely universal, while managerial instructions are conditional and responsive to difference in organizational perspective.

The available literature lacks no proper definition of evidence and an established theory for framework of evidence. Rousseau and McCarthy (2007) said that process regarding decision making based on evidence its effects of power, organizational politics and circumstance though recognized, are not conceptualized and imagined. The major centre concerning existing literature is on part of educators and researchers who facilitate to make evidence-based management process easy. There are debates in relation to similarities plus dissimilarities among medical sector and management practitioners. The job of executive and how facts can be used as a basis for decision- making are concerns that are not frequently talked about.

Evidence-based approach beginning can be traced back in 1980s when British government progressively put emphasis on necessitate for well-versed policy and practices that were precise as well demanding basis of proof. In particular it was centre on efficiency of public services that regularly led to progress for thorough guidelines and most excellent practice manuals in a lot of disciplines.

According to Cook, (1997b); Greenhalgh, (1997), approach based on evidence has became significant in medical science together with health care by critiquing implied also unconventional data compilation and understanding techniques. Peckham, 1991 has rightly explained that evidence-based medicine resulted in recognizing on whole significant and required fields of study in medical practice throughout defining nationwide level research strategies cheering successful distribution and circulation of research findings. One most important accomplishments regarding evidence-based movement in medical field was enhancement excellence for review procedure in course of systematic reviews that create study in visible and reproducible mode.

The evidence-based management literature also suggested transfer from conventional narrative reviews to logical. The research based on context-sensitive research would be fit method in developing evidence for discipline. While accepting this need, Tranfield et al. (2003) compared both medical research and management research on aspects such as nature of research culture, discipline, review protocol and research design etc. They claimed that nature of management discipline is different as medicine field proves to be convergent in nature.

In fact, for management literature there is no guidance as what passes in relevance to evidence and who is accountable for measuring body of knowledge and assessing data that needs to be diffused for practitioners. Further key centre of literature on EBDM is helpful to managers. Rousseau and McCarthy (2007) suggested that if learning by management is determined on evidence, decision-making of managers and organizations will accomplish enhanced outcomes. This idea is chiefly based on Peter Drucker's (1966) statement of recurring nature for majority organizational issues. It pursues that in regard to explaining problems; executives can utilize connected principles based on evidence for constructing effectual decisions (Rousseau and McCarthy, 2007). The joint experiences in health care with that of management education suggested descriptions for key characters in educating evidence-based management. Locke and Latham (1990) principles regarding goal setting also encouraged instructors to centre on ideology where science is obvious and convergent. They suggested that educators should build up choice responsiveness in management students so that they recognize every small act and non-action is itself a decision. It chances them to put for practice regarding evidence. Still, there are numerous barriers regarding an EBDM education. For example, in it exists no clear initiative or regulation concerning evidence in area of social science as suggested by Westen and Bradley, (2005). In addition, while education in medical field is tremendously all same, this is not case for MBAs and other forms of management education.

Modern governance is experiencing growing pressures for superior transparency, responsibility and horizontal management. These factors tied with forces of globalization, media and better stakeholder expectations for commitment and consultation that have enhanced demands on government for quality service with money value. Thus EBDM has achieved considerable respect as a required tool in meeting these challenges. The importance of EBDM has also been explained by Jim Hmurovich in given lines by giving the example of staff and manager conversation.

"When somebody on staff asks what we should do to address a problem, the first questions I now ask are 'What does the research say? What is the evidence base? What information can we gather to determine if it will fit in different contexts?' It's become a way of life." – Jim Hmurovich

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of hermeneutics, i.e., identification, investigation, interpretation and integration, has been utilised in the present paper. A significant relationship has been analyzed and explored between ancient wisdom related to EBDM practice from "Three Special Brahmins" story of Betal Pachisi and present prevailing decision-making in organisations with special reference to medical science and judicial area. Based on the thorough investigation and analysis a conceptual framework has been given that will prove to be useful for present scenario to various organizations.

CASE-I: EVIDENCE BASED DECISION MAKING IN ANCIENT CONTEXT

In ancient context the current study investigates and explores one of the stories from Betaal Pachisi titled as Three Brahmins. Mahakavi Somdev Bhatt wrote these stories nearly 2,500 years ago. It is an old methodically Sanskrit composed scripture that is also mentioned in Arabian Nights. The hero of stories, King Vikram, was Vikramditya who ruled over India (Bharat) in the first century BC. Vikramaditya was a renowned ruler of ancient India, characterised as supreme king. He is acknowledged for his charity, bravery and patronage of scholars. Vikramaditya is featured in hundreds of conventional Indian legends, as well as those in Baital Pachisi and Singhasan Battisi. We find explanation concerning him in "Katha-Sarit-Sagara" written by a Kashmiri Pundit in Sanskrit called Soma Deva Bhatta in middle of 12th century AD. This is the major collection of Indian tales ever.

The discussion of all stories mentioned in Betal Pachisi is obviously beyond scope of this research paper and therefore, the current paper discusses only one story "Three Brahmins" which remained the basis for this paper. All stories move around two characters mainly wise King Vikramaditya and ghost Betaal. The king was requested by a sage to carry ghost 'Betal' for him. So, when he proceeded for this task he met Betal. In first meeting of Vikram and Betal, when king caught ghost, it put condition for king. Ghost said to him as both of them has to cover a long distance so in lieu of relieving tedious walk, he (ghost) will tell story to him (king). But if king utter even one word till they reach to destination. He (ghost) will go back to tamarind tree. King gave its consent and remained listening Betaal's story. But at end of each (twenty five) story Betal did same process, that each and every time he told king story. But when king gave him reply he moved back to the same tree from where he (king) has caught him.

The current story was told by Betal to king Vikram for which he has to make final decision. The story is regarding three sons of Brahmin for the declaration that who is more fastidious amidst the all three. For it the King (not the king vikram) of that region conducted test for all the three sons one by one and responsibility for making a final decision was given to the king of the region. The king of the region analyzed carefully and thoroughly the outcome of the tests. However, evidence was found in the case of third son only. Now, Betal also asked to king Vikram that in whose favour the king of that region should have to give his final decision. Then the king Vikram replied to Betal that as for the other two sons, just assumptions were made by the person's concerned to it and no sound and tangible evidence was found and in the case of third son sound evidence was found for his fastidiousness. That's why the decision should be given in favour of third son of Brahmin. Therefore, it can also be said that evidence is required for judicious and effective decision-making. Further applicability and relevance of above discussed story has also been examined for two selected areas in current scenario.

CASE-II: MEDICAL SCIENCES AND EBDM

The bold new way of Evidence based practice has brought a storm in medical establishments for past decade. In thought that choices for medicinal care ought to be found concerning most recent and paramount information which really works. As indicated by Dr. David Sackett, the human being mainly connected through evidence supported solution, characterizes this as "the thorough, express and judicious utilization of recent most excellent evidence in settling on choices about concern of individual patients." Recent examinations demonstrate that around 15% of their choices are evidence based. Generally, this is what doctors depend on it rather than outdated learning picked up in school.

This concept can also be implicit from the Jeffrey Pfeffer and Robert Sutton article of their description which comes into view in print on September 4, 2011, on Page BU8 of New York edition with headline: Trust the Evidence, Not your Instincts." The article highlights importance of evidence in medical science. The role of EBDM in medical science can be explained with the help of an example which has been given below.

Suppose that a person have a severe disease. The doctor recommended that patient a disturbing, agonizing and expensive treatment. Actually she did not utter anything because she hadn't discussed with research as in for the main part studies has been found that treatment was ineffective and fraught with negative side effects. But finally as it was prescribed by doctor and patient go throughout the process, which doesn't demonstrate to be effective. Later on patient have gone through research which doctor not succeeded to consult. When the patient asked doctor whether you have gone through research in relation to this cure she replied who gives consideration to studies and I have years of experimental practice. But according to the set of laws and procedures she ought to go through work. Then this practice of doctor will be considered as misconduct.

Practice of evidence-based medicine enables in minimizing avoidable errors. However, in majority of workplaces, sound evidence-based practice is ignored and that causes damage to the staffs, their well-being and eventually group performance. Many firms replicate the performance pay model of other institutions without checking its suitability in their firms and consequently it proves unproductive. This concern is also having its correlation with the facts based decision given by king, Vikramaditya.

CASE-III: JUDICIARY SYSTEM AND EBDM

In order to understand the importance of role played by evidence-based decision making in judicious field, we can take the case of "Aarushi Talwar murder case, 2008". This case also proves importance of evidence in judicial area. The worth of evidence has been proved with concluding lines given by Allahabad High Court in its decision that as per circumstances and evidence on record court can't held guilty Talwar's in double blind case for murder of their daughter named Aarushi Talwar and servant Hemraj. The Talwar couple got benefit of doubt by the court and were acquitted in double murder case. The high court judges turned down the lower court decision and rejected the concept of circumstantial evidence. Thus, it can be said that lack of concrete proof led to benefit of doubt and acquittal. Even Court has acquitted Talwar couple by narrating loopholes in CBI investigation. The court has also given the statement that previous decision was made on circumstantial basis. The acquittal decision was made by the court after cross-examination of 39 witnesses produced by the prosecution. Here incidental evidence relied on the fact of fingerprint at crime sight. However, the direct evidence supports truth of statement in a straight and clear way with no need for any extra evidence. So, because of be deficient in direct evidence the court finally acquitted Talwar couple. Similarly in India the two another leading cases of Priya darshani Matoo and Jessica Lal were heavily based on circumstantial evidence.

This scenario is very aptly connected with the current base of theme taken in this research paper. In the story of three Brahmin also the evidence enabled the king in decision-making. The king Vikramaditya has given decision in favour of that Brahmin where direct evidence was found. While in case of two other Brahmins only circumstances evidence was there.

PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR EVIDENCE BASED DECISION-MAKING

In any organization the managers, executives and other decision-making officials prefers their judgment from opinion-based to evidence-based decision-making to ensure sound and effective decision. After thorough analysis of the case of Vikram-Betal story, cases of different areas wherein evidence-based practice is there and various reviews of study, a framework for evidence- based decision-making has been proposed.

PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The framework has considered various points and aspects in the story analyzed in the paper. The given below proposed framework incorporates application of ancient story's wisdom and practices in various areas discussed in the paper. It discusses structure of steps for decision- making based on evidence.
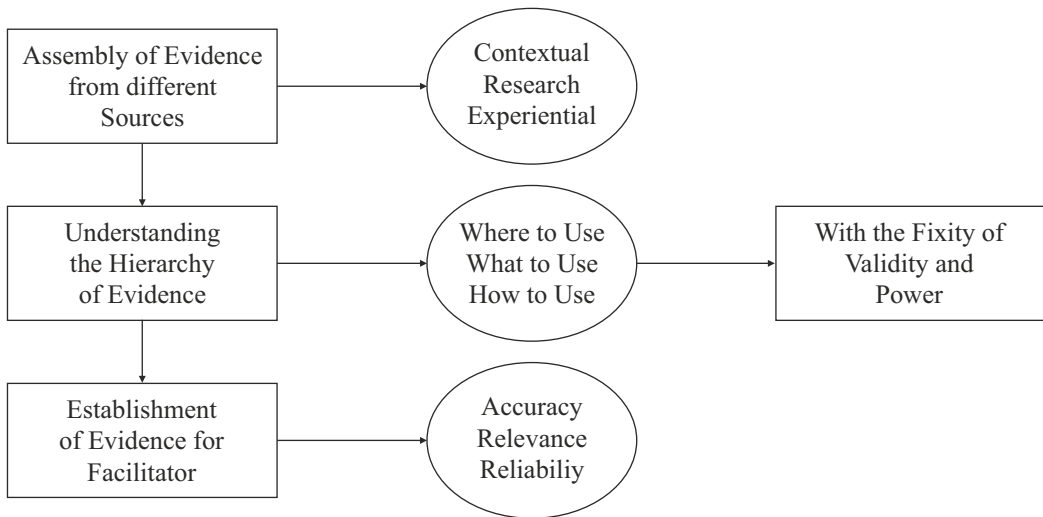
Figure 1 – Proposed Conceptual Framework
Source: Author

The process of EBDM proposed in the framework can be explained as below:

I) Assembly of evidence from different sources: In this step, evidenceis searched through various sources for collecting appropriate information on issues that are very imperative for decision-making. Evidence from contextual source includes attitudinal statements, beliefs, value preferences, orientations and other personal impressions of self and others. Evidence from research sources includes logical investigation and study of both materials and sources for ascertaining facts and arriving at conclusion. In addition to contextual source and research source, experiential source is used for assembly of evidence that focuses on observation, trial-and-error or experience regarding the evidence. After deciding and confirming the source, an effort is made to establish a proper relationship between the source and stakeholders at organization. Finally, authentication is completed into the context and that data will help in validation of evidence.

ii) Understanding the hierarchy of evidences: Here, relevancy and hierarchy of evidence is considered and examined. The various sections and segments of the institution are also given due importance in deciding the soundness of evidence and the way wherein it has to be used. The significance and relevance of evidence is also based on its typology namely primary or secondary. Thus in this step, decision-makers weigh the hierarchy of evidence based on the various sources and levels namely quantitative, qualitative, conventional intuition and other knowledge. This process enables the decision-makers in understanding the hierarchy of evidence in terms of where to use, what to use and how to use.

iii) Establishment of evidence for facilitator: Accuracy of evidence is checked based on its source, context and numbers. Clarity of facts, source of facts and soundness of analysis of facts are examined to ensure the reliability of evidence. The relevance of evidence is examined in terms of its impact on stakeholder and availability within time limit. Finally, the evidence is established for the purpose of decision-making based on three factors i.e. accuracy, relevancy and reliability.

In the current paper all the cases taken for discussion i.e. case-I, II and III has used steps of this framework designed for evidence based decision making. Proper study of all the proofs and supported

material has been done in the three cases. Then level of importance of evidences was checked. A thorough examination of all the evidences in various contexts was checked. At last, on the basis of objectivity, relevance and credibility final decision was taken by the respective practitioners.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGERS AND PRACTIOTIONER

In the era of globalization, diversity and complex environment, decision-making in any organization has become quite demanding and challenging. A huge amount of money and time are spent for implementation of a particular decision in an organization however, in many cases decisions are proved to be ineffective as not backed with sound facts and evidence. Therefore, need of EBDM is greatly felt in every organisation. It is debatable that whether evidence-based or opinion-based decision-making is more effective and judicious. It is extremely important question and requires assessment of a great number of circumstances, contexts and organisations where practice of evidence-based is applied. Mountaineering the evidence hierarchy enhances the projecting power of the facilitator's decision. As, shifting from subjective to objective data can increase the consistency of the evidence, rising likelihood of achievement. Gathering evidence will naturally cause modification and identification of missing criterion, assisting decision makers to add transparency to the needs and desires activating the decision. This will often comprise identification of factors to put off when collected evidence suggests possible long term negative consequences that might not have been measured. The proposed framework in the study synthesise various studies done in EBDM and uses the ancient wisdom and practice explored through the selected story and also cases from current scenarios that may be useful for managers and practitioners working in various organisations. The proposed framework in present study will facilitate and enable the managers and practitioners in taking sound and judicious decision- making.

CONCLUSION

The paper draws managerial lessons in the area of evidence based decision-making from the story of Vikram Betal. The critical investigation and exploration of the selected story provided deep insights and wisdom related to EBDM practice used in ancient time by the great King. Further literature concerning to current context i.e. evidence based decision has studied then some cases in current scenarios from various areas has been used has taken for consideration. The suggested framework in the current paper can be applied and also would be useful in various modern organizations for ensuring best decisions based on evidence. The framework may be useful in resolving the problems faced by managers and practioners in decision-making. Thus at last simply to line up the significance of EBDM in context to non evidence based decision making has been given by making a simple differentiation between the both. As non evidence based decision making can be considered formulating an underlying argument, for oneself or others, that a selected option will bring a favoured outcome. Options set a course for prospect results. The spirit of a decision can be symbolized as, "If one chooses 'A' as specific option then 'B' as specific desired result and its consequences will happen." The fundamental idea is that our alternative will cause, in entire or in part, the required result in the future. In contrast evidence based decision making offers information that supports this underlying argument. It provides information to set-up the possibility or obviousness of the desired effect based on what we select. In theory, the evidence should enhance our level of self-confidence in attaining the favoured results. Final explanation of evidence based decision making can also be completed with the help of quotes given by some famous authors and philosophers: "Do not leave inferences to be drawn when evidence can be presented"-Richard Wright (1908-1960) and "Each man must reach its own verdict by weighing all relevant evidence"- Leonard Peikoff (1933.)

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