



# **The Elephant Paradigm: India Wrestles With Change**

*Gurcharan Das*

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A mixture of Memoir, economic analysis, social investigation, political security and managerial outlook being thrown in to the understanding of India.

## The Elephant Paradigm: India Wrestles With Change Details

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Author : Gurcharan Das

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# From Reader Review The Elephant Paradigm: India Wrestles With Change for online ebook

**Venkatesh Chittarvu says**

An Interesting take on Laissez Faire Capitalism in India.

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**Erica Mukherjee says**

Gurcharan Das's The Elephant Paradigm is a collection of essays about the India of the 1990's. As with all collections, some essays are stronger than others. In this mixed bag of a book, Das talks about India's economic opening, her protectionist past, the benefits of meditation, needed education reforms and everything in between. This slim volume, less than 300 pages, manages to touch on a wide array of Indian public and private life, but each brush is so fleeting that it is difficult to get a firm grasp on any one topic. The book also lacked an overarching thesis which led one to question the reasoning behind the topic selection. The book wasn't about politics, economics, management or culture. It was a little bit of all these things. In this case, quantity won out over quality.

If I were to create a wish list for this book I would first wish for more time spent discussing the role of women in rebuilding India. Das barely gives women a five page essay. I would also wish for more discussion on the viability of self-help groups and micro finance in helping India's economic transformation. I wish Das's complaints about India's sluggish bureaucracy had been lessened; blaming the bureaucracy for all problems seems to be a favourite middle-class past time. I was also very disappointed to find the last essay of the book dismissing the environmental movement as a bunch of irrational animists who wish to create a new licence-raj. Such close-minded thinking ended the book on a sour note.

The Elephant Paradigm is yet another non-fiction book offering advice on life in New India. However, it's disjointed style and prejudiced editorializing puts it much lower on the to-read list than the works of Tully or Murthy.

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**Sheekhanda says**

The book is a combination of various articles written by the author over the years. Possibly from mid 1990s to 2002. The author essentially is of capitalist mind and offers solutions based on that model. The author also tries to convince people that capitalism must be sold to people like "Fabian socialism" of Nehru was sold to masses in 1950s. Even though acknowledging the short comings of the capitalist ideology, the author debates that it is the best system forward.

Being the ex-CEO of Procter and Gamble(India) , the author does provides an insight into various issues from the side of a capitalist. I however believe that the author missed out a concept called "social entrepreneurship" or "responsible capitalism", which one believes should have been talked more in his book. I must say that I was horrified by couple of his suggestions and at the same time sympathetic to some.

Author is educated in Harvard University therefore he does bring along a certain mindset. I however believe that his understanding of certain issues were elitist per say ( both social and economical )even though the author tries to pinpoint to the reader that he is NOT elitist, on this part I would beg to differ with him.

Author also focuses alot on philosophers and their view points, I presume that is an educational hazard that the author has to live with (since the author did Philosophy honors from Harvard university) and so he uses the names of many western philosophers in putting his view point across.

The author also makes a point that he is a liberal in every sense ( I presume it is fashion these days to say so), I for one evoke authors concern towards the reform of the rules and allowing entrepreneurship to be encouraged. It is an average book if any body wishes to read it. I was drawn to it after reading India Unbound by the author. I however doubt that I would be reading any other of his books soon. None the less , some books recommended by him will certainly be on my list for the book TO-READ.

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### **Kausik R says**

Average

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### **Masen Production says**

“Another Gurcharan Das which gives a alternative perspective to Modern India and changes that it is undergoing in the past 2 decades. A fine perspective and at times you tend to fully agree with his rationale....”

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### **Vish Patil says**

The book is amazingly written, although most parts have been read earlier in either a column or article written by him. Of the four books India Unbound, India Grows At Night, The Difficulty of Being Good and this one, I rate this the least. For anyone who is reading Gurcharan Das for the first time, this is as refreshing as the other three books.

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### **Saurabh Srivastava says**

Economic,Social,political,environmental..what more..Complete India coalesced..

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### **Bahul Jain says**

A thought-provoking and informative book that contains a compilation of essays about the economic,

political and social standing of India in the nineties. Although it's been a while since those days have passed, the book nevertheless is quite an interesting read. There's a lot to learn, plenty of room to grow for India in every aspect and the book pinpoints all the reasons India has always remained a third-world country and how it can cure all the parasitic infections that have festered the nation since its independence. Definitely worth the read, if you have missed out reading the newspapers in your childhood, otherwise also. In fact, this book should be made a part of our history textbooks.

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### **Dayanand Prabhu says**

Not even close to India Unbound by the same author. Ends up sounding like a capitalistic rant, indicating how anything and everything should be made into private sector. worth avoiding.

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### **Jinesh Parakh says**

Mr Das intelligently compared India as an Elephant which has just come out of slumberness and like an Elephant ,its progress and stability will last long ,unless like other East Asian economies who are limping like a Tiger but soon going to exhaust thier steam.With various examples from corporates,worlds, and his personal experience Mr Das put up a strong argument on how India will move for its betterment with global economy and competetive market at one hand and red-tape & bureacracy on the other.

Nice read,but if you have already gone through his first book "India Unbound",you may find it bit slow and a drag of his first book

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### **Ankit Sahu says**

A good account of how changes are perceived in India. Many examples have already become irrelevant with the recent policy changes, but nonetheless, they provide a thorough insight of the popular mindset which prevailed a decade ago.

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### **Rajendra Dave says**

It is a disappointing book from the author that I greatly admire.

It may have something to do with the fact that the essays that were topical in 2002 appear to be stale and overtaken by subsequent events. Also, there are many repetitions,natural in a set of essays written over a time period of many years, but irritating when read as a collection. The editors could have a done a better job.

The book itself is about the progress made by India in the last decade of twentieth century and its unfinished agenda. The author argues that the solution to all our problems is building better institutions. He categorically says that there is nothing wrong with us Indians as individuals. However he fails to explain as to why we are not able to build good institutions if there is nothing wrong with our "national character" (as

he puts it). It is pity that no Indian leader or intellectual has courage to remind us that we as individuals are responsible for our commissions and omissions as a society. Probably no one wants to bell the cat!

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### **Akshay says**

"The Elephant Paradigm" by Gurcharan Das is quite simply a collection of essays. It ranges over a vast area covering subjects as varied as panchayati raj, national competitiveness, the sacred and philosophical concerns of the average Indian consequent to India's entry into the age of liberalisation and globalisation. The essays largely analyse India's transformation in the 1990s from a closed to an open economy. While the author believes that India may never roar ahead like an Asian tiger but it'll surely advance like a wise elephant: moving steadily and surely, pausing occasionally to enjoy its journey and reflect over its past. Crisp, insightful and witty, the essays capture both the disappointments as well as the joys that resulted from the 1990s' revolution and serve as an essential guide to a post-liberalised India.

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### **Abhinav Gupta says**

Great book!!!

Focuses effectively on the main issues like autonomy of local government and importance of free trade and competition.

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