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# UNIVERSITY NEWS

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90  
Years of  
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## ***From the Desk of Secretary General.....***

COVID-19 has made every organization realize its limitations and potentials. It has again proved that only those organizations or institutions which are resilient, adaptable and future-ready can survive the crisis. COVID-19 has also shown the significance of decision making and how delay in decision making for one day can lead to irreparable damages and innumerable disruptions. Throughout the history, crises of different forms have challenged humanity. But the crises created by the Corona Virus in this increasingly interconnected global village where collective vulnerability is a reality, throw up a profound question for us all – as individuals, communities, institutions, organizations, societies, nations, --- what is the model that we want to set for our future generations ? Because, what we do during this crisis, the way we interpret it, react to it and bounce back from this crises today will define the life of our youngsters tomorrow.

Crisis is composed of two characters, said John F Kennedy, one represents danger and the other represents opportunity. Never let a serious crisis go to waste, said Rahm Emanuel, an American Politician. Our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi while interacting with Village *Sarpanchs* across the country via video conferencing on the occasion of the National Panchayati Raj Divas on 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2020 said that the biggest lesson learnt from Coronavirus pandemic is that we have to become self dependent and self-reliant. So this is the time to exploit the component of opportunity from this crisis and work towards creating more self reliant and sustainable institutions.

We are fortunate to have born in this period of time when Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has come as a panacea for many of the problems we are facing today. Imagine how the lockdown period would have been without a mobile or television, or for that matter, without a radio. We are at peace because the News telecasts which are products of ICT operations are creating awareness and sensitizing us to take care of ourselves from coming into the grasp of corona. ICT has become vital in almost all aspects of our life. ICT has fundamentally changed the practices and procedures of nearly all endeavours including Higher Education Institutions. Accelerated innovations in ICT are giving rise to new learning technologies which are deciding the rate of learning in HEIs. It is therefore very obvious that we can create our sustainable and future ready institutions with the help of ICT. Technology-fueled innovations will provide the much needed respite to all our higher education institutions in this hour of crisis to combat the compelled isolation of institutions and students. It is applicable to all other institutions.

Association of Indian Universities, as you all know is a ninety five year old organization which has withstood many a crisis, but came out successfully every time with more vibrancy and exuberance. This time also we are making all efforts to showcase AIU in much brighter colours after this grim period of lockdown. As a matter of fact, we have never let AIU to get into lockdown in real sense of term. We were continuously active continuing many of the routine activities of AIU. Officers and staff were working from home. We also initiated many new activities to keep the spirit of AIU vibrant. We have organized several webinars and collaborated in the webinars organized by several national and international organizations. A historic event titled ‘Vice Chancellors Interact’ on theme ‘Indian Universities in Challenging Times’ was organized with Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev as key speaker. AIU collaborated with Sri Sri University, Cuttack to organise an interactive live session on ‘Higher Education Post Corona’ with Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar as key speaker.

To equip the faculty members with the skills of transacting online curriculum, three Live-storm Webinars using a special Learning Management System (LMS) on ‘*Online Learning for Faculty: what you need to know and prepare for a successful transition of your curriculum*’ was organized in collaboration with Quality Assurance Strategic Planning Institutional Research (QASPIR). QASPIR is an International Consultancy Specializing in Quality Assurance, Program Accreditation, and Student Success based in United Kingdom. About 1000

participants from Indian universities benefited out of it. A Webinar on ‘Fostering Social Responsibility by Higher Education: COVID 19 and Beyond’ was conducted in collaboration with PRIA International Academy.

A blog and a WhatsApp group of Vice Chancellors was created to enable them to share the experiences, strategies and innovations adopted by them to minimize the academic loss of the students during the Corona pandemic, the response and participation of Vice Chancellors for which was overwhelming. Publication of Monograph entitled ‘*Protecting Academic Interests of Students during Corona Pandemic: Sharing Best Practices*’ has been initiated wherein multiple ways adopted by universities through various strategies, action plans, innovative methods for engaging the student community, and continue their assessment and evaluation. The aim is to create a ready reference for the future generations to help them to cope up with the similar situations should they arise in future. Many such activities which were initiated during lockdown period are in pipeline and we are hopeful that we shall be able to organize many more activities which shall be guiding light for the future.

As luck would have it, about ten months before the outbreak of Covid-19, we, at AIU have initiated several activities most of which were IT interventions and we are enjoying the fruits of it now during this lockdown period. First thing which we did was redesigning the AIU Website making it more comprehensive and user-friendly. Thereafter, we initiated digitization of different activities involved in Evaluation, Sports and Youth Affairs, Vice Chancellors’ Seniority etc. We have launched new portals for submitting details of the member universities which can be provided online as ready reference to all the universities. We have created online platforms for correspondence and Integrated payment gateway with newly developed AIU portal to receive the payments from clients, which was earlier done manually. MoUs were signed with INFLIBNET for digitisation of AIU Library. A project of creating QR Codes was initiated for the theses in Bibliography of Doctoral Dissertations published by AIU so that the users can have access to whole thesis if they want.

Along with all these new initiatives, as said earlier, many of the possible routine activities of AIU are being continued during this lockdown period. That includes bringing out the weekly Issues of the University News. But due to compelled lockdown, we are unable to send physical copies to the subscribers. In the meantime, we are receiving requests from many followers of the University News from several corners to provide E version of it. Bringing out E-version of the University News is also one of the important activities in the pipeline which could not be realised due to sudden confrontation with this Corona crisis. Since, it may take some more time for the postal system to resume, the best way to reach out to many of the Readers is through website. This would quench the desire of all of you who are used to reading University News every week. So we have decided to upload the University News Issues on the AIU website. From today onwards we shall upload one back Issue along with the regular Issue so that the Readers can have access to all the Issues which we have brought out so far during this lockdown period.

No crisis has the power to cease dissemination of knowledge!

Let’s enjoy reading the University News !

**Pankaj Mittal**

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# Strengthening Teaching-Learning Platforms in Higher Education Institutions in Today's Google Era

**Pratima Khandelwal\*, Khushbu K Birawat\*\*, Nagajyothi H K\*\*\* and N  
 Rana Pratap Reddy\*\*\*\***

There's immense scope of enhancing teaching effectiveness in Indian higher education institutions. With disruptive technologies and fast paced digitization, significant changes are needed to strengthen traditional teaching-learning processes. The prime change is shifting of focus from teachers to students. Further, teaching skills need to be improvised for adapting to digital tech enabled platforms, development of learning and relearning attitude in teachers, and enhancing affective skills for teaching holistically. It is equally important to understand and accept the differences in students' learning abilities, intellectual diversity, rural/urban composition, communication skill sets, and economic background under the formal classroom set-ups. Newer ways of student-teacher engagement can be applied and/or customized as per individual and institutional needs. Incorporating social learning tools to hitherto prevailing unidirectional teaching can enhance all the domains of learning. Teaching, thus, must be (socially) engaging, interesting, and student-centered in the present google era. It must also translate to seek purpose of learning for preparing for life and livelihood, much beyond only for marks and/or certification needs. It must be motivating to build emotional intelligence inventories via strategies like communication, teamwork, active, peer and group learning by students. Teachers must be trained to rely on important self-assessment tools namely feedback (by others) and reflection (by self) on their teaching. Thus, contemporary pedagogical/andragogical principles that showcase effectiveness and enrichment of both teachers and students with productivity and positivity shall resonate in harmony for times to come!

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## **At Teaching-Learning Scenario, Where are We?**

### ***Let's Take a Stock of Problems***

Today's fast emerging technological advancements and opportunities in market (industries) are creating necessity of *quality* and *industry ready man-power* who are skilled, possess knowledge, bear right attitude, have abilities to identify, troubleshoot, analyze, collaborate, synthesize; and importantly take decisions. Time and again, FICCI, AICTE, NASSCOM, NBA, UGC, TEQIP and allied statutory bodies have been indicating the sizeable gap between the existing and required skills in graduating students being churned out of many higher education institutions/colleges in India. Barring few well established, elite and truly progressive institutions at central, state levels representing public and private sectors, majority of the higher educational institutions often are seen lagging in developing core competencies in students due to various challenges at their end. The latter are seen more as threats rather opportunities.

### ***Reality Check of Existing Situation Based on Above Problems***

It is worth noticing that there are only a handful of institutions wherein quality of incoming students is quite pleasing. A lot can be achieved with them in due course of their professional career span at host institution itself. On the contrary, there are many perceivable challenges in today's set-up of majority of the privately governed and some not-so-famous public institutions. Owing to intense competition for attaining cent per cent admissions, there are limited all-inclusive attempts made to handle high diversity and learning needs of admitted students by the educational institutions and the teaching team. In most of the cases, the latter have many limitations and require help to change, follow and adapt to newness and build reserves for their professional growth. Therefore, coherent inputs and outcomes from such Teaching-Learning (TL) platforms remain highly skewed. This skewness is consequently witnessed in form of limited skills in the graduating students. *With technology invading our lives in a huge way, re-skilling of (collegiate) teachers via unlearning and relearning is fast becoming compulsory. Building up the emotional intelligence scores has become equally*

*important in today's highly stressed environments at both professional and personal lives.*

## **What and Where are the Solutions?**

### ***There are Indeed Many Silver Linings!***

Let's look at the possible ways and means to make teaching-learning holistic, challenging yet attainable and rewarding. There lie an ocean of opportunities and scope for having teachers enabled, dynamically oriented to transform the enrolled students. Such enablement is achievable by developing via affective/emotional, social, communicational skills while being updated with technical advancements in their respective domains of specialization. The beauty of fact is that any of these skills can be built or enhanced in both the two important stakeholders- teachers and students at their own pace, zone and level of comforts.

### ***Onus Lies Primarily on Teachers***

*Teachers must be the role models and make use of right blend of strategies for evolving students.* With adequate scope to be trained and tested, teaching team can be made robust to handle challenges as workable opportunities in a slow yet steady pace. With this approach, teaching as a profession becomes more gratifying and valued, leading to higher happiness indices as a cherished inventory. Eventually, this can lead to sound psychological and physiological health statistics.

### ***Let's Aim Higher, Deeper and Wider***

To bridge the gap as discussed above, and to strengthen learning by students in majority of our higher education institutions; teaching-learning systems need scaffolding and be overhauled significantly. To begin with, teaching must be bridged with learning, rather than being a mere unidirectional syllabus completing and documenting means. The unison of teaching (at teaching community's end) and learning (at learners'/ students' ends) must be seen emerging at a common platform rather than two islanded entities. *Teaching can be visualized as a fabric strongly woven with the yarns of contemporary learner-centered approaches.* It needs to be engaging, interesting yet challenging and focusing on all students in the present google era, wherein a teacher is more of a facilitator of information rather than a preacher. Such structured teaching efforts need to be substantiated with progressive curricula,

judicious assessment and evaluation techniques.

### ***Let Internet be Judiciously Used for Enriching Teaching-Learning Platforms***

Internet's ever expanding and deeply impacting omnipresence has been increasingly offering immense information on syllabus and contents much beyond syllabus. There are numerous attractive forms of information - textual, audio clips, video clips, infographics, animations, movies, etc. The right and smart use of digital resources and Information Centers beyond physical libraries can do wonders. These are accessible easily through various gadgets and devices (both at official and personal levels) at very affordable rates in today's India. *In such emerging time, passive teaching can lead to catastrophic results and can even witness ill engaged and scattered classrooms/contact sessions amid social and digital media savvy or internet addicted students.*

### **Active Learning Tools are Truly Rewarding**

Teaching must translate to seek purpose beyond marks and/or certification needs. *To do that, it must be student-centric with involvement of higher cognitive learning orders.* Tools of active learning: Flip learning, interactive/participative learning, self-learning, cooperative group learning, peer learning, Problem based learning, social learning, and learning by doing/demonstrations are excellent ways and means of involving students in learning and having engaged classrooms/labs and other spaces. With ICT enabled learning environment, active learning shall help in developing abilities to identify and solve problems, build teams, develop critical thinking abilities, and strengthen soft skills. Eventually, such approach shall lead to building two of the important attributes: confidence and communication skills as key outcomes.

### ***Communication is the Key***

It's not uncommon that many of our teachers and correspondingly majority of the students are seen limited in their communication skills – written, verbal/oral, and non-verbal. *Apt and sound usage of these set of skills can work wonders.* Limited or lack of communication abilities leads to poor or restricted ability to express in teachers, eventually passive teaching triggers. Such teachers are often seen as interventionists

and tend to seek a high-class control. They may even use destructive communication means to reach out to students. The reverse of above said is also very true. Teachers who are seasoned in communication skills often tend to smartly use the tools to best of their capacities during interactive sessions with students, tend to be interactionist, and make learning accessible and interesting. Such teachers give a huge room for social learning that has been described as an important tool by many scholars and pedagogical experts. Thus, constructive communication (with motivational style) can do wonders, including adding to wider trust radius and confidence. Enriching and far-reaching communication can also address the finer needs of students through mentoring and counseling.

### ***Motivation and Right Mentoring are Other Important Ingredients to Season the Entire Job***

Teaching is said to mother of all professions and teaching fraternity can add flavors of true success by being motivated and passionate towards the job rather than taking teaching as mere means of earning livelihood. A motivated teacher can create spark and cause many of the students to become motivated. Furthermore, students can be brought to a common bias free datum, be appreciated and understood for their different learning styles and patterns. *Motivation and hunger for aspiration play magical roles in students' lives.* Raising graduating students' benchmarks for successful and fulfilling career through incorporation of societal good, ethical standings, environmental understanding with care, team spirit and strong communication is need of the hour. This is essentially the crux of Outcome Based Education (OBE). Enabling teachers to embrace smart and artful teaching along with required communication skills shall go a long way in imparting positive learning impact on students.

It is also painful yet true that stress and depression is being seen commonly engulfing young adults and collegiate students are no exception. These invade peace of life and even be life threatening too, if not attended to! *These can be gradually and successfully overcome or negated by powerful strengths of positive mentoring and counseling respectively undertaken by academic mentors/proctors/advisers and professional (psychological) counselors.* It shall not be an over-statement that with adequate and right

kind of mentoring and counseling services at place, the depressed, stressed, socially neglected and deprived students (and sometimes their parents too) can be attended to and brought to the mainstream of life and education. Such success stories of change-making are highly overwhelming and can create a long-lasting positive impact in such empathetic teachers'/counselors' careers. Thus, institution must focus on developing, expanding and building the emotional intelligence of both students and teachers. It is a well-known and

accepted notion that emotional quotient (EQ) stands much above intelligent quotient (IQ) in making a person successful in the longer run of life. High IQ leads to earning a job, but it EQ that makes a person's career.

### Feedback and Reflection

Let's help our teachers to understand the two faces of the same coin: Feedback and Reflection.

Time has come to emphasize on reskilling, un-learning and re-learning for teachers along with building up their soft skills scores. For ensuring positivity, teachers must be open, accepting to change with changing times and willing to be change makers in their students' lives. They must understand to appreciate the need to improvise. Such an attitude shall add towards positivity and satisfaction in teachers' inventories and positively affect health indices. *Thus, teachers must undertake introspection, also called as Reflection, besides being evaluated by students in the form of objective/subjective feedback.* Reflection is one of the best ways to analyze and emerge further, align efforts as

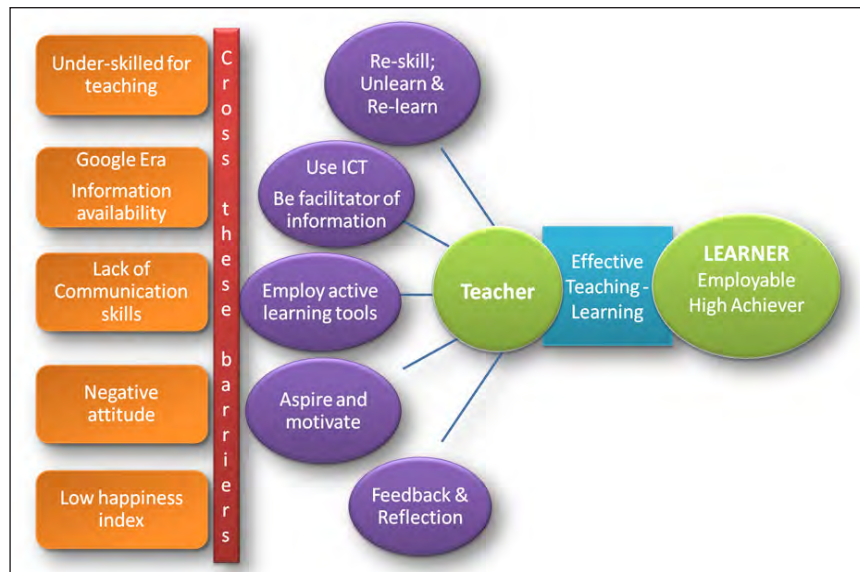


Figure 1: With Quality Inputs, we Achieve Quality Outputs

required by the system at place and be with changing times. With a well-designed training, this milestone can be achieved at any institution.

Figure 1 is an attempt to list the commonly existing barriers that need to be crossed by a teacher to engage in effective teaching-learning process. It further emphasises the need for unlearning and re-learning, use of ICT tools, employing active learning tools, being a motivator and reflecting upon the process by a teacher.

### Conclusion

Understanding the changing times, adapting contemporary pedagogical principles, using available (digital) technology, developing emotional intelligence stocks, appreciating students' varied needs of learning together can lead to enhanced efficiency of teaching-learning in Indian higher educational set-ups. It's important to invite and develop hunger for learning in students, attend to this hunger via aspiring and motivated teachers and cast a mark with all positivity. Such a holistic approach shall resonate well in harmony for times to come in our emerging landscape of higher education. ■

# Relevance of Gandhian Philosophy of Education in the Cyber Age

Rashmi Soni\* and Anshumali Sharma\*\*

*The real difficulty is that people have no idea of what education truly is. We assess the value of education in the same manner as we assess the value of land or of shares in the stock-exchange market. We want to provide only such education as would enable the student to earn more. We hardly give any thought to the improvement of the character of the educated. The girls, we say, do not have to earn; so why should they be educated? As long as such ideas persist there is no hope of our ever knowing the true value of education.* (M. K. Gandhi *True Education* on the NCTE site)

- M. K. Gandhi

There is a new world offering new opportunity and new potential, particularly for the new generation who are accessing it. This world of new technology known as Information and Communication Technology (ICT) exists within the real world but has rules and behaviours exclusive to it. Cyber world offers knowledge, personal growth, extended relationships and fun. There are also new exclusive dangers and challenges, particularly for children and young people. Children and youth should be safeguarded wherever they are, including in Cyber world.

The youngsters use the Internet like the telephone of yesteryear. They use it for entertainment, education and communication and not necessarily in that order. In some ways chat rooms are like milk bars and coffee houses of the past where young people could spend time without adult interference. The Net itself is not to be feared but it can become a distorted reality if the adolescent spends all their waking hours online. While the research is thin on the ground about the NET and its effects on children and young people it is fair to say that many concerns concentrate around overuse at the expense of offline

activities and relationships.

The adolescents of today are the first generation to be raised in a world where computers are a common entity in classrooms and homes. This is a big change to prior generations where technology did not overlap into all areas of our lives. In addition to the tremendous benefits that technology offers, including access to information and educational resources, the increased immersion of students into a digital age has also contributed to the evolution of new participants in and witnesses to the emergence of social problems in the cyber world (Berson, & Ferron, 2002).

The increase of modernization, westernization and globalization has tremendously changed our lives in general and the lifestyle of youth in particular in the last few decades leading to change in social institutions and structures as well. The life of our present generation, our youth in particular, has become very complicated and overloaded due to the pollution of information, rapid demographic change in terms of population, political corruption, rising unemployment, and eroding value system combined with excessive market-oriented economy. If the youth is falling prey to a rapidly changing value system on one hand, they can also be moulded by inculcating good thoughts, actions, habits and values on the other because as Swami Vivekananda said that divinity lies in man. The present-day social environment needs to be cooperative and responsive to these expectations of the youth so as to make them partner to over-all development and nation building.

In order to make the youth of modern India more actively engaged in nation-building, a force that has lot of zeal and purpose to do something, the present system needs to be all-encompassing to be able to move with the young and old with the right perspective. To achieve harmony among the young and old and effortlessly function as a vibrant society,

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the youth of our country need to become the engine of change. It thus becomes essential that Gandhian values are inculcated among the youth to make them more energetic and active for nation-building.

To address these issues, Gandhian philosophy is best suited for the present day situation and needs to be epitomized among the youth. The healthy and pious lifestyle of Gandhi may outwardly look very common but in reality it is very effective and lasting in the long run. The young may instinctively be repulsive to such values but elders, teachers and, above all, parents need to help the youth to imbibe these values in the long run.

### **Gandhi and Education**

For Gandhi, education did not imply spiritual knowledge or spiritual liberation after death. In essence, knowledge consists of all that is imperative for the service of the humankind; and for liberation, which means freedom from enslavement to domination and from the domain of one's own created needs. We understand very well how our youth are bound up in chains of the of the cyber world. Recent example is the PubG game wherein children and youth both were addicted mentally and emotionally to the vicious cycle of the game. They had become so hooked that they could not think consciously what harm they were doing to themselves. Education, therefore, has to be geared in this direction. Children and youth need to be trained in developing decision making and problem solving skills which will help them in taking correct decisions in life especially in the cyber world. For Gandhi, our ancient system of schooling and the education imparted in those schools was enough because character building was accorded the importance it deserves. For Gandhi, character building was basic in any educational system.

Mahatma Gandhi in his article titled 'National Education' published in Young India on 1 September, 1921 has written that it might be true regarding other countries but in India where 80% of the population is occupied with agriculture and 10% of it with industries, it is an offence to make education merely literary. It is apparent from these lines that according to Mahatma Gandhi, education is not only to gain

literary knowledge. Each and every student should develop life skills and have a definite aim before he enters the field of higher education; otherwise it is meaningless to pursue higher education.

True education is all-round development of the faculties, best attained through action. It bases itself on the fact that knowledge and understanding develop in relation to problems set right by action. Information thrust on the mind only burdens the memory and causes intellectual indigestion, casting learning into oblivion. Education must be concrete and interconnected, not abstract or given in isolated sections. Therefore, theory needs to be supplemented with practical knowledge. Concrete education allows the learner to manipulate problems or sets of problems and study their relationships, character and artistic sense. It allows the mind, heart, hand and eyes to work simultaneously in a correlated manner, resulting in a harmonious and well-balanced personality.

It is the need of the hour that in this cyber age each individual must develop "a scientific attitude of mind". It means a clean intellectual curiosity to know the "how" and "why" of things; the patience detachment to test all phenomena, all ideas and all traditions by the standards of truth; the courage and power to think for oneself; the intellectual and moral authority to abide by all the facts.

He stressed that the educational system must be one in which the highest development of mind and soul is possible and which instils courage and self-reliance in the individual, while at the same time, helping them cultivate the highest intellectual, scientific, moral, and ethical accomplishments. Gandhiji aimed at developing a society, "a socially conscious 'man' dedicated to truth and nonviolence." His educational scheme was nationalist in setting, idealist in nature and pragmatic on one hand while social in purpose and spiritual in intent on the other hand.

*Simple living and high thinking* was the motto of Gandhi. This in itself is suggestive of the fact that thoughts of an individual have a great role in shaping his/ her life. This philosophy is very simple in talking but much difficult to practice in day to day life. For

instance, remaining truthful, tolerant, non-violent and respecting others in difficult circumstances of life require a great degree of commitment. Especially in the internet era our children and youth need to be more tolerant and patient. Truth, the core values of Gandhian philosophy, has been given a special importance by Gandhiji as he himself tried to remain truthful throughout his life.

Gandhian virtue of self-control is much needed in a materialistic and digital world driven by the desire to achieve, exhibit and acquire more. Societal values have degraded to such an extent that people don't hesitate to kill someone for the gratification of their own needs. Respect for women is one of the major ideas of Gandhian philosophy. The world is witnessing increased level of violence, suppression of women as cases of domestic violence are increasing to a great extent. Gandhian dream of a safe country necessities safety for women and that will come from the virtue of self-control.

The youth of today need to inculcate more important values in the digital world today where they are engaged in technology day and night. Adding more to this list of moral qualities of Gandhiji are punctuality, commitment to one's duty and honesty. The basic objective of meaningful education was to generate the potential in children to create a new world order. This, Gandhi felt, was possible by way of engaging in socially useful labour, i.e., labour in the service of welfare of humankind. This idea formed the basis of his *nai-talim*, which was conceptualised in a way that would involve a harmonious development of the body, mind and soul. The process incorporated involvement in craft and industry as a medium of education.

Having become a graduate with technical knowledge any young boy or girl would be capable of seeking self-employment in a country with a population as large as in India and it will be comparably easy for him/her to get a government or non-government job. He or she can also pursue his or her studies further while doing his/her job. In this way, being self-dependent, a young boy/girl can continue his/her studies further to fulfil his/her

aim and object. This is what Gandhi wanted. One who is self-employed will not have to run about after graduation for post-graduation or any other higher degree. Apart from this, he will not be required to waste precious time and money. It will naturally bring down the unnecessary crowding in colleges and universities. Besides, education will be purposeful and will be able to guide in the right direction.

His idea of education rested on the mission to place learning of a craft at the centre of the teaching programme whereby, spinning, weaving, leather-work, pottery, metalwork, basket-making, book-binding and other such activities that were often associated with the lower caste people or 'untouchables' were performed by upper caste pupils and literacy and acquisition of knowledge which were the privilege of the upper caste people were available to the 'untouchables'. He wanted the schools to be self-supporting or else providing education to all the children would never become a reality. Further, financial independence would bring with it freedom from intervention by politicians and political parties.

### **Crisis of Tradition and Modernity**

The world of information and technology is to large extent drifting our youth away from themselves and emotions and feelings. This alienation, this dehumanization aspect of the established types of education is happening in India because we do not understand Gandhi's views on education. Dr. Radhakrishnan has also commented on the tension being created among the educated youth because of the established types of education and the over domination of science and technology. It is not the over domination of science, but it is probably the misinterpretation of science and technology that is the underlying cause for much of the tension. We have heard about several of the educational reports contained in the UNESCO Report on Education that examines the different types of tension that are being created in educated individuals. The tension that exists between tradition and modernity is a very significant tension and it is not a new thing.

Right from the start of the industrial revolution, this tension between tradition and modernity has been there. Not only in education, but also in the Arts, Literature, and our day-to-day life, these tensions exist. There is a feeling that science and technology can solve our problems immediately and naturally. Thus, we resort to immediate and short-term solutions, neglecting the long-term views on development, thus, naturally causing concern in realms of the environment, ecology, and other areas. If modern education is creating tension between these areas of concern, we definitely need to build consensus because of the way in which education is imparted. We need to understand that real education according to Gandhi is one that brings a harmonious development of the personality of the individual in all aspects.

Gandhi believed that education should be intimately related with human experience, "... what better book can be there than the book of humanity?" he asked. The convergence of ideas and action was the key note of his approach, which was national in scope, as he wanted to present an alternative to the system introduced by the British colonial system. He stressed that the educational system must be one in which the highest development of mind and soul is possible and which instils courage and self-reliance in the individual, while at the same time, helping them cultivate the highest intellectual scientific, moral, and ethical accomplishments. Gandhiji aimed at developing a society, "a socially conscious 'man' dedicated to truth and nonviolence." His educational scheme was nationalist in setting, idealist in nature and pragmatic on one hand while social in purpose and spiritual in intent on the other hand.

Gandhiji advocated the principles of Right Conduct, Excellence and Truth as the effective weapons with which to fight the war of negative influence of the digital world. Gandhiji was himself a disciple of the Bhagwad Gita and exalted the younger generation to follow it too. The Gita mentions three different qualities viz. Satva, Rajas and Tamas. In case of Tamas the happening comes from violence and laziness. In case of Rajas it comes from material gains. Gandhiji proposed that the youth

follow the Satvik model where happiness is inward development, i.e. it emphasizes the inclusion of basic human values. Right conducts refers to a set of norms or code of conduct accepted by the society on the basis of thoughtful behaviour and is displayed when we discharge our duties and various actions such as obedience, etiquettes, fulfilment of social obligations, co-operation, sympathy etc.

The youth should take into consideration various dimensions of their conduct such as the social, cultural, religious and the political aspect. Especially in young people, there is a constant flow of energy. They are dynamic, vibrant and excessively energetic. Hence it becomes all the more necessary for them to discharge their energies in a positive manner to attain long-term happiness and goodwill in society and to contribute to the progress of society. Right conduct, he believed, comes from the right education and education should not only help gain knowledge, but should also contribute towards character building. Gandhiji often referred to that one should do his duty and remain unconcerned about the fruit which is the essence of The Holy Gita.

Youth must be able to differentiate between truth and blind belief. Gandhiji wanted every individual and society to practice truth at any cost. He emphasised that all religions, philosophies, societies have unambiguously advocated truth. According to him truth was God and that truth must manifest itself in the thought, word and deeds. He did accept that the path of truth will always be full of hardship, difficulties, sufferings, and sacrifice and one needs courage to tell the truth. Youth must note that no society readily accepts any social transformation. Hence the students who are acting as agent for reformation will have to face challenges and resistance from society. Self-determination, strong will power and profound belief in one's conviction will help the youth to lead the society. Trading the path of truth is a continuous and unending process which has to be followed by every generation.

Thus, on all fronts Gandhiji believed that youth should be prepared as a cadre of inspiring and competent role models and change agents with the

courage of conviction who in turn will trigger off the process of building a healthy nation. This war has to go along way still to bring fruitful results. Social transformation must be undertaken on priority and this is nothing less than a revolution. Long term fundamental changes and not merely outward changes are required. The youth of the country are the catalysts who will bring about this change. The entire system needs revamping and the young people will play an instrumental role. It is surely a great challenge but with our youth this challenge can be faced with utmost graciousness.

The weapons he gave were not just meant to overthrow the British but to be used at all times. Today we require these weapons more than ever to build a better society. Even after so many years of freedom we are still struggling to gain independence in the true sense; to pull ourselves out of the physical and mental clutches of addiction, violence, crime and corruption which have rendered our entire society sick. Although free from foreign rule, we are still enchained by many kinds of internal and external influences which are corrupting our youth and driving them astray. The very agents of social transformation are engulfed by the fatal diseases of poverty, illiteracy, over-population and unemployment. It is now the need of the hour that we wake up and revolt in a non-violent way but effective war needs to be waged keeping in mind all that the great Mahatma taught us years ago.

### **Conclusion**

The modern system of education acts as an instrument to increase the value of consumerism, materialism, undue competition and violence. The

growing concern over the erosion of ethical values, youth unrest, ecological violence and increasing cynicism in cyber world and society have brought to focus the need of revival of indigenous Indian heritage and life-style. His educational thoughts are based on eternal principles of truth, love, and self-sacrifice, character building non-violence, which will never lose their relevance. The requirement is to adapt his thoughts according to the present scenario. When environmental consciousness, moral values, intrapersonal skills, community and society oriented awareness are all inculcated in young minds through education, then only development of the country in true sense can be possible.

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# Transition to Remote Teaching in Higher Education: Response to COVID-19

Jyoti Bawane

## Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented global crisis that has seized the attention of educationists who are grappling to cope with the complexities of this situation and stabilize the problems they are confronting with. Most of the higher educational institutions across the globe have either transitioned to online education or have been temporarily closed down, while the others have postponed their examinations and decisions to delay the academic year calendar are under consideration by few. This pandemic, an unforeseen condition, has shaken the entire educational set-up, both school and higher education, and has compelled Institutions to explore alternative approaches and platforms to reset the educational activities by initiating and establishing communications with students either through distant or online modes. Under these circumstances, establishing equal educational opportunities may be challenging especially for those students who are without or poor access to internet.

‘The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated how important technology can be in times of change and uncertainty. The next test for educators and technology companies will be utilizing and shaping digital tools to make the opportunities that they offer equally available to all, inside as well as outside the classroom.’ (Bishop, 2020)<sup>1</sup>

As higher educational institutions are embracing technology to replace face-to-face classrooms, the role of a college or university teacher becomes more central during this transition phase. Such a kind of educational set-up necessitates optimum level of digital literacy both among the teachers and students and hence several concerns have been raised regarding those teachers who are less proficient in utilizing digital technologies and students who have less access to technology. Even today, many students are devoid of internet facilities and are unable to afford to invest on any such sources and thus remote teaching-learning has surfaced many accessibility and inequality issues. Although, India after China has the highest number of Internet users

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and as per the latest statistics, 31 January, 2020, the number of internet users in India is 560 million contributing to almost 24.3 % users in Asia, while the penetration of internet in the population is only 40.6 per cent.<sup>2</sup> The biggest worry is that the students of the marginalized communities with no or least experiences with remote devices may find difficult to adjust to the new learning environment and the same may also hold true for the teachers too. Hence, one can see that this crunch is multi-tiered and multi-faceted and there is a need to explore how and what kind of technological devices can be made easily accessible and feasible for all learners.

Online or E-learning platforms which gained entry prior to this pandemic and has already opened a plethora of educational opportunities and widened the landscape of higher education in India. Various web-based technologies and platforms like the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) courses was initiated in 2008 and a national platform (Study Webs of Active–Learning for Young Aspiring Minds) SWAYAM was launched by the Government of India in 2016 to enhance the quality of higher education. However, under the given circumstances, these online educational opportunities have to be further reestablished and strengthened to ensure easy access to the students and teachers of higher education. The University Grants Commission which is a statutory body for higher education is exploring various options and has already invited suggestions from different stakeholders to address this issue. A few universities are deliberating on holding online examinations for its graduate and post-graduate students. Few others, to ensure continuity in the educational processes and staying connected with their student community have introduced online classes to engage their students. Many are also taking advantage of this lock-down state to invite the best experts and educationists to share their knowledge and experiences with the students and the larger academia. Platforms like Zoom and Webex are being used widely to schedule video lectures and presentations to reach a larger audience.

As the recovery time period from this pandemic is still tentative, its implications on the social, economic

and educational policies are also indefinite. The impact of this crisis on the enrollment and participation at the higher educational level is likely to be manifold due to loss of employment in many families and under such circumstances it is anticipated that the Indian youth would prefer to support and compensate their family incomes. Anticipating the future scenario, educational systems must initially gear-up to explore open-source learning management platforms and digital learning solutions to ensure easy and quality access to higher education. The draft of the New Education Policy 2019 also highlighted the need to reform the country's higher education system by expanding access of online education. But the prime question is how can we ensure seamless integration of technology in order to smoothly transit to remote educational systems?

### ***MOOCs as Start-up?***

The government has been investing substantial resources to develop MOOCs to deliver high-quality content and in recent years MOOCs have been widely embraced by both students and teachers of higher educational institutions. MOOCs have strengthened in numbers since their inception and are reaching to more than 10 million learners. Some of the MOOC platforms in India are; NPTEL, SWAYAM, mooKIT and IITBX (Chauhan, 2017). SWAYAM a Government initiative has laid a web-based platform for learners from class 9 to post-graduate to have access to courses prepared by some of the best teachers and delivered free of cost. However, for certification the learners need to appear for examination and pay certain fees and selected courses also offer credit transfer after successful completion of a course. Prior to looking at the relevance and implications of MOOCs, it is important to understand the potential of MOOCs in India.

Indians were one of the largest consumers of MOOCs when they were initiated by the United States (US) under various platforms like the edX, Course Era and Udacity (Trehan et al, 2017).<sup>3</sup> Even, Banerjee & Duflo (2014)<sup>4</sup> revealed that the few top countries that students were enrolled for their economics course were from US (28%) followed by India (10%) and UK (5%). Ironically, Indians far from being potential consumers, have moved ahead towards developing and providing MOOCs on various platforms. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) of the Government of India, in 2016 brought out guidelines for development and implementation of MOOCs in the country. The fundamental difference regarding MOOCs initiated in India and other western countries is that the former

has been more of a government enterprise, while in the later it has been a private initiative.

MOOCs although seem to have heralded as an education revolution, they continue to suffer low retention and completion rates, which often are being questioned as a means of promoting education for all. Some of the challenges for MOOC in India were; technological infrastructure, investment, diversified clientele, course quality, adaptability and acceptance by academic institutions (Chauhan, 2017)<sup>5</sup>. While Trehan et al (2017) revealed that language and communication barrier emerged as foremost issue in MOOC design and implementation in India. In general, low completion rates and poor student motivation have been identified as core issues for MOOC takers across the globe. 'We found that learners expected investment, including level of commitment, expected number of hours devoted to the MOOC, and intention to obtain a certificate, related to retention likelihood (Greene et al, 2015)<sup>6</sup>. Banerjee & Duflo (2014) attributed the low completion rates of MOOCs courses to 'mismatch between what people expect from a MOOC and what they discover in practice (p.514)' and also nature of teaching practice in an online environment. They found that students who were not organized were significantly less likely to succeed in the course and complete their assignments in time. According to them, 'We present more evidence to support the interpretation that the discontinuity probably reflects disorganization, rather than something else that is different about those students (p.517)'

In any remote or online learning environment, the two key areas students relied upon is teachers expertise and feedback (Sorenson, 2014)<sup>7</sup>, and this is feasible for a teacher when the class size is optimum. Despite, several researchers established that class-size is a potential element that affected instructor participation and student interaction, the optimum size that fostered an appropriate balance of interaction in an online program has not been truly established. From review of studies it was seen that the class-size range may range between 12 to 20 for graduate courses (Burch, 2019)<sup>8</sup>. In Indian context, the latest AISHE report (2018-19)<sup>9</sup> revealed the average pupil-teacher ratio in higher educational institutions ranged between 18-29. Class size hence may not be a priority concern, unless a teacher is less proficient in teaching online. Since, for those teachers who have never taught online, this transition may demand hours of their work and according to Rolla 'at least three times as much work as traditional lecture' (Rolla cited in Gewin, 2020)<sup>10</sup>, a

great level of patience especially while engaging with students is expected. Moreover, other barriers like poor internet access by students and lack of training among the teachers followed by institutional policy and instructional design for e-learning (Panda & Mishra, 2007) may need to be resolved to ensure smooth conduct and quality of online courses. This may apply for all kinds of remote teaching that we propose to teach in the near future. But at a positive side it is seen that teachers were generally motivated when they were provided the opportunity 'to gain new pedagogical knowledge through online teaching, including opportunities to experiment with new pedagogy, reflect on classroom teaching, and gain new understanding of assessment issues' (Shea, 2007).<sup>11</sup>

### ***Online Learning Paradigms***

At this stage it is important to theoretically glance at the online principles and pedagogies that have implications for developing online education in higher education. Anderson & Dron (2012) looked at the technology enhanced distance education pedagogy across three generations and brief of the same is being presented. Learning as we all know, was primarily conceived as an individualized process wherein behaviourists focused on change in behaviours, while the cognitivist models essentially emerged from the behaviourist model focused on examining the mental and cognitive processes related to learning. Such learning environments are usually training based and held as tightly orchestrated events basically to investigate how learners used and interacted with the content. Progressive thinkers and social constructivists, on the other hand, disagreed with the idea that teachers were transmitters of knowledge and learners were passive listeners and rather believed that learners can contribute towards construction and integration of knowledge, based on personal experiences in their social context. This pedagogy gained grip in distance education when wider technological appliances that promoted many-to-many communication became available. It is important to realize that in the cognitivist and behaviourist (CB) pedagogies, the locus of control was commonly the teacher and the courses here were centered more on delivery of course content, rather than participative learning and exploration with quizzes and assignments integrated periodically. While the courses based on humanistic and social constructivist principles, created richer opportunities for interactions, dialogue and collaboration both in synchronous and asynchronous contexts, thereby

helping groups to interpret, negotiate, learn from and respond effectively from their own interaction patterns. According to Garrison and others, constructivist-based learning, with rich student-student and student-teacher interaction, constituted a new, "post-industrial era" of distance education.' (Garrison, 1997 Cited in Anderson & Dron, 2012). Subsequently, came the connectivist model, said to be the third generation of distance education pedagogy that focused on learning building and maintaining networked connections. 'Connectivist learning designs, like constructivist ones, often involve collaborative or cooperative work between many learners. However, contribution often grows beyond the group to further encourage collaboration across time and space' (Anderson & Dron, 2012, p. 8).

'Connectivism' as a learning theory for a digital age was promoted by Stephen Downes and George Siemens. According to Downes (2014)<sup>12</sup> 'in connectivism, a person learning is seen as a self-managed and autonomous seeker of opportunities to create, interact and have new learning experiences, where learning is not the accumulation of more and more facts or memories, but the ongoing development of a richer and richer neural tapestry". This has implications for developing new pedagogies relevant for learning environments which attributes its core principles to be as; autonomy, connectedness, diversity and openness (Tschofen & Mackness, 2012)<sup>13</sup>. The history and development of the MOOCs can also be traced from this perspective as the MOOCs offered during the initial stages were largely based on behaviouristic principles and hence were termed as xMOOCs, while the subsequent ones propagated by Stephen Downes and George Siemens were known as connectivism and hence known as cMOOCs.

The above learning pedagogies have large applications for the remote teaching practices that higher educational institutions intent to adopt during the current crisis and even thereafter. Assuming that different disciplines have varied paradigms of learning that determines their primary goal of the educational experience, that may range from; just knowing, understanding, analysing, evaluating, synthesising, creating and distributing or even sharing. These goals reflect the kind of teacher-content-student relationships courses need to establish and develop among the students. Most importantly, the learner's role in remote teaching, rather than being limited to memorizing or understanding, should attempt to achieve deeper goals

such as theorization, creation, innovation, discovery and developing new learning communities (Anderson & Dron, 2012).

### ***Moving Ahead***

At this crucial moment, insights and past practices on online education offer meaningful guidelines for development and enhancement of the prevailing e-learning platforms in India and other developing countries. Just as Banerjee & Duflo (2014) stated that there was scope for improving MOOC performance by providing more structure to assist students to deal with their self-control, designs that facilitate students to become aware of their knowledge structures and as well as expand them through interaction with their peer and teachers need to be explored. More attention towards self-directed online learning in both formal and informal learning environment (like face books, twitter, you tube) which always challenged traditional form of learning and interaction (Tan, 2013 cited in Bonk et al, 2015)<sup>14</sup> must be encompassed. When technological devices for informal learning are proliferating and increasingly mobile (Bonk et al, 2015)<sup>15</sup>, efforts to introduce the feasible and economic model should be the priority. Models and designs that embed online discussion forums and learning communities, could be probed for practice in higher education. For this purpose, involvement of different stake holders like civil societies, non-governmental organizations, Information technology firms may be encouraged to participate in development of varied technological frameworks and applications that offer better economic solutions. This is because it is important to realize that one of the greatest challenges of utilizing genuine and valid online resources is the technology costs involved in its development and as well as accessibility costs in the form of membership and registration fees. When variable like personal interest to use technology, intellectual challenge, and sufficient provision for technology infrastructure stand as powerful motivators for teaching online (Panda & Mishra, 2007), this calls for a movement that universities must invest in building repositories of scholarly content and upgrade skills of both teachers and students.

Secondly, learning in any context largely rely on the culture and social background of the learners. Vygotsky's theories emphasized the fundamental role of social interaction in the development of cognition and how community or 'culture of groups' play a prime role in deriving meaning from this learning process.

Dawson noticed that students who communicate more with peers and staff have higher degree of sense of community (Cited in Anderson & Dron, 2012) and hence, to promote learning in online learning environment, priority should be laid on building a sense of community among the students by designing activities that foster collaborative opportunities in both synchronous and asynchronous mode of interaction. Such interactions also foster in creating opportunities for students' construction of knowledge (Anderson & Dron, 2011)<sup>16</sup>.

Lastly, learning environments that utilise socio-constructivist principles and offer varied platforms for learning may be widely explored for higher education. Irrespective of the pandemic, blended formats could be thought of, wherein video lectures and assignments on the learning management systems can foster productive self-directed learning and online discussion forums can promote interactions and presentations in small groups to enhance quality of learning at higher education. Many higher education institutions are also currently tapping the potential of adaptive learning technological resources where teachers have opportunities to apply a range of methods (problem solving, case study, etc) to 'dynamically adjust to the level or type of course content based on an individual's abilities or skill attainment' and accelerate learner's performance with both automated and instructor interventions (Pugliese, 2016).<sup>17</sup> Although, adaptive learning systems based on constructivist principles, provides 'flexibility' for both teachers and students to choose and adapt resources (text, audio, animation, videos, interactive diagrams, etc) based on their individual differences, it can also cause problems if these differences and methods chosen are not associated appropriately (Kara & Sevim, 2013<sup>18</sup>; Nguyen & Do, 2008)<sup>19</sup>. Hence, more care needs to be taken before embracing these technologies for wider application. Moreover, the advantage of providing incentives in the form of digital badges to recognize and promote student participation could also be considered.

### ***Summing Up***

COVID-19 is a global crisis for the entire teaching and learning community and has dramatically transformed the terrain of Higher education. It has revolutionized the online learning platforms, and institutions are refreshing and adopting different crisis management strategies by either switching to selected courses online, postponing their schedules, or even extending dates of application deadline<sup>20</sup>. This epidemic



has created a set-back situation and shuddered the entire academic community, especially the teachers who are likely to grappling to tune-in and adapt to the new roles likely to be proposed for smooth transition to remote teaching in higher educational systems. It is important to realise that this transition does not mean just replication from face-to-face practice to online practice and hence may be demanding for those who are not accustomed to teaching online. Yet, teachers will have to overcome their resistance and equip themselves to teach remotely and ensure ways to facilitate individual and group learning spaces for creating personalized learning environment for their students. While converting the regular courses to an online mode, the basic principles of online learning need to be adhered to and hence cannot be prepared hastily and constrained by limited or strict time lines. The online courses that offers more flexibility and feasibility opportunities for teachers to introduce, adapt and reform practices as per the requirements of learners should be integrated by any educational systems. The impact of remote teaching on the educational, social and emotional well-being of a student would also be a matter of concern and hence should be recognized. Anticipating that the transition period may not be easy, rather it would be an overwhelming experience for both teachers and students, therefore appropriate and timely support services need to be created to resolve their grievances and challenges. Hence forth, it is important that institutions equip their teaching and student community with basic disaster management skills, i.e digital literacy skills, to face and cope up with any such situation in future.

To conclude, one would agree that technology is a prime tool but cannot be considered as a substitute for real classrooms. Yet, the essence and primary goal of any such educational experiences, including remote teaching should be more on the quality- processes of learning and creating equitable learning opportunities, rather than only quantity- measurement of their outcomes .

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## Three Fundamentals to Build an Excellent Institution

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**Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’ Hon’ble Minister, Human Resource Development, Government of India delivered the Convocation Address at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Convocation of the Indira Gandhi National Open University in New Delhi on February, 17, 2020. He said, “Universities are sacred places. Students do not have a permanent residence in a University, but a university resides permanently in a student’s heart. Therefore, it is imperative that the academic environment and the ambience of a university be full of morality and patriotism. For this, the curriculum of the universities should be framed in such a way that a sense of morality and patriotism should keep circulating like blood in the veins of the students. If this is done, students will be fully prepared to face the world with the same social and cultural values which our ancient sages always envisioned.” Excerpts**

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I am delighted to be here at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Convocation of this unique University which has not only envisioned, but has also taken education to the doorstep of every Indian household. This is a milestone for all graduating students. I also congratulate those successful students who have attained distinctions and Gold medal in their respective academic programmes. The achievements earned by you is due to blessings of your teachers, and your parents who ever guided and the facilitated you to attain such note worthy distinctions.

It is a matter of pleasure and pride that Indira Gandhi National Open University is the largest University in the World with cumulative student’s strength of 3.4 millions.

In the era of competition and challenges, to meet the hardships in the global structures, IGNOU has proved itself to establish as leader in the world. I congratulate IGNOU for having unprecedented expertise in developing and launching academic programmes that are needed in the present context and deeply useful for learning communities. You have initiated skill oriented curriculum weaved around a conducive environment for learners. The excellent opportunities created at IGNOU have enhanced analytical and critical capacities of learners and needs applaud. Nurturing research for social use and for academic quality is curtailing a success feather in IGNOU’s hat. At the juncture, when Government is creating avenues for enhancing Gross Enrolment Ratio of our counting to 50 per cent. IGNOU and similar institutes have an important role.

In India the education system does not make students mere word-smiths but awakens the inner core of each student. It is the result of this Indianness of education that “*Vasudhaiv Kutumbkum*” becomes the essence of the Indian mind. Western education leads us to divergence whereas Indian education teaches

us the lesson of unity. From the western perspective India represents “unity in diversity”. It is a single entity comprising diverse forces that merge to form a unified whole. But in reality, this very unity of India carries a diversity of forces that emanate from it like the rays of the sun spreading in the sky. Using this analogy, I have tremendous pleasure as Minister of Human Resource Development to note that Indira Gandhi National Open University is one such single entity that is preparing myriads of small suns every year.

‘हीरा जो अब चमक गया वह जग को भी चमकाएगा।  
छोटा सा सूरज बनकर अब नव राह दिखाएगा।’

*(Diamond that started glittering now will also shine the World.  
By becoming a little Sun shall show the new path)*

Recently, while addressing students, our hon’ble, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, mentioned how important the last decade was, both in the lives of the students as well as the nation. He was in fact giving a very valuable and inspiring message. He was reminding us of that great path treaded by our old sages which takes a person from individuality to universality but which has somehow now got lost in the sea of indifference and forgetfulness. The honourable Prime Minister has given you a new vision to create a new India and it is expected of you to not let dust settle over his cherished dream. You are students of the largest University of the world. No other University can equal the large number of student registration that IGNOU has. IGNOU is world famous for its innovations in the methods of imparting knowledge and information and this deserves our praise. It is a great achievement for IGNOU that not only has it taken distance education to new heights, but has also placed this type of education on an equal pedestal with all other systems of education. This great worldwide expansion of education amazes and gives tremendous solace and hope for future educational

endeavours. I congratulate all the teacher, officers and staff of IGNOU for rendering quality and aspiring education for nation building through its network of 56 regional centers, 11 armed forces recognized regional centers and above 1900 study centers along with 22 international learning centers.

I am happy to learn that more than 34 lakh students are pursuing various courses in 255 programmes in IGNOU. I heartily congratulate those 2 lakh, 31 thousand, 622 students who are receiving degrees, diplomas and certificates in today's Convocation, and I wish them the best in their future endeavours. I realize that these achievements are the realization of not only you and your families' aspirations, but also the aspirations of your great nation. And you must never forget this.

Today you have your degrees in your hand which is the result of your hard work as well as the struggles and blessings of your parents. You must never belittle their share in helping you climb the ladder of your success, so you must always feel grateful to them. Soar high but remember that they gave you wings. Fly higher but keep your feet planted firmly on the ground, be humble in your success, remember your moral values and culture, because this is the true essence of Indian Education and this is the "Indianness of Education".

The Honorable Prime Minister has given us two mantras: *Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas and Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat*. I am glad that IGNOU has incorporated the essence of these mantras. IGNOU has been instrumental in fulfilling many aspirations yet many still remain unfulfilled and the onus is on you to fulfill these. I would want further development of Hindi and Sanskrit in our Universities but recognition of Hindi as the National Language alone is not enough. Hindi has served as the charioteer of our Independence Struggle and we must not forget that during this struggle the great people who recognized Hindi as the National Language were those whose mother tongue was not Hindi. They recognized it as the national language to take the nation forward in its struggle. The development of Hindi has taken place along with our freedom struggle. It is the expression of struggle against any type of exploitation. It is the language of spreading love. In the same way Sanskrit is the language of culture. There is no other language more scientific or one that can spread ancient knowledge better. We may have forgotten, but the entire western

world is enamoured by Panini's grammar. There is no other creative writer on par with Valmiki and Kalidas, the world over. The Buddhist philosophy of 'shunyavaad' is the cornerstone of the theory of postmodernism. They have got their inspiration from there. It is high time that we understand the importance of Hindi and Sanskrit. We should not fall prey to the maxim "nearer the church further from God". India has been the pioneer of knowledge. India has been the highest mentor of the world and we have to develop Hindi and Sanskrit in the light of this thought. I am very happy that IGNOU has given due importance to Hindi in its curriculum by offering all its programmes in Hindi as well. I have also learnt that IGNOU is going to offer MA Hindi in the Online mode. This is indeed very heartening. Observing the efficiency and reach of IGNOU the HRD Ministry has exempted IGNOU from ODL and exemption from online regulation is also in its final stage, but this has increased your responsibility. The government wants that education should reach each and every citizen through many other mediums. The MOOCs platform has been developed keeping this objective in mind.

Ladies and Gentleman, this is a matter of great pride for us that Swayam MOOCs platform, which is the world's largest e-learning platform is now available in India and you are free to impart education through this platform. It has been brought to my knowledge that you are offering three certificate programmes through this mode and I congratulate you for this and hope that you use it to its optimum level. Since there is a direct link between paper and trees we have to see that the use of paper is lessened so that trees are not destroyed. For this we need to follow the digital path, through which a number of difficulties can be surmounted. IGNOU has digitalized the process of admission, filling up of examination forms and digitally recording the minutes of all internal meetings. I have also learnt that the study material of IGNOU is available to students on *e-Gyankosh* in digital form. Also note worthy is the fact that the students who opt for the online studying will be given a discount of 15 per cent in their fee structure. This will definitely give an impetus to the digital revolution. It is only fair that the new generation should be provided with opportunities which are in keeping with their convenience and interest.

It has come to my knowledge that IGNOU provides courses in many other regional languages apart from Hindi and Sanskrit. This is what a National University should be like. Along with spreading

Indianness in education we should also focus on the old Indian disciplines of Yoga and Astrology. How ironical that although Yoga and Astrology had their genesis in India they have been pushed into the background because of the influence of western modernization. We should give them their due importance. Today the whole world is embracing Yoga which is a panacea for all ills. Similarly Indian astrology has shown the way for space research. I am pleased to know that IGNOU has started a certificate course in Yoga. Similarly it should develop one in astrology. Ladies and Gentleman, the need today is for the Indian Universities to shrug off the yoke of colonialism and promote, expand and develop the knowledge of Indian culture. IGNOU's international importance is also undeniable. It is the need of today that IGNOU takes its programmes to international heights speedily. In this context IGNOU can most certainly make a mark by playing its role more proactively.

Information technology has revolutionized the spread of information. You are a click away from practically everything and yet some things remain beyond your reach. Computers cannot be a substitute for the human touch as they cannot replace the emotions of the human heart. To do this we have to be one with nature. The earth is getting devoid of trees. Deforestation is increasing and it is our social and moral responsibility to conserve our forests. And it is not a very difficult task. I have appealed to all educational institutions that the slogan of "One Student One Tree" not only remain a slogan but be put into practice and made a way of life. Just like students value their degrees they should take care of at least one tree each. Don't forget that the mountains, trees and rivers are like the prayers of this earth and no one has the right to deprive Mother Earth of her prayers. Once we respect and embrace nature and traditions, accepting them as living wealth and blending them with science, no one can stop us from achieving great heights. IGNOU has started working in this direction. This is indeed a note worthy development and will help in the realization of "*EK Bharat Shresth Bharat*". Other universities will also be inspired by this.

The excellence of an institute is recognized by three fundamentals - first, qualitative, innovative and applied research; second, regular, meaningful penchant teaching; and third, effective, responsive and responsible administration. To attain the excellence thus, a university needs to create a balance and coordination amongst elated teaching, learning and

administrative communities. IGNOU is an exemplary institute to demonstrate this excellence.

Today's India is youth centric and dedicated to the youth. They form more than 65% of the nation's population. This is a matter for rejoicing but along with it comes a great responsibility. We have to provide employment to everyone. The government is committed to doing this. Along with traditional/conventional education we have to stress upon a skill based curriculum. It's a great challenge but it should not daunt us. It is only educational institutions and Universities that can show us how to overcome this challenge. IGNOU's achievements are praise worthy in this direction.

India is an agricultural country. It is the duty of Indian universities to think and work towards the interest of agriculture and farmers. Agriculture should be given its due importance as that is the need of the hour. Equal importance has to be given to the study of the discipline of law. IGNOU can work significantly towards this and should become a beacon in this direction.

Universities are sacred places. Students do not have a permanent residence in a University, but a university resides permanently in a student's heart. Therefore, it is imperative that the academic environment and the ambience of a university be full of morality and patriotism. For this, the curriculum of the universities should be framed in such a way that a sense of morality and patriotism should keep circulating like blood in the veins of the students. If this is done, students will be fully prepared to face the world with the same social and cultural values which our ancient sages always envisioned.

We have taken pledge to take ourselves as an economy of 5 trillion dollars. We are also committed to achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs) of Commonwealth of Nations. We need to address seriously to the problems arising from climate changes. Our success lies in developing and nurturing long-term culture of belief and entrepreneurship. We have to continuously move toward innovations and creativity.

Although a convocation is the finale of education, real life actually begins from this point onwards. How far moral and academic values have been imbibed by a student begins to manifest soon after a convocation. The exams you have passed were no doubt important,

but the tests you will be passing through now, are inevitable. You will not find a solution to these tests in any books. All questions henceforth will be compulsory and you will have to pass all of them. Indian philosophy does not inspire you to live for yourself. Its teaching is to live and to think for others. A great personality is one that dedicates itself to society and the nation. The western education system evokes disrespect towards labour and labourers, whereas you cannot obtain the “sustaining grain” or *ann* without labour. I appeal to all of you who are entering the world with your degrees, to never disrespect labour or labourers. The sweat on a labourer’s forehead is his dignity. It has the aroma of his hard work, which no perfume can equal. The wisdom and knowledge

of duty, meditation and science obtained from the Vedas should be made a part of your consciousness and soul.

Today the Vice Chancellor of IGNOU Prof. Nageshwar Rao presented the Vice Chancellor's report. The achievements of IGNOU are indeed praiseworthy. I congratulate the IGNOU fraternity and give them my good wishes with the hope that the coming years will be full of more accomplishments. Once again my heartiest congratulations to all the students who are receiving their degrees today with a hope that they achieve more and more success in their future endeavours.

Jai Hind

## **Themes of AIU Annual Vice Chancellors' Seminars 1986-2019**

Association of Indian Universities organises every year five Zonal Vice Chancellors' Conferences of North, South, East, West Zone and Central Zones; and a National Seminar on the occasion of Annual General Body Meeting of the AIU Member Vice Chancellors. National Seminar of the Vice Chancellors is organized on a topical theme relating to education policy, planning and development in higher education and the role of universities. During the past, Seminars/Conferences have been organised on the themes: Distance Education (1986); Role of the Universities in the Implementation of New Education Policy 1986 (1987); Making the University System Work (1988); University Finances (1989); University and Productivity (1990); Decentralization of Higher Education System in India (1991); Excellence: Achieving Social Relevance in Higher Education (1992); Environmental Challenges and the Universities (1993); Accountability in Higher Education (1994); New Initiatives in Higher Education (1995); Higher Education in the Era of Information Technology (1996); Emerging Trends in Funding of Universities and their Implication (1997); Higher Education in the Global Perspective (1998); University Management Systems (1999); The Role of Universities in the 21st Century (2000); Technology Enabled Flexible Education and Development (2001); Quality Assurance in Higher Education (2002); Threats and Opportunities in Higher Education in Context of GATS (2003); Networking among Indian Universities and Credit -Transfer within the Universities in India (2003); Engagement of Universities with the Society (2004). Role of Universities in Empowering Weaker Sections of the Society (2005); 150 Years of Indian Higher Education (2006); National Knowledge Commission Report-2006 (2007); Quality and Relevance in Higher Education (2008); Evaluation Systems (2009); Governance of Higher Education (2010); Reforms and Innovations in Higher Education: A March Towards World Class Standards (2011); Research in Higher Education Institutions for Sustainable Development (2013); and Higher Education Policies in India (2014) Autonomy and Excellence in Higher Education (2015), Role of Higher Education in Transforming India (2016) Celebrating Higher Education: Accomplishments and Achievements of Higher Education in Post-independence Era.( 2017), Higher Education in the Era of Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Disruptive Technology with Focus on Human Values in the Age of Disruption (2018), Autonomy for Excellence in Higher Education (2019).

### **International Conference on Revisiting Three Decades of Liberalisation and Globalisation**

A two-day International Conference on 'Revisiting Three Decades of Liberalisation and Globalisation---Status, Prospects and Challenges' was organized by the School of Management, Kristu Jayanti College, Bengaluru in collaboration with Trinity Western University, Canada, recently. Dr. Philip G Laird, Vice Provost, Trinity Western University, Canada was the Chief Guest of the function and Ms Michelle Wade, Commissioner to South Asia, State Government of Victoria, Australia was the Guest of Honor. Dr. Aloysius Edward, Dean, Faculty of Commerce and Management welcomed the gathering and Dr. Justin Nelson Michael, Director, Centre for Research gave the prelude of event. Rev. Dr. Augustine George, Vice Principal, Kristu Jayanti College delivered the presidential address. Dr. Philip, in his Inaugural address shared his vast experience on 'Impact of Globalization on Education'. Ms Michelle Wade, Commissioner to South Asia, State Government of Victoria, Australia in her address she shared the growth story of the State of Victoria during the times of Globalization. Dr. M K Baby, Head, School of Management proposed a Vote of Thanks for the inaugural session.

There were five keynote sessions. Dr. Imbenzi George, Business Stream Director, Trinity Western University, Canada chaired the session on 'Prospects and Impact of Globalisation'. Dr. Imbenzi spoke about the Canadian economy and also the impact of globalization on it. He also deliberated the opportunities to work in Canada. The second session was on 'Transformation in Manufacturing Automation/ Machinery'. There were two speakers for the session namely, Mr. Jason Samuel, Vice President, ERM, TVS Motors Co. Ltd. who spoke about the 'Impact of Globalisation on the TVS Motors Company' and also about the various achievements accomplished by TVS motors before and after globalization. The second speaker Mr. Ganesh Srinivasan, CEO, Resil Chemicals Private Ltd.

shared the role of technology on the 'Transformation of the Manufacturing Sector'. He also shared the lead taken by Resil Chemicals in adopting such technologies into their production line.

In the session was on 'Engendering Change in IT and ITES Communication', the speakers Mr. Sujit John, Business Editor, Times of India and Mr. Rakesh Goel, Senior Director, Capgemini spoke about the growth of IT companies after the globalisation and the story of how India transformed into a preferred IT destination. The session on 'Dawn of New Economy in Banking Sector' was chaired by Mr. K R Sekar, Global Business Tax Leader, Partner, Deloitte Bengaluru and Mr. Mark D Souza, CEO, Mark D Souza & Co. Mr. K R Sekar offered insights on various advantages and disadvantages of Globalisation on the Indian Economy. The speaker was of the opinion that India should try to become the manufacturing hub as it would generate more employment opportunities. The second speaker, Mr. Mark D'Souza spoke on the need for the financial sector reforms and discussed on the impact of liberalisation and globalization on the Indian Banking Industry. The session on 'Emerging Business Models in Infrastructure and Media' was chaired by Mr. Vijay Sai Pratap, Co-Founder and CEO, Onion Dev Technologies. Mr. Pratap spoke about the impact of telecommunication industry on the rural areas of our country, post liberalization and globalization. Mr. Narasimhan S briefed the development in the infrastructure sector of India pre and post Liberalization and Globalization. He also highlighted the development of a smart city in Naya Raipur as an example. There was a plenary session for the participants to present their research papers in the Conference. The event witnessed 163 research papers with more than 185 authors with their contributions from 18 Universities and Academic Institutions across the globe and 9 states from the country.

### **Central University Haryana Convocation**

Central University of Haryana (CUH), Mahendergarh organised its convocation recently. Shri

Satya Pal Malik, Hon'ble Governor of Goa was Chief Guest of the function. Former Education Minister of Haryana Shri Ram Bilas and former Chairman of University Grants Commission Prof. Ved Prakash also graced the occasion.

Shri Satya Pal Malik, in his convocation address reiterated the importance of Convocation for the students as well as their parents. He spoke about the influence of youth in the national reconstruction. The Chief Guest inaugurated the Sports Complex of the University and laid the foundation stone for the construction work related to the sports complex on the occasion..

In his address, Prof. R C Kuhad, Vice Chancellor while presenting the progress report of the University, informed that the Academic Advisory Council of University Grants Commission (UGC) has granted the university with 4.5 rating out of 5. On the basis of its popularity, Academic Advisory Council of UGC has sanctioned the re-run of the MOOC on *SWAYAM* platform to the University. He congratulated the degree recipients and wished them for a bright future ahead.

Prof. Ved Prakash in his address, suggested the five features—diligence, discipline, willingness to learn, sportsmanship and will to succeed in life, as *Mantras* for success. Shri Rambilas Sharma stressed that the youth should work for their nation. Chancellor, Prof. P L Chaturvedi chanted the verses from '*Taitariya Upanishad*'. On the occasion, 643 students were awarded Ph.D., M.Phil, Graduate and Postgraduate degrees, and 11 students were awarded the gold medals.

### **Convention on Training for Future**

A One-day Convention on 'Training for Future: Opportunities and Challenges' was organized by the Indian Society for Training and Development (ISTD), Indore Chapter and National Human Resources Development Network (NHRDN), Indore Chapter in association with Shri Vaishnav Vidyapeeth Vishwavidyalaya (SVVV), Indore, recently.

Chief Guest, Mr. Yogi Sriram, Senior Vice President, Larson and Toubro, Dr. Upinder Dhar, President NHRDN, Indore Chapter and Vice

Chancellor, SVVV, Dr. Santosh Dhar, Convener, and Chairperson, ISTD Indore Chapter, Dr. DT Manwani, National Council Member, ISTD, Indore Chapter and Dr. Rishu Roy, Coordinator, Convention and Secretary ISTD Indore Chapter inaugurated the convention. Other committee members of ISTD, Indore Chapter, Dr. Rajeev Shukla, Director, Shri Vaishnav School of Management, SVVV, Dr. George Thomas, Director, Shri Vaishnav School of Management, Indore, Mr. C Sumant, Director, iGrowth Learning and Development and Mr. Tarun Navlani, Treasurer, ISTD, Indore Chapter and Assistant Manager, Quantile Analytics Pvt. Ltd., Indore attended the inaugural session. Guests from other chapters i.e., Ms Rashmi Bhargava, CEO, Denovo, Mr Pradeep Bhargava, President, Denovo and Dr. Deepak Jaroliya, Treasurer, NHRDN Indore Chapter also attended the event.

Dr. Santosh Dhar in his address highlighted that the global workplace is changing with companies demanding different skill sets from their employees in this VUCA environment. Automation is set to take over roles in corporate training and is helping companies to improvise their training practices and facilitates the way employees can learn. Training presents the organizations with plentiful of opportunities but the challenge is how to put vigilance, checks and control while delivering what is needed to deal with the new kinds of exposures.

Dr. D T Manwani highlighted the increasing contribution of mobile technology to make employees more efficient by maintaining work life balance. He also stated that the latest technology is Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence that is offering virtual assistance further helping out in recruitment and selection as well. He highlighted that learning to learn and the ability to learn faster than your competitors may be the only sustainable competitive advantage.

Dr. Upinder Dhar in his address shared that researches have revealed that opportunities for training and development are second most important factor in workplace happiness (after the nature of the work itself). Despite such importance, training and development initiatives face multiple challenges like understanding

the corporate landscape of the future. We need to keep pace with technology and need to improvise our policies and style of functioning accordingly in this era of Industry 4.0. Mr. Yogi Sriram, in his address shared that training can be synonym of workplace learning. He also highlighted that in today's 'Phigital' (blend of Physical and Digital) era workplace learning is an ongoing activity. Multi-skilling and customized learning will be the future of training 2020. He also insisted on the right use of the technology and emphasized that we have to control the technology rather than technology dominating us.

The inaugural session concluded with the vote of thanks by Dr Rishu Roy, Coordinator, and Secretary, ISTD, Indore Chapter. The symposium was followed by two plenary sessions. Dr George Thomas and Dr. D T Manwani were session chairs. Dr. Winsy Abraham, HR Head, DXC, Capt. Manu Aul, State HR Head, Reliance JIO Infocomm and Dr. Prachi Gharpure, Director, NMIMS, Indore were the guest speakers in the first plenary session.

Mr. Vikas Singh Head, Incubation Center, founded by State Government at IT Park 'Srijan', Dr T K Mandal, Professor, Shri Vaishnav School of Management, Ms Rashmi Bhargava, CEO, De Novo and Mr. Pradeep Bhargava, President, De Novo were the guest speakers in the second plenary session. The convention concluded with Dr Rajeev Shukla, Director, SVSM expressing gratitude for the cooperation extended by the members of ISTD Indore Chapter, NHRDN Indore Chapter and faculty and staff members of SVVV.

### **Workshop on Neurodegenerative Diseases**

A Six-day IBRO Global Engagement Workshop on 'Neurodegenerative Diseases' is being organized by the Department of Biomedical Engineering, North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Shillong, Meghalaya. The tentative dates of the Workshop are October 05-10, 2020. The researchers' in life sciences, biotechnology, and in related fields of biomedical engineering, doctors working in the field of neuroscience/neurochemistry, young faculty members, neuroscientists and post docs below the age of 40 years working in the related fields as evident from research publications from Asia Pacific region may participate in the Event.

Neuroscience is a multidisciplinary science that is concerned with the study of the structure and function of the nervous system. This nervous system breakdown leads to various brain disorders. At the present world scenario of advance disease diagnosis technologies available, brain awareness programs are very much necessary to be organized among the local masses to aware them from various disciplines related to neuroscience. The main aim of our program will be creating awareness among the people on various neurodegenerative disorders like Parkinson's disease, Cerebral Palsy and Alzheimer disease.

For further details, contact Dr. Sudip Paul, Assistant Professor, Department of Biomedical Engineering North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong-793 022, Meghalaya. E-mail: [sudip.paul.bhu@gmail.com](mailto:sudip.paul.bhu@gmail.com). ■