

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

On behalf of our gracious host, Mr Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar, it gives me great pleasure to be welcoming you here at The Durbar Hall today.

A warm welcome to Shriji Arvind Singh Mewar and Mrs Vijayaraj Kumari Mewar, members of the Mewar family, Prof K Ramachandran from ISB Hyderabad, awardees of the Maharana Mewar Foundation, esteemed guests, mediapersons, educationists and notables from the city of Udaipur...I feel privileged to be moderating these proceedings today.

It's a landmark occasion for us: this presentation by Prof Ramachandran on the case studies on the House of Mewar. Prof Ram, as he likes to be addressed, is the Thomas Schmidheiny Chair Professor of Family Business and Wealth Management at the Indian School of Business. He has specialized in entrepreneurship, strategy and family business and he has over 33 years of academic experience, most of which were at IIM Ahmedabad.

Our association with Prof Ram began in February 2008 when Shriji attended the ISB conference on Family Business Management in Hyderabad as a delegate. He invited Prof John Ward and Prof Ram to conduct these case studies for the benefit of not only management students and researchers worldwide, but also to develop an evolving document – a manual, as he said – for the present and future generations of the House of Mewar.

The in-depth interviews, research that followed led to a lot of introspection and, I must say Prof Ram, you were very right: it led to a lot of thinking, re-thinking, re-visiting critical issues about Mewar's history and the role, responsibilities of its Custodians.

The ISB-Kellogg case studies are a new chapter in the ongoing academic and scholarly interest on Mewar. For the first time, the focus is shifting to 'management issues'...on values that have steered the House.

For long - if I can take just a 200 year slice of history - the focus has been on Mewar's political history, trials and tribulations of its heroic rulers, on art, architecture, music, vintage cars, photography, cuisine, costumes, jewellery...all the material wealth and objects, the tangibles that's been associated with Mewar and Indian Royalty.

If I could use the IT analogy, I'd say the focus has been on the 'hardware' of Mewar.

Yes, the width, depth and impact of this scholarship has been enormous: from the early 1800s when the first of the British gazettes were written, reports of the Archaeological Survey compiled; and Col James Tod penned his epic work on Rajasthan, to Kaviraj Shyamaldas and his magnum opus 'Veer Vinod' written in the 1880s: the stage was set. The 20th century witnessed GS Ojha and his 2-volume study, numerous works and monographs of D N Purohit, R V Somani, G N Sharma, Hugh Davenport and Brian Masters followed; In art and architecture, it was Andrew Topsfield, R K Vasishtha, Pratapaditya, George Michell, Michael Meister, Christopher Tadgell, Giles Tillotson who gave Mewar its pride of place...and what's fascinating is that each work spawned a whole new generation of researchers in India, UK and the US. Nandini Sinha Kapur's State Formation in Rajasthan, published in 2002, marks a pinnacle of scholarship on Mewar that began in the early years of the 19th century.

If we were to put together all these works of the last 200 years, while it would certainly not cover much ground in this magnificent Durbar Hall ...I can assure you, it would make its presence felt even here!

What's important today is a shift in focus that's being achieved...from the 'hardware' to the 'software' of Mewar...raising key questions...

- What is it in Mewar that makes it occupy so iconic a position ...despite changing times?
- Why are its Custodians so respected and trusted, even when they were neither the most powerful nor the wealthiest of their times?
- What's been the secret of Mewar's longevity and sustainability?

It is to the credit of Prof Ward and Prof Ram that they are opening up 'windows' to this understanding of Mewar's and issues of Custodianship. As these studies conducted, there is a strong undercurrent emerging: it is eroding and setting aside many stereotypes and myths that have plagued not just the House of Mewar, but the former Princely Order in India.

One stereotype is of **'lack of transparency in governance'**. It's been alleged that the Princely Order had scant respect for governance issues; that major decisions were taken without consensus; that the powers that be were not open to being questioned.If one were to make even a cursory study of these books and reports mentioned, one would realize how shallow these allegations were, and are.

In fact, as Prof Ram may have realized, during his interactions, Shriji, and the family members, spoke freely, frankly... and with rare candour....ever-willing to share their thoughts and documents that were asked for.

This leads us onto the other stereotype **'of poor documentation'**.

It's long been thought that Indians, especially in the 18th and 19th centuries, were poor in documentation skills. Or their documentation was haphazard, incomplete, or reliant on oral sources etc.

You'd be in for a surprise, a very pleasant surprise, if you read through the works and reports in English, Mewari, Gujarati and Hindi that were mentioned earlier.

The 'sense of history and time': is yet another stereotype.

It is often felt that we do not possess a 'refined' sense of history; that there is more mythology than fact, there is more hype than real substance.

The challenge in Mewar, as in India, is to look beyond the obvious.

If one can achieve that skill, one can feel-sense-and-experience the pulse of past throbbing in the present.

As these case studies demonstrate, the House is acutely conscious of its documented and oral history traditions, the role it has to play, the multiple responsibilities it has to discharge towards diverse stakeholders.

There is a reverence for the past. At the same time, the excess baggage of the past is also being shed off.

There is 'space' therefore being continuously created.... for being contemporary, modern and yet to be constantly bootstrapped by this 'software' that is so ancient and universal in its values.

This is where 'Eternal Mewar' is evolving and finding its place in our globalizing world.

You'll hear more about this from the gurus themselves; Prof Ward, Prof Ram and Shriji himself.

A few words about Prof John Ward, whose video address we are about to view:

Prof Ward is Clinical Professor of Family Enterprises at Kellogg School of Management, as well as a visiting lecturer at IMD Lausanne; Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Indian School of Business, Hyderabad and IESE at Barcelona.

Prof Ward is author of leading books on family business: the most famous of them being: *Perpetuating the Family Business*.

The impressive list is there in the booklet created for this occasion.

But more than the books, it is his sensitivity towards the challenging subject of family business that he has demonstrated. While all business families may be complex, it is Indian business families that are probably more complex than others...and require more deft and sensitive handling.

May I request that the lights be dimmed for the video address to be played.... Thank you....

Vote of Thanks: As this morning session is reaching its finale, let me do the honours of thanking all those who have made possible this event:

I begin with the gracious Mewar Family and Shriji who has always encouraged and empowered us to keep pushing the envelope, to keep on involving and associating diverse audiences with the living heritage of Mewar;

Mrs Vijayaraj Kumari Mewar, Ms Bhargavi, Ms Padmaja and Mr Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar for all the time and cooperation in facilitating this study in Hyderabad, Delhi and Udaipur. Please do accept our grateful thanks. Your support is always inspiring.

Our gratitude to ISB, Kellogg and Prof Ward, Prof Ram for their endeavour in understanding and presenting Mewar in the 21st century. Their words of wisdom, pointers and recommendations are acknowledged and will go a long way in shaping Eternal Mewar, this 'work in progress'.

I thank all of you, this august gathering today at The Durbar Hall, your presence has added immeasurably ...to the splendour of this architectural space. This Hall has been a witness to many such gatherings, sabhas and durbars...we thank you for giving us this opportunity.... to give our heritage its due respect.

I wish to thank my colleagues of the HRH Group of Hotels and Maharana Mewar Charitable Foundation for their impeccable organizational skills and assistance at every stage. Thank you, Thakur Bhupendra Singhji, Dr Mayank Gupta, Mr Adityaveer Singh, Mr Subramaniam, Mr Vijay Choudhary and all their team-members.

We've had a stimulating presentation...a lot of food for thought and action, we now invite you for a sumptuous lunch, the real food from HRH kitchens and its hardworking chefs, whom we'll thank later. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen for your time and attention.