

# OPTIMISTIC BIAS

**Year's end is neither an end nor a beginning but a going on, with all the wisdom that experience can instill in us.**

—Hal Borland



—P V Satya Ramesh

**N**ew Year is the time when School Heads actively involve themselves in planning for the next academic session. At the same time, they also make it a point to have a relook at the planning for the current session. In this process there definitely arises the need to make minor amendments in the current plan giving adequate scope only for activities of utmost importance. In this context, let us ask ourselves a few questions.

1. Have we ever been able to make a plan wherein there did not arise any need to make amendments till the end of the session?
2. Which algorithm should we follow in preparing the plan?
3. To what extent does the planning of earlier session help us with our planning for the new session?
4. What has been our greatest learning in this entire exercise of Planning for the New Academic Session?

We all might agree that each year's planning provides us an insight which guides us to evolve with much better planning where the scope for possible deviation is negligible. This deviation will be negligible but never zero. Why? It is because at times certain events both natural and man made force us to deviate from our plan and none is an exception.

**Hope smiles from the threshold of the year to come, whispering, it will be happier.**

—Alfred Lord Tennyson

#### For example:

- Who would have thought of the unrest which took place in Gujarat while planning for the session 2015 - 16?
- Who would have thought of the recent natural calamity in Chennai while planning for the session 2015 - 16? Now the question here is why we fail to think of these when we plan. There could be many reasons but the credit goes to Optimistic Bias a phenomenon underlying cognition in human beings. What is Optimistic Bias? Read on to know about this concept.

Irrespective of whether Optimistic Bias is a boon or a bane for humans, let us learn to

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remain optimistic and accept the fact that the innumerable micro plans made by us can never be aligned with the divine master plan. However, this should not come in the way of our life because ultimately every small step taken by wise planning contributes to the progress of an individual, family, society and nation.

#### *The Rocky Past versus the Golden Future: Optimism at Work*

*Close your eyes and think back over your past life. Did it have peaks – times when things were going great for you – and valleys – times when things were not good? Now, in contrast, try to imagine your future: How do you think it will unfold? If you are like most people, you may notice a difference in these descriptions. While most of us recognize that our past has been mixed in terms of highs and lows, we tend to forecast a rosy or golden future – one in which we will be quite happy and in which few negative events happen to us. In fact, research by Newby-Clark and Ross (2003) indicates that this tendency is so strong that it occurs even when people have just recalled negative episodes from their own pasts. What accounts for this difference? One possibility is that when we think about the past, we can recall failures, unpleasant events and other disappointments, while these unexpected possibilities are not salient when we think about our future. When we think about our future, in contrast, we tend to concentrate on desirable goals, personal happiness, and doing things we have always wanted to do – such as engaging in travel to exotic places. The result? Because our thinking is dominated by these positive thoughts, we make highly optimistic predictions about the future and tend to perceive it as indeed golden, at least in its promise or potential for us. In short, the optimistic bias seems to occur for people not just for specific tasks or situations but also in our projections of our entire future lives as well.*

Ref: Social Psychology, Baron and Byrne