

The Time Estimates@

It is a story of 1988. The personal computers were only 5 years old in the country. Prof. Jamboonath, a professor in strategy, was wondering why the three PCXTs, were not getting commissioned for use. He has been able to convince the Director, to buy the 3 PCXTs for use by faculty, including himself. He had created a PCXT based computer training centre in a bank two years ago, which was the first computer training centre in the banking industry in the country. He could not work on computer as using computer meant he should walk a kilometer, climb 3 floors in a rented building in which the computer centre was located. Thus for a 30 minutes job that he could do during the break period between classes, he needed to waste 2 hours and get tired as he was over 50 years old. Besides the head of computer centre was reluctant to allow any subordinate staff (typists, stenographers etc.) for using computer even for faculty support. Since very few persons were developing course case material like Professor Jamboonath, there was no appreciation of problem faced by him. Prof. Jamboonath was also having heavy teaching load almost 2 times of average faculty load that gave him little leeway to use computer centre facilities.

One day he entered the office of Mr. Vikram, Project Manager, who after retirement, as Chief Engineer of MES had joined recently. They were good friends and shared each other's concerns as Professor Jamboonath also helped in Project Management as and when required by the Director when Mr. Vikram was on leave. The following transpired between them.

Prof. J.: "Good morning Mr. Vikram. What is the delay in hand over the computer room for installation and commissioning of the PCXTs purchased 3 months ago, in the first week of July, and lying in aisle. It is October 10th. I see the room painting work done long back and even air conditioner is fitted over almost a month ago."

Mr. Vikram: "Come on Prof. J. It will not take much time now. Only a little work is left. By Nov. Ist week it should be handed over".

Prof. J.: "What is all that is left to be done. I see everything is done".

Mr. Vikram: "We have to fix lightening arrester for protection".

Prof. J.: "What all is required".

Mr. Vikram: "We have to make a pit and fix lightening arrester in that".

Prof. J.: "How large is the pit. Is it 1m*1m or 3m*3m. Is it 1 ft deep or 10ft?"

Mr. Vikram: " Oh no, It is only 1.5*1.5*2 ft size".

Prof. J.: "How about lightening arrester. It is imported or available locally?"

Mr. Vikram: "It is available locally".

Prof. J.: " How far, near airport (20 Km away) or close by say 1 Km ?"

Mr. Vikram:"No. No. Not that far. It is available in main market 5 Km away".

Prof. J.: "How costly is it? It is in lakhs or thousands?"

Mr. Vikram: " Oh no. It hardly costs Rs. 500/-".

Prof. J.: "Sir, You have been provided a jeep with driver. You also have an imprest of Rs. 2000/-. Why can't you give the money to the driver and ask him to bring the arrester by afternoon. You can also hire a labour for half a day for Rs. 20/-. A large number of labour stands at the corner of the Institute in the morning, creating traffic jam. He can finish the work by lunch time. In the afternoon the plate can be fixed and wiring done. By evening the entire "small job" will be

done. Tomorrow the supplier can install and commission the 3PCXTs, and I can use the PCXTs day after tomorrow”.

Mr. Vikram:“Don’t pull my legs. It will be done”.

Surprise of Surprise. On the third day the job was done. Not only Prof. Jamboonath, but even other faculty members started using computer centre. For example, a senior professor of MIS Prof. Singh was going to attend MIS conference with 25 pages of manuscript of a research paper. He was wondering how to get it typed. Prof. Jamboonath suggested that he should carry a softcopy and a print out. The professor was not convinced whether it was possible as he was to leave 2 days later. Prof. Jamboonath suggested that he should give a try and give it to an assistant Mr. Praveen, whom Prof. Jamboonath had introduced to basics of word star. Prof. Singh was pleasantly surprised when the boy typed 25 pages the next day and gave to Prof. Singh. Gradually other staff members learnt to use computer, which came handy six months later when the intake of the institutes MBA programme was increased from 30 to 100 in 4 months’ time.

Twenty years later Dr. Jamboonath narrated the story to a newly appointed Director of a sister institute, who wondered on the delay, the reasons thereof and the attendant consequences. Dr. Jamboonath quipped whether the things have really changed?