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# UNIVERSITY NEWS

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Investing in Yourself is the Only Way to Succeed  
– **Convocation**

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# Our Changing Universities and Colleges: Impact of National Assessment and Accreditation Council

Shirish Chindhade\* and Sunita Wadikar\*\*

Greek philosopher Heraclitus' dictum speaks of a great truth: *No man ever steps in the same river twice*. Everything is in a flux; change is the only constant reality. Even so, our usual response to a systemic change is one of resistance mainly because it is feared to challenge our comfort zone created by *a status quo*. We feel worried that we have to pick up new ways of working, learn new subjects and re-skill or up-skill ourselves. This is a tedious process. But we cannot stop change, nor can we avoid it. It is ceaseless and unstoppable.

The periodic changes and revisions in the Instrument of Assessment (IA, that is to say, SSR Manual) of NAAC need not frighten us. They are a proof of the adage, "*Charity begins at home*" or improvement begins with oneself. An example is better than a precept. This constant fine tuning on the part of NAAC has established the organization as a resolute change agent for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in India. If one retrospects to see how NAAC has succeeded in playing the catalyst, one will easily find a good number of concepts and activities that started getting implemented in the functioning of our HEIs only after NAAC recommended them in the SSR Manual.

This article tries to identify some of the post-NAAC changes though it is necessary to try to cover as many as possible in subsequent installments. The following eleven ideas initially offer a good scope for study:

- i. Setting up of IQAC
- ii. Best Practices
- iii. Feedback
- iv. Learning Outcomes
- v. SWOC
- vi. Academic Audit
- vii. Add-ons / Value Additions
- viii. Student Satisfaction Survey (SSS)
- ix. Core Values
- x. Institutional Social Responsibility (ISR), and
- xi. Institutional Distinctiveness

It is easy to find the source of four out of these ideas, namely, Management Studies, Industrial practices, and the Corporate world's

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approach. However, Learning Outcomes, Academic Audit, and Student Satisfaction Survey are purely academic activities. It is to be noted that our HEIs started implementing these concepts only after NAAC introduced them in its Manual. This has helped to impose a system on the working of the HEIs for achieving desired quality outcomes. The first five activities, among several others, have entered the functioning of our HEIs only after NAAC introduced them first through the SSR Manual. These ideas in some detail are discussed here.

### **Setting up the IQAC**

We have often read newspaper advertisements looking for Quality Control Officer for industrial units. As a matter of fact, every good industrial unit has a Quality Control Department. Now, we may ask ourselves, “How many of our universities and colleges have had such a department or a functionary working fulltime as an essential part of the set-up, when quality creation and sustenance is our prime intention?” --Difficult to answer in the affirmative! How shall we describe this attitude? Is it ignorance, indifference or complacency?

Thus, the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) has its source in these industrial practices. No activity is to be outsourced in strict academic life: Hence, the “I” (Internal) in the IQAC. Quality creation, enhancement and sustenance are not meant to be outsourced because such an approach will breed dependence, and it will debilitate institutional initiatives. Outsourcing deprives an educational institution of a precious learning experience and renders it slothful. In other words, creation, enhancement and sustenance of quality are the responsibility of the HEI itself. The underlying message is, someone else cannot eat your meal for you! You have to eat it for yourself if you want to survive and grow!

The composition of the IQAC is often understood inadequately. Although NAAC has circulated clear guidelines on it, several HEIs often feel perplexed. They need to understand that NAAC does not send any negative instructions telling us who is a *persona non grata* (a person not acceptable) for the IQAC! Cooption of members is a prerogative of the HEI and its Head. There cannot be an external ceiling on the number: More the merrier! But, of course, wisdom lies in not making it unwieldy as it may not be necessarily productive and conducive.

It is, however, advisable that representatives from industry, corporate, social magnates, artists, scientists, thinkers, some influential alumni would be excellent choices. This gives the IQAC a vivisection of the best that is available around. These people help to generate new, even challenging ideas, suggest solutions and read the future needs, which is the need of the times. An HEI is, after all, expected to cater to the needs of the society. This establishes strong links with the “situatedness” of the HEI and strengthens its social relevance.

The IQAC looks back, around and forward, thus commanding a triple perspective of past, present and future. Needless to add, therefore, that the members have to be studious, well-read, alert, mature and dynamic. They are almost visionary prophets! They keep the system healthy and breathing on internal support by setting down SOPs, systems, procedures, methodologies. Considering the pivotal role of the IQAC, NAAC has made it a prerequisite for HEIs going for their 2<sup>nd</sup> and subsequent Cycles.

### **Best Practices**

The next important idea coming from industry to NAAC is of Best Practices. What is a Best Practice? The term has been used to describe “what works” and yields desired results in a particular situation or environment. When data supports the success of a practice, it is referred to as a research-based practice or scientifically based practice. Best Practice is also defined as a method or technique that has consistently shown results superior to those achieved with other means, and that is used as a benchmark. (<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/best-practice.html#ixzz1wTiV63i0>)

Best Practices are field-based or research-tested actions which are instrumental in bringing about a positive change in the institution. Usually--but not necessarily--Best Practices are practices which are institution specific. It means that a particular practice that has worked for someone within a given set of variables may or may not yield the same results across educational environments. The challenges faced by the institute can be addressed by designing practices which give solutions to the concerned issues. Best Practices are customary activities that have achieved a high level of effectiveness and have been perfected over a period of time. In fact, they reflect the ethos and the quality dimension of the institution. In other words, they are time tested for results that the institution wants to obtain.

At the same time, there are several “generic” Best Practices being followed in educational institutions, such as various co-curricular and cultural events, publication of annual miscellany of students’ writings, annual social festival, and even blood donation camps, tree planting, and so on. They help to create spirit of togetherness, inspire creativity and also instil social responsibility. Such practices can be—or are—learned from others and there is nothing wrong in doing so.

### ***Planning of Best Practices***

The following factors (already noted by NAAC) are to be considered while planning any best practice:

- i. Identification of Best Practice
- ii. Implementation of Best Practice
- iii. Institutionalisation of Best Practice
- iv. Internalization of Best Practice
- v. Dissemination of Best Practice.

Best Practices not only aid in bringing about “continuous improvement” in the institution but also engender ownership and teamwork.

### **Feedback**

The former Infosys Director Narayan Murthy once observed, “The biggest instrument of improvement is feedback.” He almost cautions institutions that to keep shut the feedback channels is to ensure failure! Most of our HEIs were blissfully indifferent to obtaining a robust and “structured” feedback on all activities from the stakeholders. At the most a Visitors Book would be pushed under the nose of a visitor to write what he thought of the institution. More often than not this was a cosmetic rather than creative ritual, remaining shut between the covers of the Book! With the prodding and goading by NAAC our HEIs woke up to a “formal” feedback and seminar kits began to include a feedback form! However, this too is cosmetic. What great use is it to obtain a feedback on the performance of alien speakers who visit only once? They are only passing clouds that shower pearls of wisdom and vanish. Whether those pearls are collected by the listeners remains a well-guarded secret!

Feedback should encompass practically each and every activity, event and equipment. Several Peer Teams have repeatedly suggested that the

feedback should be “structured”. This involves process of analysis, outcomes and Action-Taken Report (ATR) on the feedback. If an activity does not yield a desired tangible outcome, then it is a futile effort. It is a mere waste of time, energy and resources. Our HEIs should, therefore, ramp up their feedback systems as quality catalysts.

Feedback practice comes from the world of commerce where customer satisfaction is supremely crucial. It is NAAC that has pumped this awareness in our HEIs.

### **Learning Outcomes**

There is much awareness about scrutinising the learning outcomes in recent years. As mentioned in the National Education Policy (NEP 2020), amongst some of the major problems currently plaguing the higher education system in India include the poor learning outcomes and development of cognitive skills of students. Therefore, what actually matters is what is learned rather than what is taught.

What is a learning outcome? A learning outcome is a clear and specific statement that identifies what students must demonstrate at the level and standard required to successfully pass their study at programme and course levels. Learning Outcomes are specific intentions of a programme or module, written in clear terms. They describe what a student should know, understand or be able to do at the end of that program.

### ***Learning Objectives and Learning Outcome***

Generally there is confusion between learning objectives and learning outcomes. Learning objectives describe what a faculty member will cover in a course, whereas, learning outcomes is what a student must be able to do at the conclusion of a course.

### ***Framing the Learning Outcomes***

In developing learning outcomes we need to consider the total learning experiences of the students. Learning Outcomes need to be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and with time constraint) and more importantly clearly understandable by students. Hence it is a challenging task to frame precise, meaningful learning outcomes as a number of factors are to be considered. Learning outcomes are written with action words indicating the expected change in behaviour of the learner.

While framing Learning Outcomes, the following points need to be considered:

- Identify what students are expected to demonstrate on completion of their programme or course;
- Keep learning outcomes to one short statement;
- Use three components, viz., an action verb, a content phrase and a context phrase (Macquarie University FILT, 2015 & Dick; Carey & Carey, 2005);
- Avoid using passive verbs/phrases such as "be familiar with". Instead use more active verbs such as identifying, creating, recalling, translating, classifying, comparing, etc. for lower level thinking and analysing, evaluating, constructing, performing, producing for higher level of thinking;
- Make them identify cognitive differences between lower and higher level thinking and also should include outcomes related to application and attitudes / values.

### ***Importance of Learning Outcomes***

- Learning Outcomes assist the instructors to precisely communicate to students about what is expected of them.
- They provide a map/pathway to help instructors to design their material effectively.
- Assist the instructors to select relevant teaching and assessment strategies.
- Learning outcomes provide the check points that are measureable to assess the progress of a learner as per the expected holistic learning.
- Learning outcomes make assessments mapping clear & easy.
- Learning outcomes work as a kind of evidences e.g. rubric, charts or graphs related to summative learning goals.
- Learning outcomes help the Accreditation Agencies in ascertaining whether the desired objectives are achieved.
- Learning outcomes help to know the different processes for evaluating the students' learning.

It becomes necessary to set objectives in terms of the learning outcomes. This is why NAAC wants colleges to upload their POs, COs and PSOs. Moreover, what is important is that, the content to

be taught, the teaching methods to be adopted and the assessments to be conducted need to be aligned with the intended learning outcomes. After all, the quality of teaching is ultimately judged by the quality of learning that takes place. The teacher in this futuristic approach as opposed to being the repository of knowledge must now be a facilitator of learning. Then the question will not be raised: We teach but do they learn?!

### **SWOC**

Of the several terms and practices that NAAC has adopted from the world of Commerce and Management, SWOC (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges) analysis is a prominent one. It is a method used to study external and internal factors which affect business success and growth or otherwise, that is, stagnation and failure. The main aim of a SWOC/Threats analysis is to get managers to scrutinise everything that could impact favourably or adversely the course of a business activity, venture or project.

Higher Education Institutions are expected to attempt a SWOC analysis of the institutional activities and general status while preparing the SSR. It is obvious that most institutions enter a number of Strengths while the number of the "Weaknesses" is limited to only a couple of entries! (If this were really the factual record, most of them would land "A"!).

A simple way to identify SWOC points is to go by the seven criteria of the SSR and find out where the institution stands. The separate groups that work on the criteria can do this exercise effectively. After they have identified points, they can be discussed with the entire staff to arrive at a common consensus.

Peer Teams (PTs) also give SWOC analysis in their report. A detailed study of these reports will show that this is a rather slippery ground. That is to say, often one finds it difficult to assign ideas to the exact slot of the SWOC. For example, several PTs think that "students from rural areas" or "high dropout rate of girls" contribute to the "weakness" of an institution! Surprisingly enough, the same facts are assigned respectively to "Strengths" or "Challenges" by some other PTs! Such anomalies abound in PT reports! Therefore, it is advisable to attempt a good brainstorming in the staff or the IQAC before assigning points to the different slots of SWOC. It being an introspective exercise on the

part of an institution, SWOC analysis needs to be done critically if quality creation, enhancement and sustenance is the aim.

These five activities, among several others, have entered the functioning of our HEIs only after NAAC introduced them first through the SSR Manual.

### **Academic Audit**

Among the new ideas and practices introduced for the first time by NAAC to our HEIs, we must mention Academic Audit (AA) as a prominent mode of quality boosting and sustenance. No doubt, HEIs have been conducting internal and external Financial Audits annually as a mandatory provision. However, the idea of an AA is certainly a new one for us. It is a general observation that the activity is still slow to get implemented. May be, the concept demands clarity. Of course, a handful of our universities certainly have adopted the practice for themselves and for their affiliated institutions. Even so, a strict periodicity does not seem to be involved.

It is no exaggeration to say that every activity that we conduct needs to be “audited” with regular periodicity. SWOC analysis comes quite close to it. However, it is too general and even sometimes debatable about the exact slotting of the “qualities”. What is “strength” for one PT can (and does) get slotted under “weakness”! The exact allocation under SWOT/C heads is thus a challenge. Not so with AA, as it has usually a definite framework and norms of conducting it.

It is seen that our HEIs are tardy about conducting an annual AA. They expect the (affiliating) university or the Education Department to conduct it. Of course, the Education Department does conduct a Financial Audit regularly but conducting an AA is out of its purview. It is the job of either the university or the concerned HEI itself to do it or get it done. But most HEIs have a cold response to it.

Now, the question that several HEIs ask is: How to do it? What are the modalities, the rules and parameters for doing it? First of all, let us be clear about the scope of AA. It can be on a micro level or can be a macro one. “Micro level” refers to standalone unit like a teacher, a subject, a course or a Department. On the other side, the “Micro level” approach encompasses a whole Faculty

(if the HEI is a multi-faculty institution like Arts, Science, Commerce) or else it can include the entire institution.

The construction of an edifice starts with a blue print. In the same way, AA starts with a stated framework of the Instrument of Assessment (IA), the same way as the NAAC SSR. It can serve as a good model, though the approach can be selective to suit the purpose of the HEI. The HEI need not select all the Criteria and Metrics. It can select only one or two Criteria and some probing questions from them. Some preparation of documentation may also be involved. After filling in the IA it will be sent to a PT formed by the HEI on the NAAC pattern. Procedurally then follows an onsite visit, and then the final exercise of SWOC (which is a good feedback also) and recommendations. All this process is the privilege of the HEI itself. What is needed is confidence and initiative on the part of the IQAC.

### **Add-ons /Value Additions**

*“A man’s mind, stretched by new ideas, may never return to its original dimensions.”*

**--Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.**

Today knowledge is growing at an exponential rate which is making it difficult to keep pace with the changing environment. Even though in some universities the curriculum is updated quite frequently it’s difficult to keep pace with the innovations and developments.

With a view to equip students for this competitive world we need to train students to constantly keep upskilling themselves to be the global citizens. This can be done by giving maximum exposure to the students to be a lifelong learner, introducing necessary skills like communication skills, soft skills, digital skills and other professional skills through various short term add-on courses which can be one of the ways to achieve the objective.

Hence there is need to incorporate add on courses which are need based and keep the students up dated. Value Added courses are optional courses which are offered apart from the main curriculum. These courses not only add value but also help students in developing integrated personalities. The main objectives of the value added courses need to be as given below:

- To provide students an understanding of the expectations of industry.
- To enhance the employability quotient of students.
- To bridge the skill gaps and make students industry ready.
- To provide an opportunity to students to develop inter-disciplinary skills
- To update the students with the latest skills as per the need of the hour.

Value added courses may be in the form of bridge courses or as add- on courses:

*Bridge Courses* are connecting courses which connect a learner's previous course and the course student wants to join which is different from the course s/he is currently pursuing. Generally bridge courses are short in duration which extend from 6 months to 1 year. Bridge courses are supplementary knowledge courses which impart basic knowledge and prepare the students for the upcoming advanced subject to be learnt. This will save student's time, energy & money as the student does not have to study the entire course.

Whereas, *Add-on Courses* by the virtue of being interdisciplinary in nature can be opted by students from various streams. Add-on courses may not be directly linked with any of the Curricular subjects, but immensely contribute to sensitizing students to cross-cutting issues such as environment and sustainability, ethics and values, gender equity, child labour, child abuse, women atrocities, mental health and well-being or any other relevant topic. So let us try to provide our students with holistic education as we know that, to quote Malcom X, "Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today".

### **Students Satisfaction Survey**

The global mood today is to treat education as an industry, a humongous human manufacturing unit. In other words, education is commoditized. We in India do not like to endorse this approach for many reasons. One of them is clearly that it will make education elitist once again and ruthlessly unaffordable to the disadvantaged of whose number is very high in our population. Thus it militates against the human ideals of equity and equality. Another reason why we disapprove of the commercial approach is that

traditionally we have believed the dictum of the holy scripture of Bhagwad Gita which tells us, *Nahi dnyaanena sadrusham pavitramiha vidyate* (नहि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते I There is nothing sacred like knowledge in this world.) Even so, the result of the commercial approach is that the conventions and rules of the market are applicable to education. Therefore, the erstwhile "student/disciple/learner" has become a "stakeholder" in the new terminology. It is close to calling him a "shareholder," a customer who always hungers for profits, gains and costs and abhors losses.

*Grahako ev raja*, (ग्राहको एव राजा I)-- The customer is the market king today. He decides what will sell and what will fail as a product. Like the proverbial king, the customer can do no wrong! He is always right. Therefore, his needs, demands, views and even craze are supreme decisive factors for his satisfaction. Our students are our central stakeholders, customers. The entire commerce of education gyrates around him to achieve his welfare and win his satisfaction. He has to agree that the Teaching-learning (TL) experiences catered to him by the institution are meaningful and capable of yielding his desired outcomes. He invests his money, time and energy in the TL process and expects tangible returns on investment (ROI). Consequently his positive feedback has become crucial and indispensable. It is in response to these practical conditions of the situation that have driven NAAC to include the SSR in the metrics. It is assigned considerable weightage of a whopping 60 (into 4=240). The survey is digitally and directly conducted by NAAC to obtain an objective and "un-tinkered with" feedback from the horse's mouth, in the process of institutional Assessment and Accreditation (AA). This is an entirely new awareness brought by NAAC in the functioning of our HEIs, and it should be taken seriously.

### **Core Values**

NAAC has shoved and shepherded our HEIs to imbibe new habits and work-styles to suit the ever changing world in which they have to work. One noteworthy habit to mention is display of the Vision statement of the institution. Surely, to the consternation of at least some institutions here was no such stated Vision at all! –Or if it was there, it was as it were a well guarded secret from the world! In other words, not many institutions ever bothered



to know it and show it. The next addition that came from NAAC was the display of the Mission statements. Either many HEIs had not stated (written them down) or it never occurred to them that both the Vision and Mission statements are for a loud and bold display for everyone to see and understand.

Management Guru Stephen R. Covey points out in his celebrated book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (2004) that Vision and Mission statements can be personal, family specific or organisational / institutional. All the concerned have to know them and understand and follow them. At least in an organisational situation Vision and Mission statements need to be displayed prominently so that they are seen frequently by all the concerned stakeholders.

Vision and Mission statements are actually expressions of the convictions, the core Values, the philosophy in the light of which he people work in the organization. A prominent display makes them a shared experience and conviction. To strengthen the concept further NAAC has recommended five Core Values in the light of which HEIs in India are to function in order to collectively achieve them. These Core Values are:

1. Contribution to National Development
2. Fostering Global Competencies among Students
3. Inculcating a Value System among the Students
4. Promoting the Use of Technology
5. Quest for Excellence.

NAAC has also succinctly outlined each of them in the Manual as follows:

#### ***Contribution to National Development***

- This is an explicit goal of Higher Education in India
- Aims at developing human resource to contribute to economy
- Serves the cause of social justice
- Ensures equitable and inclusive access to education

#### ***Fostering Global Competencies among Students***

- Developing skills to meet global benchmarks
- Instilling competencies to face global challenges

- Achieving closer relationship between “the world of competent learning” and “the world of skilled work”

#### ***Inculcating a Value System among the Students***

- Inculcating desirable value systems among students to suit the central pluralities and diversities in India
- Imbibing values to meet social, cultural, economic, environmental realities
- Fostering universal core values like truth and righteousness, cooperation, mutual understanding

#### ***Promoting the Use of Technology***

- Understanding and making appropriate use of advancing technologies for self and administrative development
- Enriching the Teaching-Learning (TL) experiences
- Using ICT appropriately

#### ***Quest for Excellence***

- Fostering willing for self-development
- Making contribution to institutional development by exercising institutional and self-analysis (with SWOC measures). Vision, Mission and Core Values are the lighthouses that steer the ship of HEIs to their desired destinations. Hence, a clear understanding of their importance and intention has to be developed in the stakeholders.

#### ***Institutional Social Responsibility (ISR)***

*Without restoring an ethos of social responsibility, there can be no meaningful and sustained economic recovery.*

–Jeffrey Sachs

Institutional Social Responsibility focuses on the institution’s responsibilities to the public in terms of protection of public welfare. As an active agent of social change other than imparting knowledge and skills educational institutes should create a culture of social responsibility in youth through an array of activities which will help in creating not only social sensitization but also altruism within them. The hands-on activities conducted should be able to bring within the students an “attitude of gratitude” and a need to reciprocate to the society from which they have gained immensely.

Institutional Social Responsibility basically lies on the premise of Philanthropic Responsibility which means to serve humanity. This aspect gives attention to the well being of the needy or under privileged sector of the society. Philanthropic responsibility can be fulfilled through activities such as donating time, money or resources to charities and organizations at national and international levels. These donations can be given to a variety of worthy causes.

Activities undertaken at the institutional level must be meaningful and useful catering to the needs of the beneficiaries and making a significant difference in their life. Broadly the projects may be undertaken as given below:

- Socio- humanitarian responsibility: responding to urgent social issues
- Socio-cultural responsibility: supporting social and cultural responsibility
- Ecological responsibility: economical use of resources, preservation of environment
- Civil responsibility: protection of public health and safety, development of local community

Institutional Social Responsibility also involves being aware of the impact an institution has on the community or world around. The higher education institutes should be ardently committed to social responsibility by being increasingly responsive to community-based development initiatives. Sensitization of students and staff and the well-fare of the society should be the key agenda behind any of social initiatives. After all don't we all believe that *a small good deed is always better than a grandest intention?*

### **Institutional Distinctiveness**

Considering the fact that India is now a globalised country, the benchmarks in various walks of life will necessarily have to elevate themselves to the global, international quality levels. Education, like industry and the defense equipment are among the most immediate concerns that need urgent and continuous upgrading and up skilling. This amounts to developing one's own brands and features that give a unique (*hatke*, as the popular Hindi term calls it) image, the USP, to the institution. Since the efforts of NAAC are to guide HEIs to achieve excellence by making quality the defining element or distinctive

feature of education, it is expected that HEIs strive to develop (and ultimately attain) distinctiveness in some aspect of their functioning, such as academic, cultural, social, research, sports, and so on.

Let us give some thought to these particulars. Distinctiveness in academics will mean initially continuous chain of high achievers at the university level in the form of gold medals, large numbers in highest ranks, highest scores in various subjects, apex performance in qualifying entrance tests and competitive examinations, landing top jobs of the country.

In cultural activities continuous national and international levels of achievements, in the performing arts (music, dance, drama), literature, film and television dominance, and so on.

In NCC it could be consistently large numbers of recruitments in the defense services. If the institution is a Law college, then its distinctiveness will naturally be measured by the large numbers of contributions to the Bar and the Bench. Imagine the high number of Nobel laureates produced by Oxford, Cambridge and Harvard Universities.

These are only some readily available examples to show how distinctiveness can be defined. The point to be understood here is that apex quality and achievements are never accidental outcomes. They are fruits of rare cultivation that grow on only rare trees. They need the manure of continuous grooming, cultivation and care and strong motivation. The teachers, the staff, the infrastructure, the general culture and ambience in the institution are the architects of distinctiveness.

However, such lofty and exalted criteria of distinctiveness need not dishearten us, because distinctiveness can reside in certain deceptively simple looking features also. For example, if a college is a uni-gender institution for girls and can show tangible outcomes in terms of the large number of girls who have passed out, some of them occupying respectable positions in various walks, their high level achievements, the results of the gender specific programmes and skills imparted to them enabling them to leave stamp on the society, are all evidences of impressively answering the NAAC Core Value of *Contribution to National Development*. This is distinctiveness of the most fulfilling kind.

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(contd. on pg. 21)

# Content to Competency: A Paradigm Shift in English Language Curriculum

J John Sekar\*

The utility and futility of online teaching and testing of the English language at tertiary level during the pandemic has dawned upon Indian academics and it has made them personally and professionally realize that it is high time that there was a paradigm shift in English language curriculum from being content-based to becoming competencies-based, from being teacher-fronted to becoming learner-centred, from being teaching-oriented to becoming learning-focused, from being bulimic to becoming skills-oriented, and from being memory-based to becoming learning focused. The present reflective article documents why English language teaching at tertiary level in India should move from content to competency in the increasingly globalized world that requires skilled workforce with knowledge, abilities, ethics, and positive attitudes toward generic issues. It is an outcome of the sharing of online teaching-testing experiences of the academics as well as feedback from students on online teaching and evaluation.

Online teaching and testing during the pandemic has facilitated the academics' reflection over teaching-learning styles and strategies that teachers and learners adopted pre-pandemic in face-to-face classrooms that kept students as passive (learners) listeners, and supervised-examinations that encouraged students' memory and recall skills. Academics have now realized that it is debilitating on their part to teach invisible students online and value scripts that are a verbatim copy of the study materials available online, and that it is unproductive and therefore futile to teach online and it is a mockery to value scripts online. For the first time, their reflections on the futility of mark-oriented and memory-based learning have crystallized now and it has now drawn their attention to a paradigm shift from content-based *memorization* to competency-based *learning*, and from testing the capacity to reproduce the study materials to testing competencies

and abilities for problem solving and independent, critical thinking.

Teaching and testing are not information-oriented, but the acquisition of knowledge and skills that are to be inevitably linked to societal requirements. In online teaching, personal contact with students is missing and teachers just read the materials kept on the computer screen and they complete and 'cover' the syllabus even before they complete half the semester. They set the usual recall type of questions instead of problem solving and application-oriented questions that test students' higher order cognitive abilities. As a result, students transfer information to their answer sheets directly from the google instead of recalling from their memory, and post it online. Both serious students and well-meaning teachers tacitly acknowledge that it is a mockery of teaching-learning and testing process. They lament that no learning is taking place; no testing is possible; and no failures can be imagined. It is demotivating high performing students. Institutional advantage is that HEIs have cleared the backlog and burden of their past students who had arrear papers pending for decades together. It is of course a huge success and relief for academic administrators. While students who graduated through face-to-face classes are by and large unemployable, students who graduate through online teaching and testing worsen the situation further. Whether prospective employers would consider the graduates of the pandemic period for employment remains a million dollar question.

Teachers and students are now realizing the futility and utility of their teaching and learning respectively. They now start doubting if the present state of higher education either online or offline facilitates economic development and international competitiveness. Self-isolation during the lockdown period has enabled them to be self-critical of what they have been doing all these years and they now realize that teachers should rather develop students' competencies. Their competence should be translingual and transcultural in the present global(ized) world. Meanwhile, the UGC asked HEIs pre-pandemic to introduce outcome-based education (OBE) though many HEIs are yet to adopt. A section

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of academics were opposed to the concept then, but now they realize the relevance and academic profit of the learner outcomes-based curriculum. Some institutions which implemented it did not realize that outcomes could not be superimposed on the existing curriculum when they did in order to comply with the NAAC requirements on the eve of re-accreditation. In fact, it involves the danger of putting the cart before the horse. The objectives of the course and learner outcomes with proper alignment with Bloom's taxonomy should first be decided before developing the course units and identifying the reference books. Learner outcomes should be closely linked with competencies that learners would acquire at the end of the course for demonstration in real world-life situations in unforeseen or unpredictable circumstances.

This reflective article aims at identifying a paradigm shift in English language curriculum from content-based bulimic approach to competency-based productive approach. It also argues that revitalization of English language education is possible only redesigning curriculum, revamping the plans of implementation, and enhancing teacher competencies. The research questions that guided the author's reflections and consolidation of academics' views on switching from content to competency are:

1. How to distinguish between content-based curriculum and competency-based curriculum?
2. How should English language teacher competencies be characterized?
3. Why should there a curricular change from content to competency?

## **Discussion**

The realization that there is a dire necessity to replace the present content-transfer pedagogy with competency-based teaching is refreshing and revitalizing the teaching-learning process. Teaching without learning is incomprehensible and unimaginable. In fact, teaching is effective and necessary if only it leads to learning. Who cares for teaching and who cares for learning? It appears that students do not care for teaching and teachers do not care for learning. Students are not necessarily interested in teaching since they view it as the business of teachers. When teaching does not cater to learner needs, students do not appreciate teaching. For them, there are sources of help readily available in the most desired format from the google or in the

market for a pass in English. English teachers should realize that English language teaching is not about imparting metalinguistic knowledge about English such as grammar and phonology, nor about literary knowledge about celebrated writers and texts, but about facilitating students to use English first in their daily life and subsequently or concurrently for cognitive academic language proficiency in their studies.

Department of English exists as a service department when it offers General English courses, and the object of English language teaching to students of majors other than English Majors is not to make them English language teachers but English language users. Other Major Students need English to understand lectures on their majoring subjects, to read books and articles in their disciplines, to participate in conferences, to talk about issues in the domain knowledge, and to write academic essays on examinations. They need English to become professionals who can meet societal needs. They should be equipped with communicative competencies for work and life. As per Rylatt & Lohan (1997), "It can confidently be said, as we enter a new millennium, that the business of improving learning competencies and skills will remain one of the world's fastest growing industries and priorities." In the increasingly globalized world, students developing key competences is of paramount importance for participating actively in society and to contribute to sustainable economic growth. Grognet & Crandall (1982: 3) think that competencies are "necessary for individuals to function proficiently in the [sic] society where they live." Students' qualification needs to be aligned with the requirements of prospective employers. Employers do not expect graduates with distinctions but with excellent communication skills, critical thinking skills, ethics and values, and positive attitudes.

English language curriculum should therefore focus on the development of communicative competencies and critical thinking skills, values, and positive attitudes in addition to content knowledge. Of course, google can provide students with information and knowledge but not with skills and abilities that are to be developed through the curricular knowledge in classroom interactions. Green et al. (2002: 21) stress the reality that "higher education plays a key role in preparing students for the global workforce." English language curriculum

should therefore build link between theory and practice, and coherence between students' academic profiles (statement of marks) and professional profiles (competencies). Students are no longer expected to be content specialists in their chosen disciplines, but to demonstrate a set of abilities, skills, and attitudes which facilitate their attempt at, and aim to succeed in their chosen professions. English language curriculum should enable students of different disciplines to acquire these competencies. Graduates with excellent communicative competence, critical thinking abilities, and positive attitudes are an asset to society and are active and useful citizens in democratic society. English language curricular reorientation should therefore aim at preparing graduates to "face the challenges of this world, be they academic, economic, humanitarian, diplomatic, strategic, or otherwise," to quote Bousquet, 2008: 305.

Unfortunately, Board of Studies (BoS) in English in all state universities of Tamil Nadu miserably failed to reorient the general English curriculum to the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century English language learners despite repeated reminders and recommendations from the reports of the various educational commissions, the UGC, and the state government. All undergraduate students are forced to study General English in the first four semesters of their three year degree programme hoping that they enable students to pursue their studies in chosen fields. However, these courses are awfully and woefully inadequate in the sense that they are colonially loaded with literary texts to the extent that English literature is taught to them because English teachers enjoy teaching it as much as they teach it to English Majors.

On the contrary, the purpose of General English courses is to enhance students' basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS), but the current curriculum is intended to communicate something that is literary and aesthetic. The BoS did not pay attention to all these years to the direction of the UGC and the State government on aligning the English language courses with learners' communicative competencies and critical thinking abilities. Hence, the Tamil Nadu State Council for Higher Education (TANSCH) thrust four skill-based courses under the rubric Communicative English and Professional English in October 2020 to be uniformly followed in all state universities with immediate effect. Humphreys (2005: 31) is right in

his suggestion that curriculum should incorporate approaches that "teach students to apply academic concepts to real-world contexts." However, there is so much of passive resistance from English teachers with strong literature background to these skill-based courses which do not have literature component. Tertiary English teachers believe very strongly that literary curriculum is not only interesting to young adult learners but also enables them to imbibe human values that are necessary for the formation of egalitarian and just society. It is true that our globalized corporate world requires ethically strong workforce.

Competency-based English language education is closely linked to the learning outcomes at the end of the course. Learning outcomes are declarative statements of what learners are expected to demonstrate after completion of learning. They should be articulated in terms of cognitive achievements. The statements should use verbs that indicate outcomes to be observable and measurable. In Bloom's taxonomy, these abilities are in three bands: lower order thinking skills (LOTS) of knowing and understanding, middle order thinking skills (MOTs) of applying and analyzing, and higher order thinking skills (HOTs) of evaluating and creating. Each of the five units of contents of the course should have an explicitly statement learning outcome corresponding to the unit content. Course objectives are the reflection of teacher intentions of the course, but learning outcomes which usually start with the sentence "at the end of the course, students will be able to" reflect learners' achievement.

Definition of and distinction between the terms 'competence/competences' and 'competency/competencies' elude academic consensus. According to Fleming (2009), competence refers to a broad capacity or capability (generic), whereas competency includes particular abilities (specific). On the other hand, Pennock-Speck (2009: 172) defines it as "ability to carry out tasks and also the behaviours and attitudes needed to carry out the tasks successfully." Generally, both are often used interchangeably and the plural is preferred. Thus, competency includes knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, and means capacity to perform successfully in academic, professional or social environments. So, competencies-based classroom is student-centred and experience-oriented where critical thinking skills are promoted in and through knowledge about the subject domain. Thus, knowledge/content is not precluded.

Rather, competencies and cognitive abilities are applied to real-world contexts. They are not acquired for the sake of acquisition, but for use in society. Bunk (1994: 10) is thus quite explicit in his definition of competencies: “The necessary knowledge, skills and capacity to perform in a profession,...to solve occupational problems in an autonomous and flexible manner and...to contribute to his professional environment and the organization of work.” Education is supposed to produce citizens who can be assets not only to workplace but also to democratic society. Therefore, a similar perception of competencies as demonstrable and transferable is articulated by European Commission (2004: 7): “Key competencies represent a multifunctional and transferable set of knowledge, skills and attitudes that all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, inclusion and employment.” Competencies are broken down to two broad categories: general and communicative competencies. For example, *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (CEFR, 2001) distinguishes between general competencies and communicative language competencies. While general competencies refer to knowledge, skills, and ability to learn (autonomous learning and lifelong learning), communicative language competencies comprise linguistic competencies (lexical, phonological and syntactic knowledge), sociolinguistic competencies (sociocultural conditions of language use), and pragmatic competencies (mastery of discourse, cohesion and coherence).

Competencies-based curricular changes will become a reality if only there are a series of fundamental changes that start with change of mindset. Traditional perception of teaching as the transmission of knowledge from teachers to students and learning as reproduction (bulimic) of content should change. Competencies-based English language education emphasizes autonomous, lifelong learning and critical thinking. English language education is extended beyond classrooms and is in companion with citizens throughout their lives. Goals of the programme should be set, courses should be developed, and evaluation should be evolved. First, academics should develop teaching competencies and it requires greater effort than merely transmitting contents from books. Thus, competencies need to be explicitly addressed, stated, and incorporated into English language teaching.

In multilingual India which has 24 constitutionally recognized languages and hundreds of regional languages which serve as Language-1 (L1) to millions of Indians, English serves as the language of higher education, social mobility, employability, and occupational promotion of all educated Indians. Hence, students, researchers, academics and all other stakeholders of higher education should be able to communicate effectively with one another. This calls for attention to be accorded to English language *learning*. Language learning in HE is thus a preparation for lifelong language learning. English should not continue to be the language of the privileged. Rather, the goal of “English-for-all” is to be realized at all HEIs. English is viewed as an academic language, as a professional language, as an occupational language, as a language of social mobility, as a language of prestige, as a language of development.

Rationale for a competency-based approach to English language teaching/learning is that English is not the object of study but its immediate, subsequent uses for academic study and in life later. There is no use of learning/acquiring it without using English. Pragmatic competencies are the capacity to assess one’s skills in English, to set relevant and realistic goals, to identify one’s preferred learning styles and strengths, and to identify and use relevant learning materials. Learners need English to understand lectures, gain specialized material at libraries and on the internet, to follow courses, to write assignments, to write project reports, and take examinations, and to present research papers and participate in conferences. If literary texts are used, they should become a medium for honing creative and critical thinking skills, for learning personal and social values that are basically human, and for crystallizing their attitudes toward issues and ideas. Moreover, competencies-based English language classes should prepare students for lifelong learning. Thus, all learners experience learner autonomy. Mackiewicz (2002: 3) suggests that “lifelong learning requires a new pedagogy, i.e. a shift in emphasis from knowledge acquisition to competence development as well as a shift from teaching to learning.” To achieve competencies-based models, learner-centred or learner-directed approaches to English language learning should be incorporated into the curriculum wherein objectives of the course in terms of generic and specific competencies should be strongly linked to concrete learning outcomes. Successful teaching is assessed in terms of successful learning.

Three types of competencies that may be generic or specific can be incorporated into English language curriculum. They are instrumental competencies, personal competencies, and systematic competencies. Instrumental competencies are the ability to analyze and synthesize literary texts, to organize and plan and then express one's views and opinions in English, to manage information, and to use problem solving and decision making skills.

Personal competencies consist of teamwork, interdisciplinary teamwork, work within international contexts, interpersonal skills, recognition and appreciation of diverse, multicultural practices and values, critical reasoning, and ethical commitment. Literature can serve as an ideal medium for acquiring and exploiting instrumental and personal competencies. Systematic competencies refer to capacity for autonomous, lifelong learning, learning to learn, to adapt to new unpredicted or unpredictable real life situations, to create, synthesize, and produce something new and original, to appreciate other cultures and customs, and to sensitize oneself toward environmental issues.

To implement competencies-based English language curriculum, teachers should first acquire teacher competencies which are very specific and unique to English language learning. Some of them are

- i. To demonstrate mastery in communicative competency in terms of linguistic competency, sociocultural competency, discourse competency, and strategic competency. Dell Hymes has extensively done research.
  - a) Linguistic competencies refer to the ability to use (not just know of, or know about) the forms of English (sound system, lexicon, sentence structure).
  - b) Sociocultural competencies refer to the ability to use English appropriately in different contexts inconsonance with socially and culturally defined norms and expectations.
  - c) Discourse competencies refer to the ability to understand how English is used to construct knowledge to create forms of the language that are longer than sentences. It can be emails, academic texts of different disciplines, business correspondences, and the like.
  - d) Strategic competencies refer to "language learning strategies" although these

competencies go beyond formal strategies in the classroom. They ultimately direct learners to achieve lifelong learning.

- ii. To plan teaching and testing strategies for what is to be taught and to be assessed.
- iii. To design activities that can promote different micro-skills of four macro-skills.
- iv. To progressively develop communicative competencies and higher order thinking skills in learners.
- v. To update constantly and consistently the main pedagogical, andragogical, and heutagogical trends in English language teaching and to apply them at different levels.
- vi. To apply the different ways of assessing learners in terms of what should be assessed, how it should be assessed, assessment criteria, and other evaluation strategies.
- vii. To demonstrate sufficient knowledge of the cultures that English texts bring to classroom.
- viii. To encourage the development of metalinguistic and metacognitive required for the acquisition of English and its use.
- ix. To develop positive attitudes in learners toward linguistic and cultural diversity through literary representations.
- x. To demonstrate tolerance and receptive attitude toward learner errors in perception and production of language.

Teachers' role is different in competencies-based class from the traditional content-based class. Teachers are no longer contended with transmitting information that can be done better and faster by the google. They should employ teaching strategies that develop basic skills and abilities in students. Teachers' skill and will are dovetailed in reflections about learning. They must help learners believe in their own capacity to control and direct their learning. Otherwise, learners will develop negative attitudes toward learning. Here, pedagogy paves the way for andragogy and it will in turn introduce heutagogy. Research findings support the view that learners who develop and maintain positive perceptions about their abilities experience high performance, take control over learning, and evince keen interest in learning.

## Suggestions

In the light of the theoretical discussion on competencies-based English language curriculum documented above, the following suggestions can be taken up for follow-up activities:

1. Human Resources Development Centres in HEIs shall organize workshops and refresher courses on outcome-based English language and literature education.
2. English language and literature teachers can take up action research to identify a set of communicative competencies and higher order thinking skills that can be incorporated into the curriculum.
3. English departments can organize in-house workshops to write learner outcomes for different genre-based courses and link them with questions for evaluation.
4. Teachers should be trained to use literature as a medium of developing abilities and skills, values, and attitudes in students so that they can become responsible citizens in democratic society and productive workforce with communicative competence.
5. Self-learning materials (SLM) and textbooks can be prepared on the model of competency-based approach to English language learning.

## Conclusions

Bulimic form of education causes much academic indigestion and it leads to unproductive reproduction of what students are uniformly forced to memorize. As a result, no learning takes place. Their grade is not an index of success or failure in learning. Communicative competencies and abilities to think critically, to analyze and synthesize should be developed in English language education. Learners should be equipped with the necessary tools to locate, select, interpret, and use the vast amount of data from their discipline. Ultimately, there should be a move toward a self-directed, autonomous learning where students' independence,

involvement, and participation are fostered. Lockstep lectures are having a debilitating effect on students. Correspondingly, competencies-based assessment must evaluate knowledge along with components of competencies: abilities, attitudes, and skills.

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# The Skill Development in Higher Education in India: Recent Trends, Opportunities and Prospects

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India has the second-highest population of the working age (15-59 years) individuals in the world. The skill set of this population group plays a critical role in the growth of the country. In India, education plays a vital role to build skill-based society of the 21st Century. It is the quality of education that decides the quality of human resources of the country. The intent of the present article is to analysis and highlights the status of contemporary education with respect to skill development. It is renowned for its size, diversity and complexity, whether it is geographical, socio-economic, cultural, political or developmental. All these factors impact on every aspect of life including employment, labour force considerations, education and training. If nation is a system, education is the heart of it. Education empowers the nation. Education is an important input for the growth of the Nation. Properly planned educational can increase national gross products, cultural richness, build positive attitude towards technology, increase efficiency and effectiveness of the governance. Education opens new horizons for an individual, provides new hopes and develops new values. It strengthens competencies and develops commitment. So, every government is now committed to provide the facilities that are required for educating a child right from the beginning. As compared to western economies where there is a burden of an ageing population, India has a unique 20-25 years window of opportunity called the “demographic dividend” means India has a higher proportion of working age population.

## India’s Scenario on Skills Development

India has seen rapid growth in recent years, due to the growth in new-age industries. The demand for a new level of quality of service has increased with the increase in purchasing power. However, there is a large shortage of skilled manpower in the country. In the wake of the changing economic environment,

it is necessary to focus on the skill development of the young population of the country. India lags far behind in imparting skill training as compared to other countries. As compared to western economies where there is a burden of an ageing population, India has a unique 20-25 years window of opportunity called the “demographic dividend.” This “demographic dividend” means that as compared to other large developing and developed countries, India has a higher proportion of working age population about its entire population.

The rapid economic growth has increased the demand for skilled manpower that has highlighted the shortage of skilled manpower in the country. India is among the top countries in which employers are facing difficulty in filling up the jobs. The key reasons in finding a suitable candidate for available jobs in the country are lack of available applicants, shortage of hard skills and shortage of suitable employability, including soft skills.

## Recent Trends in Skill Development in Higher Education in India

Worldwide, the percentage of employers who are experiencing difficulties filling job vacancies continues to rise. If are talking about India than it is on 7<sup>th</sup> position in facing difficulty in filling jobs. For India, the difficulty to fill up the jobs is 58%, which is above the global standard of 38% in 2015. The World Economic Forum indicates that only a little bit % of the total Indian professionals are considered employable by the organized sector. The unorganized sector is not supported by any structured skill development and training system of acquiring or upgrading skills. The skill formation takes place through informal channels such as family occupations, on-the-job training under master craftsmen with no linkages to formal education training and certification.

The percentage of employers who are experiencing difficulties filling job vacancies in India continues to fluctuate from 2006 to 2015. When compared with 2014, the proportion decreases from 64% to 58%. Employers are having major difficulty

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filling jobs in Accounting & Finance Staff, IT Personnel, Secretaries, PAs, Receptionists, Admin Asst. & Office Support Staff, Teachers, Engineers, Marketing / Public Relations / Communications Staff Sales Managers, Management / Executive (Management / Corporate), Legal Staff, Researchers (R&D). On the other hand, Higher Education sector has witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of Universities/University level Institutions & Colleges since Independence. The number of Universities has increased 34 times from 20 in 1950 to 677 in 2014. The sector boasts of 45 Central Universities of which 40 are under the purview of Ministry of Human Resource Development, 318 State Universities, 185 State Private universities, 129 Deemed to be Universities, 51 Institutions of National Importance (established under Acts of Parliament) under MHRD (IITs - 16, NITs-30 and IISERs-5) and four Institutions (established under various State legislations). The number of colleges has also registered manifold increase of 74 times with just 500 in 1950 growing to 37,204, as on 31st March, 2013. The quantum growth in the Higher Education sector is spearhead by Universities, which are the highest seats of learning.

In order to provide adequate training to the youth and develop necessary skills, the Government of India took steps to improve the skill training scenario in the country. In 2009, the government formulated the national skill development policy that laid the framework for skill development, ensuring that individuals get improved access to skills and knowledge. This Institution is based skill development, including ITIs, vocational schools, technical schools, polytechnics or professional colleges, etc. Training for self-employment or entrepreneurial development is given under this policy-learning, web-based learning and distance learning is also parts of national skill development policy. The policy states the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, which include the government, industry, trade unions, local governments, civil society institutions and all skill providers.

The policy lays down following institutional framework comprising: (1) Prime Minister's National Council on Skill Development (2) National Skill Development Co-ordination Board (3) National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) (4) National Council for Vocational Training (NCVT).

The policy also lays down special emphasis on skill development for the unorganized sector. The policy provides for having a separate institutional mechanism to plan, implement and monitor the skill development for the unorganized sector. It focuses on having target groups within the unorganized sector, literacy and soft skills, recognition of prior learning, and skill development for self-employment.

### **Opportunities for Skill Development in Higher Education**

The current vocational education is shifting from welfare approach to a demand driven approach. The government has undertaken various efforts to strengthen its scattered VET (Vocational Education Training) delivery system under various departments and ministries, e.g. the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MOLE) through its Director General of Employment and Training (DGET), the Ministry of Urban Affairs and the Ministry of Rural Development. Opportunities available to learners for skill development are facilitated by Central & State Government & by Private sector.

### **Government's Role in Skill Development**

Government gave priority to Skill development in 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan. The government plans to set up sector skill councils to prepare standards required for training programs. The industries are also proactively taking steps to partner with the government and reduce the skill gap. The government has doubled the allocation of funds for skill development under the National Skill Development Fund (NSDF) by INR 10 billion in the Union Budget 2012-13. The total corpus of funds has been increased to INR 25 billion.

The various ministries have created infrastructure for skill development such as it is, polytechnics, community polytechnics, secondary schools (in association with private sector). Recently, government has passed the amendment to the existing act known as 'Apprentices (Amendment) Bill, 2014' to increase the number of skilled man power and provide industries with flexibility to hire apprentices as well as improve stipends specified to them. According to the Bill, the industry will have 2.5-10 % of the total work force as apprentices Prime Minister Narendra Modi in June 2014 announced

the creation of a first-ever separate Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship to promote entrepreneurship and skill development and 2016 announced the 'Skill India'.

MHRD government polytechnic institutions with the current capacity of diploma level courses under various disciplines such as engineering and technology, pharmacy, architecture, applied arts and crafts and hotel management. As per AICTE Annual Report-2011-12, total number of institutions is 3205 within take capacity of 8, 87,825. Another key initiative of MHRD is the scheme of Apprenticeship Training, which aims to provide practical experience to engineering graduates, diploma holders and students in 10+2, and make the trained candidates job ready as per industry requirements. A part from this, MHRD has also introduced vocational education from class IX onwards, provision of financial cost for engaging with industry /SSCs for assessment, certification and training 'Aajeevika' is a killing and placement initiative of Ministry of Rural Development. The aim of the scheme is to impart specific set of knowledge and skills to rural youth and make them job ready. The scheme is catering to youth without formal education.

Textile is the second largest employer after agriculture in the country. The work force will increase from 33-35 million in 2008 to 60-62 million by 2022. The ministry has an Integrated Skill Development Scheme for the Textiles and Apparel Sector including Jute and Handicraft. The scheme aims to fulfill the need for skilled manpower to the textile and related sectors. The scheme aims at targeting 15 lakh people over the span of five years.

The NSDC formed in 2009 under National Skill Policy, which is a public-private partnership body mandated to skill 150 of the 500 million people by 2022 and the National Skill Development Agency (NSDA), an autonomous body formed in 2013 to coordinate the government and the private sector initiatives to achieve the skilling the targets of the 12<sup>th</sup> plan and beyond has been subsumed under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship to give coherence to skill training efforts in the country. The figure below elucidates NSDC's target of producing skilled workers per sector over the next ten year (Source: NSDC).

Some of the other key initiatives of the government are as: (1) Establishment of new ITIs

in underserved regions and the existing ITIs being upgraded to centers of excellence to produce multi-skilled workforce of world standards. (2) Setting up more polytechnics in the PPP mode and 400 government polytechnics being upgraded. (3) Expansion of vocational education from 9,500 senior secondary schools to 20,000 schools; intake capacity to increase from 1 million to 2.5 million. (4) Establishment of 600 rural development and self employment training institutes (RUDSETI). (5) To set up a virtual skill development resource network linking 50,000 skill development centers (SDCs). (6) Skills training have been made more affordable by exempting vocational education institution from paying service tax.

### **Private Sector's Role in Skill Development**

Over the years, the private sector has increased its presence in the field of vocational education in India. Unemployment and underemployment are two of the most serious development problems currently being faced by the country. The equality vocational education and training courses for the learner can solve this problem. The private sector comes into play here with its ability to match better the demand for workforce by the industry with a supply of superior skilled manpower. The private sector can contribute to supplement infrastructure, facilities, technology and pedagogy. There are several roles that the private sector plays in this domain, namely, as a consumer of skilled manpower, as a non-profit facilitator of quality knowledge or as a for-profit enterprise providing education.

In the first role, the private sector would deeply benefit by training the available manpower with appropriate skills and then ultimately employ them. Corporate houses can train learners by diverse methods and in varied fields such as research and development, academic internships, on-job training, programs in line with the market demand and several collaborative programs. As a consumer, the private sector is educating learners with the right balance of academic skills, analytical skills, attitude and exposure. This approach ensures only industry demanded skills/expertise being imparted to develop a suitable talent pool. Many private sector players have also entered this space as a way of giving back to the society from which they otherwise gain immensely. These players have the requisite funds, expertise and infrastructure to invest in nine

constructing an appropriate platform for vocational education and training. Many industry experts or young business leaders interact with the learners via this mode to provide a unique training package.

Finally, the private sector may enter vocational education and training with a sole purpose of profit building. By constructing infrastructure facilities in terms of schools, training institutes and universities, such players provide education at a price. In a nation such as India where maximum emphasis is laid on education, there are immense opportunities and a vacant capacity to tap this sector.

### **Future Prospect for Skill Development in Higher Education**

India, as a whole, realizes the complete seriousness and importance of possessing a skilled workforce. As highlighted above, there are several programs and schemes initiated to address this issue. However, considering the rate at which the eligible working population of India is growing, these skilling initiatives would fall short by a severe amount. India is perceived to be emerging as a service-driven economy with quality human capital as its competitive advantage. For continuing this growth in the service sector and achieve competitive advantage in manufacturing, it is imperative that the human capital asset is developed further. The future prospects give birth to a serious concern of inadequate educational facilities of the nation.

Skilling has certainly seen a growing focus from government and other stakeholders and we hope it would have sustained attention from decision makers. While structurally the government has introduced a new Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, further clarity on its operational mandate and alignment with other ministries' skilling programmes is still awaited. With amaze of schemes and training initiatives at multiple ministries, it would be imperative for the new ministry to streamline government focus and ensure efficient implementation in the right areas with optimum fund utilization targets. With the recent announcement of it is and DGET being aligned with the new ministry, they would also need to revamp the existing massive infrastructure to make it industry relevant. Schemes like National Career Services Project by DGET and National Textile Policy tar getting to create 35 million jobs are encouraging steps where effective

implementation would be the key. NSDC would also need to get large training players backed by employers and industry to join the training industry as credibility and sustainable infrastructure 18 would be the key to meet its target of 150 million training by 2022. While by setting up 31 SSCs, they have laid the path for establishing training standards with employers at the fore front, ensuring financial sustainability of SSCs would be equally important.

Another key government initiative-'Aajevika', which is a flag ship initiative of MHRD, also needs to align itself with training standards and focus on outcome-driven funding. Right monitoring and striving for impact-based implementation is certainly required and we hope this is taken up sooner than later. With a trained workforce of 500 million, the nation is looking at creating a fine balance between quality and quantity, which would be vital to create a credible and sustainable reform. At an annual addition of 9.25 million per year approximately 37 million jobs are expected to be created from 2012-13 through 2016-17.

### **Conclusion**

To sum up, we need to recognize that the knowledge, skills and productivity of our growing young and dynamic workforce form the backbone of our economy. To reap the benefits of such a young workforce, we need to implement the reforms in the education system and also bring forth new factors of production, namely knowledge, skills and technology which have the ability to unleash the productive frontiers of the economy in the most efficient and dynamic way. Besides, taking a leaf from the western hemisphere, India should try to become "knowledge economy" to promote inclusive growth. The three major areas to be focused to ensure that our education system is sustainable and meets global standards: Quality of Education means in terms of infrastructure, teachers, accreditation, etc. Affordability of Education means ensuring poor and deserving students are not denied of education. Ethics in Education means avoiding over-commercialization of education system. It is time to bring in the changes that will give us the momentum to find a place in the global scenario. Government and public both should work hand-in-hand to support each other and look for the required upliftment of education. Change in the GER will not come in a

year, but it can be achieved by consistent persuasion. Using of state-of-the-art infrastructure allied with ICT and a developed curricula for industry-ready candidates seems to be the dream of the country and its people, but, the possibilities of such extent need to be channelized and it is make sure that everyone do get the opportunity to be a part of such system.

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(contd. from pg. 10)

Another example is of a college in Maharashtra where over a period of less than ten years the college planted one lakh trees and raised a whole forest in due course. Surely, if some of the trees were mango and tamarind variety, it could be permanent revenue for the institution.

Another college in a far flung tribal belt could admit only first generation learners with low previous performance at the entry level, but affectionately and diligently groomed them academically and with useful skills and has a record recruitment in government administrative workforce from these underprivileged, initially low performing intake! What can be a better example of distinctiveness than this?

Now, the question is: How to identify distinctiveness? Well, one needs to know one's institution thoroughly with its Vision, Mission, history, achievements, efforts put in, diligent documentation and a continuous SWOC. Additionally, the "perception" of the stakeholders about the institution (which NIRF also values) has to be understood. The best clues for identifying distinctiveness are scattered in the 7 Criteria of the Manual. Their SWOC analysis will help out. □

Distinctiveness strengthens and sustains the glamorous and glorious survival of the institution, giving it a matchless identity in a ruthlessly competitive ambience. It is said, nothing succeeds like success.

"Distinctiveness" is another name for sustained success!

It has been our effort to highlight some of the new ideas and practices that have entered our HEIs only after NAAC introduced them. This is a fundamentally useful quality initiative and contribution of NAAC to Indian higher education which needs to be acknowledged and appreciated.

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# Academic Counselling Models of Pre-COVID and COVID-19 Periods: A Study on Attendance and Retention of Students

Neerja Sood\*

Open distance learning means a mode of providing flexible learning opportunities to students by overcoming the physical separation of student and teacher using various media like print, audio-video, online and face-to-face interaction for specified period to provide teaching-learning experiences including practical activities to students. In this mode of learning, there is separation between student and teacher; with a few face-to-face contact sessions and this is the platform where they meet their peer group and teacher. To overcome the separation of student and teacher the self learning material is written in a way that teacher is in-built in the material. Self learning material means course content in print or non-print form which is self-explanatory and self-directed and enables the student to perform self-evaluation and acquire learning. Learner support centres provide academic and non-academic support to students and conduct academic theory and practical counselling sessions as per the need of the specific programme. especially in School of Health Sciences (SOHS), IGNOU programmes Counselling sessions are conducted by approved academic counsellors and they advise and guide learners, conduct tutorials, evaluate assignments and conduct practical sessions and practical examinations. But suddenly during COVID pandemic everything changed for students, teachers, colleges and universities. No face-to-face classes or practicals could be conducted as all institutions were closed for uncertain period. Teachers were also impacted with expectation by institution for providing online support to learners and working from home or with limited resources.

In distance education, group of students enrolled in programme are adult learners and are very heterogeneous; it is a challenge for academic counsellor to meet the learning needs of all the students and retain them till they complete the programme successfully. But during COVID-19 pandemic the challenge increased many fold to retain the students and help them to complete the programme. Therefore this study

was conducted to explore the ways to retain the students and motivate them to attend online contact sessions and further to assess its impact on the attendance and retention of students enrolled in two programmes (2 practical nursing administration courses one of each programme) i.e. Diploma in Nursing Administration and Post Basic B.Sc. Nursing. Students enrolled in these programmes are in-service nurses and practical contact sessions are compulsory to attend.

## Review of Literature

Mishra (2014), asserted that providing good student support is an issue of concern so that attrition rate can be reduced and students can complete the programme. As in distance learning, adult learners take admission and face variety of problems due to various factors; they take admission for advancement in their career while on job; they need support and guidance during academic counselling. Therefore, it is important to ensure that academic counselling needs of the distance learners are met. Kishore (2014), stated that heterogeneous group of distance learners prefer to attend contact sessions at study centre and academic counsellors have a crucial role in management of counselling sessions and to maintain quality. Aslam et al. (2009), highlighted in their study that distance education teachers should rethink of teaching strategies. Study also highlighted that through online it is possible to reach the unreached and there will be paradigm shift of teacher from repository of knowledge to facilitator of information for learner. Academic advising helps learners to achieve learning objectives and helps in retention of learners (Hester, 2008; Thompson, Orr, Thompson, & Grover, 2007).

UNESCO report (2020) highlighted that impact of COVID-19 pandemic was sudden and no higher education institution was ready with an emergency plan; rather they had to support students virtually/online. As there was no time for training and providing logistics, teachers faced the challenge to be creative and innovative and had to demonstrate adaptability and flexibility in design and implementation of courses.

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## Areas that Require Innovation

Researcher observed and received feedback from students and academic counsellors that during routine academic counselling, attendance of students was very less due to various reasons like few academic counsellors and students were not coming on time, students on duty were not able to get leave on the day of counselling; students were not motivated for self learning; few academic counsellors just clarifying doubts in case students ask or discuss the issues from the units which were not updated; very rarely lecturers taken on difficult aspects etc. And during evaluation of term end examination answer scripts it was observed that in selected courses pass percentage of students was very less. On the other hand, University is spending money for academic counselling for academic and student support that too needs to be justified. Therefore, it was important to increase the attendance and retention of students so that they can be motivated for self directed learning and complete the programme in minimum or maximum duration.

During COVID-19 pandemic when all institutions were closed and teachers were trying to reach out to the students through online to complete contact sessions especially the practical component; this challenge

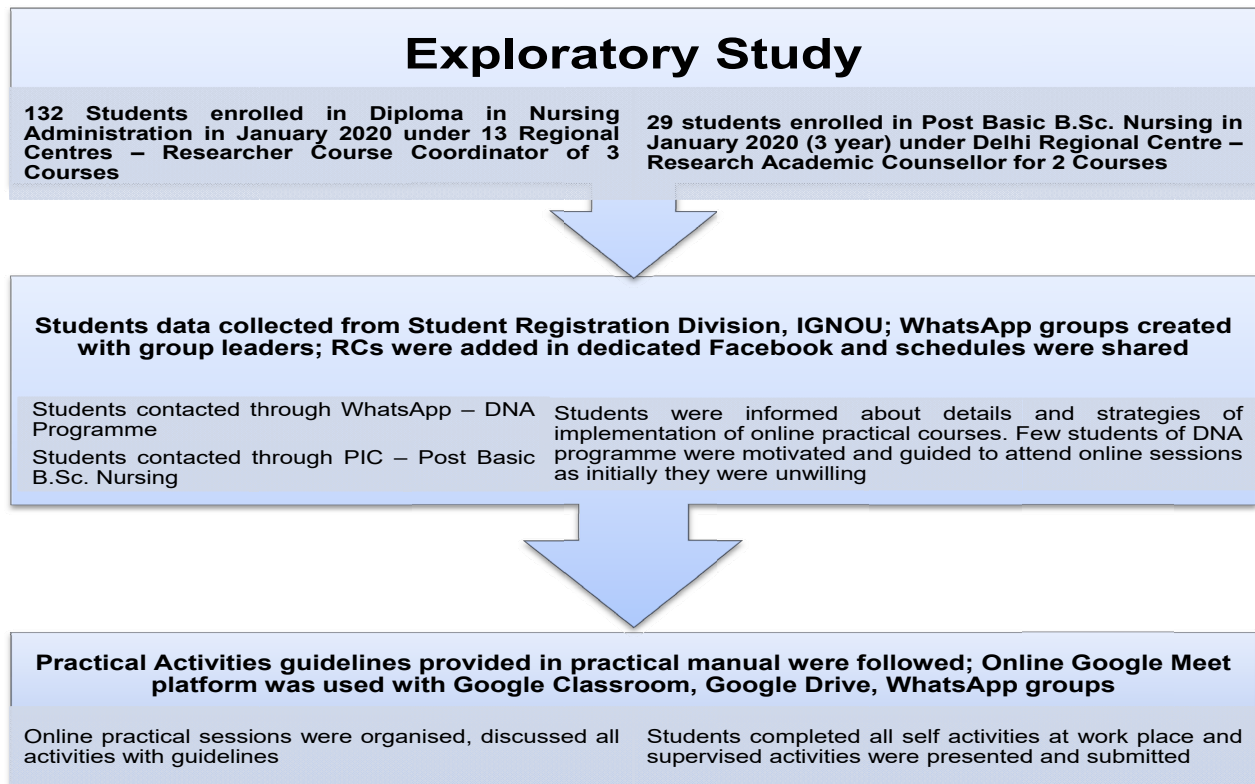
increased many folds as both teachers and students were not well versed with online teaching-learning platforms and tools for practical components.

The purpose of research work was to compare the academic counselling process for practical sessions during pre-COVID-19 and during COVID-19 lockdown period and process of motivating the students to attend compulsory academic counselling, and improve their retention for completion of the programme during difficult times in select nursing programmes of School of Health Sciences. The Research Questions for the study are:

### Research Questions

1. What is the process of routine pre-COVID and online academic counselling process during COVID-19 pandemic?
2. Is it possible to create a model for online practical contact sessions?
3. How to motivate students to attend academic counselling and motivate them to participate in self learning during pre and during COVID-19?
4. Is it feasible to improve retention of students to complete programme pre and during COVID-19 pandemic?

Figure 1: Research Methodology



## Innovations in Academic Counselling before COVID-19 and during COVID-19 Period

It is important to understand the routine academic counselling process at study centre and its issues/challenges. Specified hours of contact sessions as per norms were planned at study centre during weekends by Programme In-charge. Students were informed in advance so that they could plan their leave. Academic counsellor, i.e. subject specialist teachers, used to take sessions (Theory-1 session = 2 hours; Practical-1 session=4 hours). Emphasis was given on self-learning, answering questions, taking lecturers, assignment discussion, and during practical sessions demonstrations, re-demonstration, practice by students and at work place were carried out along with audio-video resources, Gyan Darshan and Gyan Vani sessions planned by IGNOU, HQ.

As observed by the researcher during visit to study centre and per the feedback from students and PIC/Academic Counsellors, it was found that in few colleges, facilities for teaching were not adequate; projector, internet and library facilities were not provided to academic counsellors and students; in few study centers rooms were not clean and basic facilities were also not adequate; few academic counsellors would just ask the students to clarify doubts and they did not try to find out difficult areas of study; in case material was not received by the

students, academic counsellors were not able to provide help; working students found it difficult to get leave, especially those working in private sector or who were on shift duties; teaching style of academic counsellors was mainly lecture method or answering queries; heterogeneity of learners, their backgrounds and needs were not taken into consideration. Students felt de-motivated and less interested in attending academic counselling due to the above factors; in few courses, performance of learners was not good as success rate in term end examination was low. On the other hand, University was spending money for academic counselling but attendance was less and few academic counsellors were not regular in taking sessions.

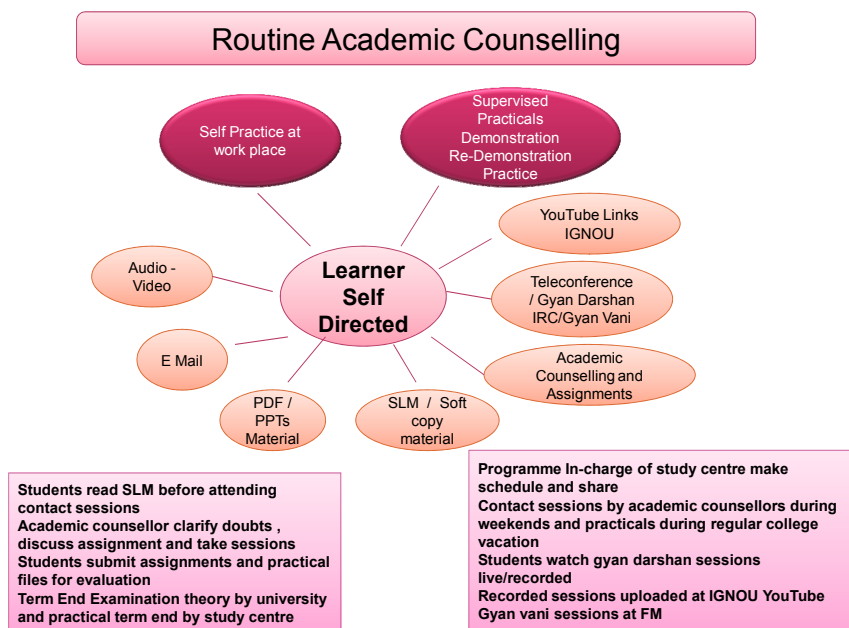
### Pre-COVID-19 Innovation in Academic Counselling

As per study by Sood N. (2020), during initial years (2008-2012) lecture-cum-discussion, presentation by students, audio-visual aids, reference material, power point presentations, teleconference and interactive radio counselling were used for teaching-learning activities. During 2013-2018 in addition to above, links were provided, videos shared on YouTube, additional material provided on difficult or new topics, discussion was done through e-mail, audio books were provided and educational visits were planned; during practical contact sessions, role plays and case scenarios were also added. Social media was used to reach out to the students

and student participated in group work, audio books were shared and case scenarios were discussed. Emphasis was given on background and level of students; heterogeneous group, difficult vs. easy content, known to unknown principle were taken into consideration. Teacher used various platforms and sources for teaching-learning and tried to motivate learners to participate in self-learning. This model helped to increase attendance of learners and retain them to complete programme.

Some of the issues and challenges were to motivate students to read in advance

Figure 2: Routine Model at Programme Study Centre



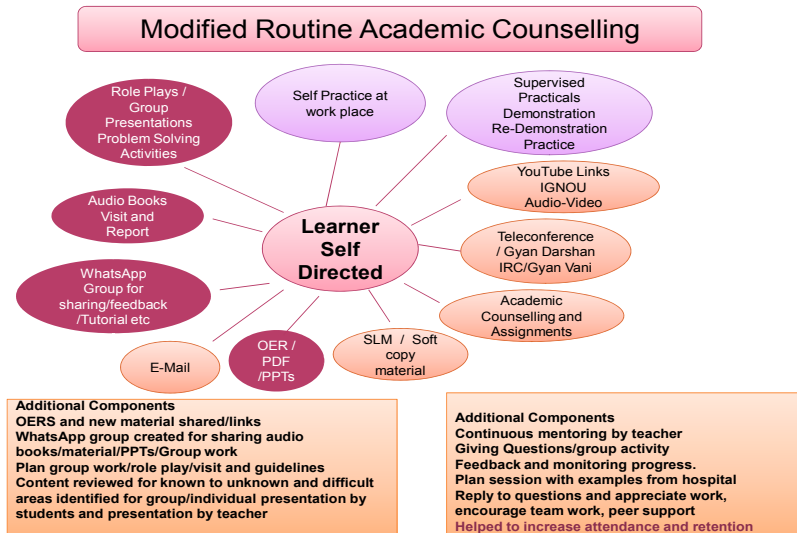


and to participate in group work, individual and group presentations. But after 2 or 3 contact sessions with peer support and encouragement they planned role play with interest and enjoyed the activities. Initially, first batch of students was reluctant for institutional visit for public health activities by State Health Mission but after explaining the purpose they agreed and took full day leave. After visit in feedback they mentioned that field visit was very useful and different method of learning. Subsequent batches had no issues as they received good feedback from previous year batch and willingly participated in all the activities, visit and attended all sessions.

### Innovation in Academic Counselling during COVID-19 Pandemic Period

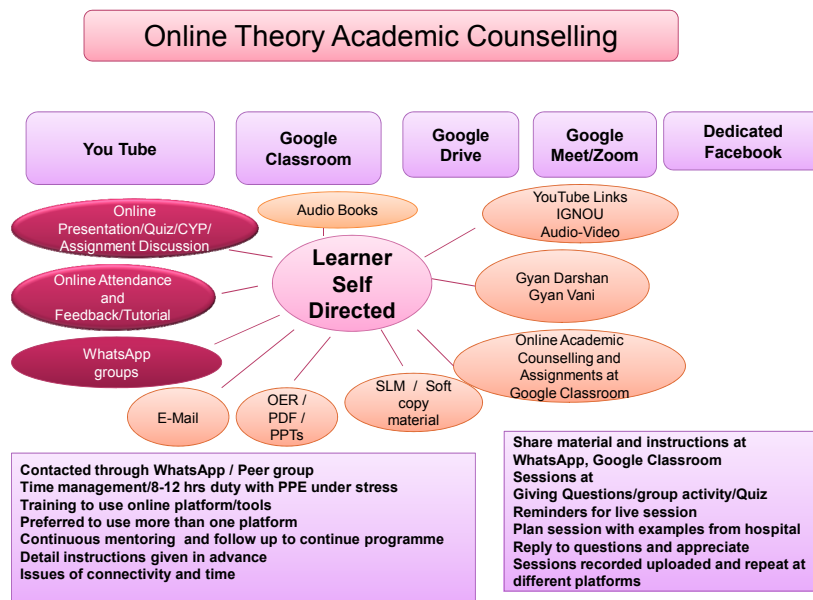
Study by Sood N. (2020), highlighted that online teaching-learning activities/contact sessions for nursing administration and community health nursing courses can be organised; various platforms and variety of tools can be used and students can mix match as per their convenience. Management/administration theory courses can be strengthened with case scenarios and examples from field so that students can easily relate with day-to-day work in

**Figure 3: Modified Model used during Pre-COVID-19 Period by the Researcher**



hospital. It is important to be creative, use innovative methods and encourage students to participate in sessions and group activities. Mentoring, guiding and follow up with students was very crucial. Students actively participated in online live sessions, and in case they missed any session due to duty, they watched the recorded videos and gave feedback on the same day; they participated in group discussions, group work, etc. and formative assessment questions were submitted in time. But on the other hand more time was required for planning, implementing and monitoring the activities by the teacher.

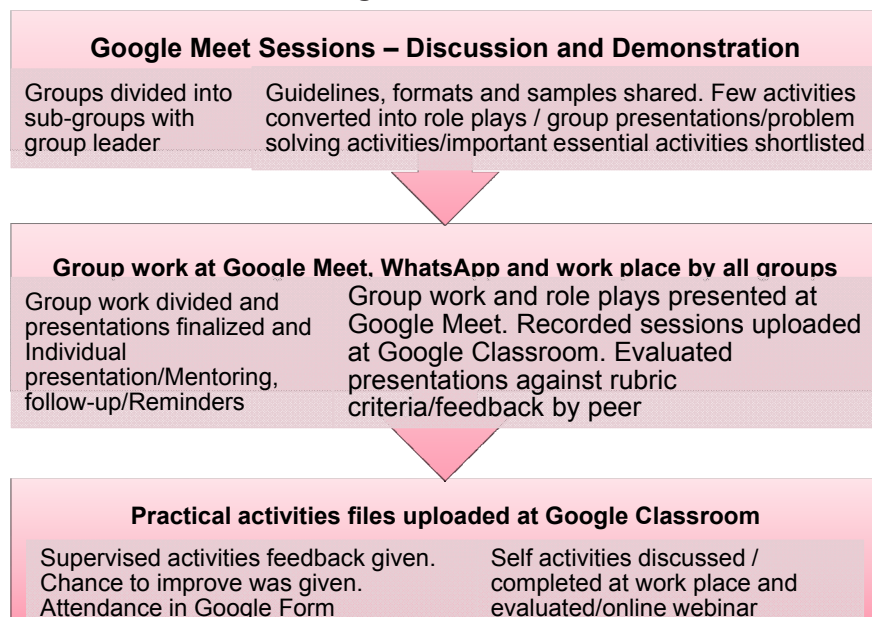
**Figure 4: Online Theory Contact Sessions Model during COVID-19 Pandemic**



### Model for Online Practical Contact Sessions During COVID-19 Pandemic

Nursing programmes of SOHS have practical components and specified hours of contact sessions were compulsory for the students to attend to complete pre-decided activities under the supervision of academic counsellor in hospital/community/college of nursing. During pre-COVID period all supervised practical activities were conducted face to face under supervision of academic counsellor and students were completing self activities in their own hospital.

**Figure 5: Online Practical Contact Sessions Methodology during COVID Pandemic**



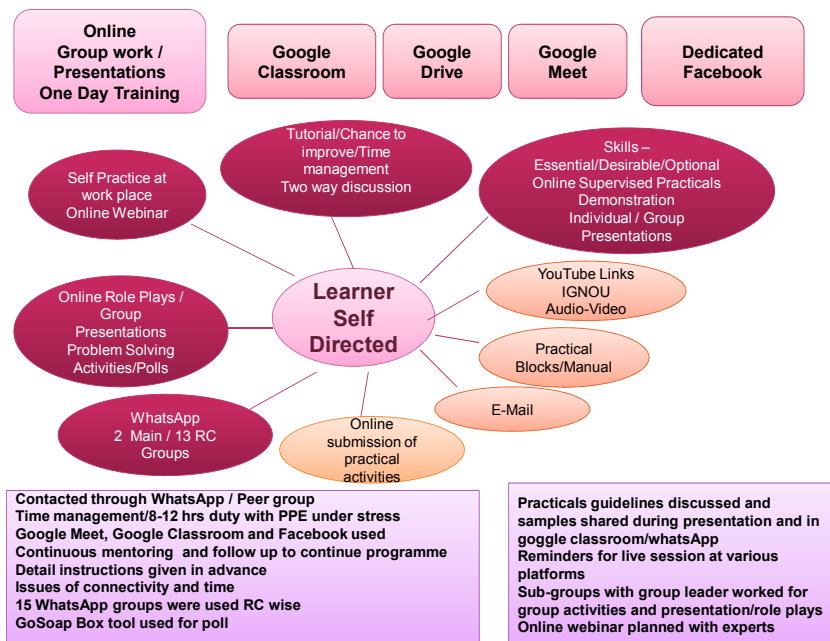
During COVID-19 self activities were conducted in their own hospitals but supervised activities of nursing administration courses were planned and conducted through online under supervision of academic counsellor. Model for theory counselling from Sood, N. (2020) study was adopted and modified for practical counselling and used to reach out to students during COVID-19 pandemic. Online platforms like Google Classroom, Google Meet, Facebook page and use of Google Drive for repository group and individual presentations, online role plays and online training by experts were used for online practical sessions.

Issues and challenges faced during COVID-19 pandemic were reach out to students through WhatsApp group and motivate them to learn and participate in practical activities, and to adjust timings with all the students as all were working in COVID-19 hospitals/quarantine centres for 12 hours and they were very anxious and apprehensive to find time for studies and participate

in activities. Situation was challenging but rigorous follow up with nursing administration programme students made it possible to reach out to 130 students out of 132 enrolled in January 2020 in 13 Regional Centres and 29 students of Post Basic B.Sc. Nursing students in Delhi study centre with the support of Programme In-charge. Accessibility to internet was another issue, especially in J&K and North-East States. Students were not well versed with online platforms i.e. Google Classroom, therefore, teaching them how to use was an additional activity. It took time to motivate and encourage students to participate in learning. Researcher

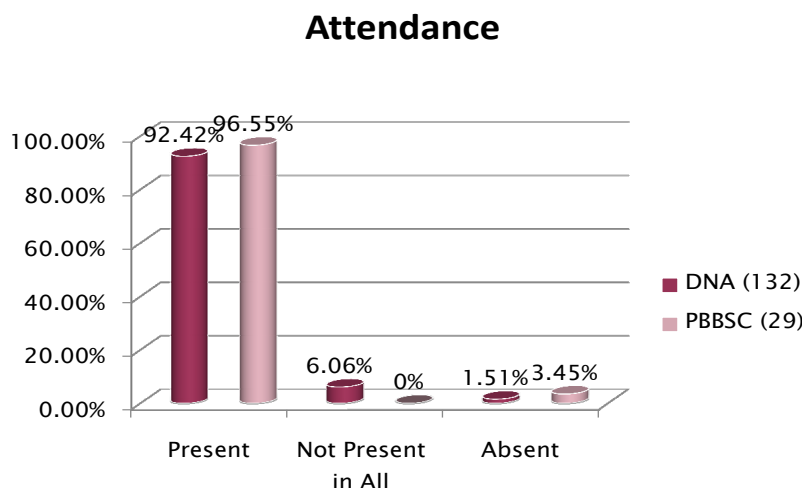
took the help of motivated students to encourage other students and followed up rigorously with all the students. Google form was used for maintaining attendance and feedback. 3 and 4. Motivation of students to attend academic counselling, participate in own learning and retention of students

**Figure 6: Online Practical Contact Sessions Model during COVID Pandemic**



Source: Adopted and modified model-Sood, N. (2020) Study

**Figure 7: Percentage of Students Attended Practical Online Sessions**



**Motivating Students to Attend Academic Counselling**

It was a challenge to motivate students to attend academic counselling and participate in own learning even during pre-COVID time and additional challenge was faced during COVID-19 pandemic period; as all institutions were closed and traditional academic counselling in College of Nursing was not feasible. After rigorous follow up and mentoring 92.42 percent DNA students and 96.55 percent PBBSCN students participated actively in online practical activities, 6.06 percent students dropped out due to personal reasons or long COVID-19 duty hours.

**Retention of Students**

Retention of students pre-COVID was also a challenge; as nursing students were in-service nurses they had to take permission/leave for contact sessions as attendance was compulsory. Students of previous batches expressed that many a times it was difficult for them to complete assignments/practicals or complete practicals or re-appear in theory/practical examination and complete programme due to leave issue or personal problems at home. Data available highlighted that nearly 73.04 percent students completed the programme between 2015-2019 as per data from the Student Evaluated Division of University.

During COVID-19 pandemic it was feasible to retain 92.42 percent students of DNA and 96.55 percent students of PBBBSN practical courses and they completed all the self and supervised activities; these activities were uploaded at Google Classroom and were evaluated.

This study highlighted that it is feasible to motivate and retain students in programmes even with online teaching-learning activities.

Innovation can be replicated for various health / nursing / hospital management practical courses and other courses where direct patient care skills are not part of curriculum. It will also help to ensure quality assurance and student satisfaction can be increased.

**Conclusion**

This study also highlighted that if teacher and students participate together in teaching-learning activities and teacher rigorously mentors the students, the retention and completion rates can be enhanced in either of the modes, i.e. offline, blended or online. Tutorial sessions can be integrated. Study has given vision about skill needs of the students to learn for day to day functioning/practice in health institution/hospital and strategies to motivate them. Many regular College

**Figure 8: Percentage of Students Completed Self and Supervised Practical Activities**

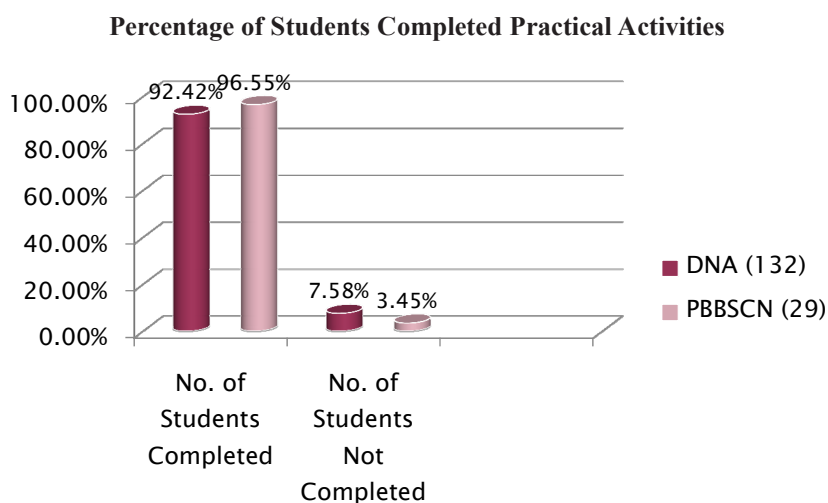
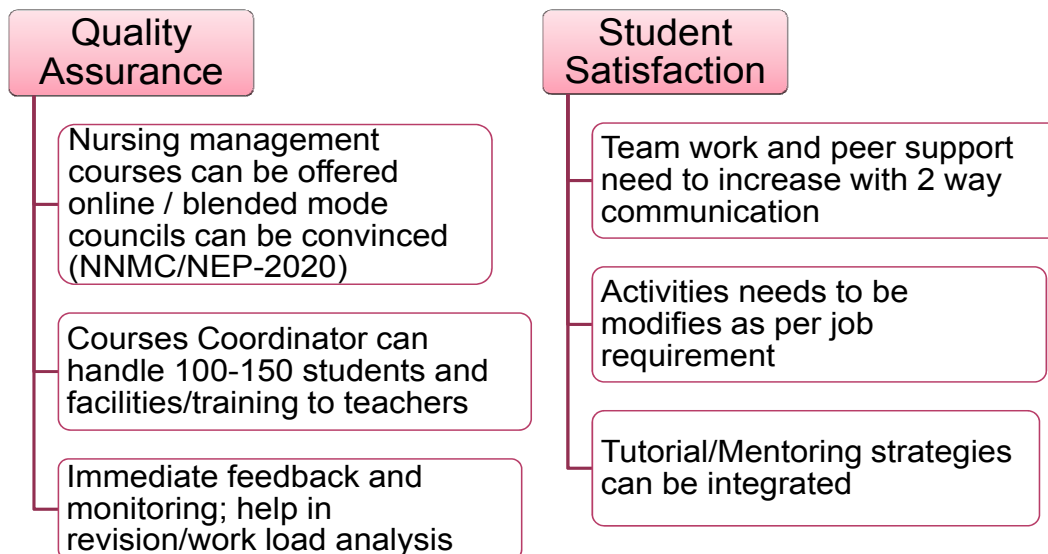


Figure 9: Future Prospects of Innovation



of Nursing approached for sharing experiences as they were also facing similar issues and their students attended / watched sessions organised for IGNOU students. IGNOU can design models for professional education and collaborate with councils.

### Acknowledgement

The author thank Dr. Harinder Goyal, Programme In-charge of Delhi Study Centre of IGNOU for giving permission and all the DNA 2018 and 2020, and Post Basic B.Sc. Nursing students from 2018 to 2020 for giving feedback and reactions. The author is also thankful to Ms. Sukrithi Sood for her editing.

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# Investing in Yourself is the Only Way to Succeed

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**Kumar Mangalam Birla, Chairperson, Board of Governors, IIMA delivered the Convocation Address virtually at the 56<sup>th</sup> Annual Convocation of Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad, Gujarat on 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2021. He said, "You must ask yourself just one question. Did I make a difference? It doesn't matter whether you are a marketer or a consultant, an entrepreneur or a techie. Have you advanced progress in your field and added to the cumulative repository of knowledge and wisdom? If the answer is yes. Then you have done justice to the education you have received and lived up to the rich legacy of this iconic institution. You have enhanced your life with education; now enrich it with meaning, purpose, and the thrill of being part of a shared endeavour. The quest for which commences today." Excerpts**

**The Convocation Address collected from the Website of IIMA is being published for wider dissemination in academia.**

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When Bob Dylan penned the iconic song 'Times they are a change in', which became an anthem for change across generations, I don't think he would have remotely imagined the world that we are living in today. In the last 12 months, we have witnessed and embraced change of an unprecedented magnitude. While we have all been robbed off the energy and intimacy of doing this convocation ceremony at the Louis Kahn Plaza, like every year, I am sure all of your digital avatars aren't complaining. As political scientist Ivan Krastev put it, "It might be only for this weird moment in history, but we cannot deny that we are currently experiencing what it feels like to live in one world."

Hidden behind the stories of loss and valour; agony and awe; ruin and revival; is the power of the human spirit. A collective spirit that has enabled us to wrestle with this pandemic for over a year now. A spirit that has been tested, again and again. But a spirit that will triumph, no matter what.

The class of 2021 will be like no other before it. The young people of the World War 2 generation were witness to the massive increases in industrial productivity that came with ramping up automobile, aerospace, and other production to meet the needs of the war years and the demand boom that came post that. Classes graduating in the dotcom bubble years of 2000-01 took away lessons about the husbanding of capital and the need to build more sustainable businesses that transformed what it meant to be an internet company. This pandemic has again stimulated innovation as a broad swathe

of companies and consumers have embraced 'digitization'. In the 4 months of 2021, the startup ecosystem in India added over 10 new unicorns whose mix represents everything from interest in financial services to business enablers and our need for human connectivity.

This class is in a unique position. Having had the ability to take a student's dispassionate look at a world in turmoil, you are now stepping into it, to leave your mark as a young leader whose intellectual appreciation of business problems is balanced by a compassionate understanding of the people involved.

The convocation ceremony today marks the culmination of a glorious chapter in your life. This glorious chapter has been defined by three hallmark traits, that I assume are common to all of you - strong academic record, all-round skills that go beyond the classroom, and of course the great hunger to succeed. I call this the trinity of records, skills, and attitude.

Congratulations on successfully completing Chapter 1 of what is going to be the book of your career. Getting to IIMA, completing your course, and finding a marquee job, which is a springboard to new horizons and new opportunities.

Today also marks the beginning of an entirely different chapter in your life. Chapter 2. Success in this leg of your career is entirely predicated on the investments you make, the risks you take, and the learnings you garner over the next 10 years.

Today is perhaps a good day to pause and consider what could be that X factor which will make the difference between just ‘coasting along’ and ‘taking off exponentially’ in your life and career. Let me share my thoughts on what could make that difference.

First and foremost, define your North Star: The pandemic and the last 12 months have again shone a spotlight on not just the role of governments but of societies, companies, and individuals in creating better outcomes for all of us. This is a period of short forecast horizons and amplified ups and downs. And therefore, a more important time than ever to define your principles and set your heading. Where do you fit in, and what do you want to be known for? Now is a good time to mull over and define the answer. Second, Experiment in your 20s: While your North Star is clearly in your sights, in the short term, the 20s should be the discovery phase of your next chapter. As a wise businessman once said, “Risk taking is inherently failure-prone, otherwise it would be called sure-thing-taking.” I feel that too many management graduates enter the corporate world with a ‘this is what I want to do’ attitude. When I say experiment, I don’t necessarily mean start your own business or company. Rather, Work in a factory, work in a different country, work in diverse sectors, work across unfamiliar functions. The opportunity cost of experimenting rises sharply as you grow in your career. So, start early and experiment. Be impulsive. But temper your impulsiveness with creativity and positivity. Be thoughtful of what you want to focus on and what is the common thread that strings together your experiments and experiences. Which brings me to my next connected point.

Third, Build your personal flywheel: It was legendary artist Vincent Van Gogh who had remarked that “Great things do not just happen by impulse but are a succession of small things linked together.”

Your personal flywheel is nothing but your own set of cumulating personal experiences. Think about experiences as units of learning. The more units you can accumulate in a year the more valuable you become. The sooner you start accumulating, the more you accumulate as you go along, as the

power of compounding kicks in. Remember, your ability to learn is elastic by nature.

Units of learning should guide your career choices. If you are ever wrestling with a career choice, the defining factor should be the units of learning. Always, make a choice that accelerates your own learning curve and improves your understanding of the world. Let me illustrate this point on building a flywheel and experimenting, using the example of an unconventional entrepreneur. At the age of 20, he opened the first record shop and turned a millionaire in 3 years. He went from running a small record shop to starting up a record label to launching music megastores. In his early 30s, when a flight he was set to board got cancelled, he hired a plane, sold tickets, and filled it up with fellow stranded passengers. This experience set in motion the idea for his successful airline business. Aviation was the fount on which his current conglomerate is built, spanning diverse sectors from travel, transport, entertainment, media, and telecoms. His name is Richard Branson. He was always restlessly entrepreneurial, something that you too can be, even within the boundaries of an organization. Remember, you don’t have to be a start-up entrepreneur to turbo charge your flywheel.

And finally, add emotion to IQ: I know all of you have burnt the midnight oil over the last 2 years solving complicated business problems. The reality is that you can’t build businesses with spreadsheets. The most detailed business plans this year unraveled in the face of factory workers falling sick. Supply chains came unstuck as the migrant labour silently powering them retreated to their communities. Therefore, don’t get unidimensional in the way you think. You need to add other dimensions to your thinking, most importantly, of empathy and humility. I don’t see IQ and EQ as binary qualities, but rather as complementary traits that make a personality wholesome.

The irony, perhaps, is that even AI is now starting to hold up a mirror to ourselves. Microsoft’s Socio chatbot- Xiaoice boasts of having both IQ and EQ. It has social skills and understanding of human emotions. It writes music, sings, paints, and has a fine arts degree. Xiaoice has had a 29-hour conversation with a human being! In total it has

had over 30 billion conversations with 100 million friends. Just pause and think about it, a chatbot is learning social and cognitive skills to build EQ.

The times they are a changin!

To summarize, what I have said is – have clarity on your North Star, but then be adventurous and experiment, use these experiences to build your flywheel and compliment your IQ with EQ.

A decade down the line, you will be confronted with a question: How do you measure this journey that kicked off through this virtual convocation ceremony? The Chapter 2 that I referred to. What benchmarks should you hold yourself accountable to? Is it the pace of promotions? The salary you draw? The designation you hold? The companies you float?

I think it's a simple answer.

You must ask yourself just one question. Did I make a difference? It doesn't matter whether you are a marketer or a consultant, an entrepreneur or a techie. Have you advanced progress in your field and added to the cumulative repository of knowledge and wisdom? If the answer is yes. Then you have done justice to the education you have received and lived up to the rich legacy of this iconic institution.

IIM-A isn't just a B-school. It's more than just an institution or a badge of honour. It is now a permanent part of you. You have enhanced your life with education; now enrich it with meaning, purpose, and the thrill of being part of a shared endeavour. The quest for which commences today. □

### **Prof Aditya Shastri Passes Away**

**Prof. Aditya Shastri** (1963--2021), Vice Chancellor, Banasthali Vidyapith and Member, Governing Council, Association of Indian Universities passed away due to COVID-19 related complications on May 24, 2021. He served for one year at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) and moved to Banasthali Vidyapith where he has remained till his last breath.

He pursued his graduation from Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani and went to the USA for Masters from the State University of New York, Stony Brook. He completed his PhD from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1990.

Prof. Aditya Shastri is a man of immense vision and acuity. He is the key force behind evolution of Banasthali Vidyapith into the largest university for women with NAAC A++ and high international repute. Serving as both Chief Executive Officer and Chief Academic Officer of the University, Prof. Shastri personifies the modern outlook of an educator and inspirational leadership qualities of an administrator.

His demise is great loss not only for his family and his university but also for Higher Education System of the country.

The AIU Fraternity received the news of Prof Aditya Shastri's passing away with great desolation and pays tribute to him.

### **International Summit on Quality Concerns in Educational Research**

A two-day International Summit on ‘Quality Concerns in Educational Research’ was organised by the Department of Education, Annamalai University, Annamalainagar, Tamil Nadu in collaboration with Indian association for Educational Research (AIAER) and International Forum of Researchers in Education (IFORE) through online mode. The summit was a lecture series on various quality aspects of educational research by eminent speakers. Prof R Babu, Head, Department of Education was the Director of the international summit. There were around 410 participants from all over India joined through Zoom meeting and around 650 participants were watching through You tube.

Prof P V Shelvam, Dean Faculty of Education welcomed the gathering for the international summit and it was inaugurated by the Hon’ble Vice chancellor, Prof. V Murugesan. In his inaugural address, he emphasised on the need for quality in educational research and how this will contribute in decision making and in framing policies. Prof. R Gnanadevan, Registrar i/c in his special address, appreciated the efforts taken by the Department of Education in this regard and said that this topic is the need of the hour, because quality research will give quality output.

Prof. Sunil Behari Mohanthy President AIAER offered felicitations and is followed by lecture series. There were 4 lecture series on first day.

Prof Stephen Mckinney, Leader of Pedagogy, Praxis and Faith School of Education, University of Glasgow, Scotland UK spoke on ‘Research in Education’ and in his lecture he highlighted as to how research ideas originate, and explained the various processes of research like how to select a topic, aims of research, implementation, dissemination and its impact on Government. Six key principles of responsible research, education research during COVID-19 and post COVID-19 were discussed. The speaker was introduced by Prof PN Natraj (Retired) and he served as the moderator for the session. Interactions and discussions related to the topic made the lecture lively and the participants were highly benefitted.

The second lecture was delivered by Prof. P Ravichandran, Dean, Centre for Postgraduate Studies, Malaysia on ‘Building Quality Literature Reviews for Educational Research and in his

Lecture, he pointed out the need for literature review, explained how to write effective view and the various tools and techniques in searching reviews. The questions were raised by the participants regarding the number of reviews required which was well explained by the expert. This session was highly useful to the young researchers who participated in the summit.

Prof R G Kothari, Former Vice Chancellor, Veer Narmad South Gujarat University, Surat, Gujarat on ‘Errors Committed in Research’. He threw light on the various errors committed by the researcher like selecting the sample size, using of tools, quoting references, difference between significance and importance of the study, method and methodology. Lots of reference books on research methodology were suggested by the speaker. The session was highly useful for the participants and his rich experience was revealed by the content of his lecture, The speaker was introduced by Dr. T Manickavasagam, Associate Professor, Department of Education and he served as the moderator for the session. Many questions were raised by the participants and were suitably answered by the speaker.

Prof Ram Ganesh, Bharathidasan University, Trichy on ‘How to Publish in High Profile Journals’. In his talk, he spoke about the various metrics like impact factor, h index of the journals, the expectations of the reader and the points that author should consider before writing an article, created awareness about publishers like Elsevier, web of science, research gate, etc., the format of the article to be followed with proper citations using various style manuals like APA, ALA, etc. The session was very informative and may help the scholars in publishing their article in high profile journals.

During next Lecture Series, Prof R Babu, Director, International Summit and Head, Department of Education, Annamalai University delivered the lecture on ‘Education Researches in India–A Prelude’.



He emphasized on the point that research must be honest and highly objective one and he focussed mainly on all the essential aspects such as Swami Vivekananda and Socrates views on Education, MB Buch Survey of Educational Research, areas of research in Education, researches conducted in the Department of Education, Annamalai University, recent areas of research and greatness of Indian researches, He also highlighted the role of budding researchers in doing research on current issues of education. Lots of deliberations were there after the lecture and it was quite interesting.

Prof Balakrishnan Muniandy, Head, Centre for Research and Innovation and Professor of Educational Technology, Wawasan Open University, Malaysia spoke on 'Addressing Quality Concerns in Educational Research'. The significant contribution of his lecture was that it will help the researchers to identify the areas of research and what are the factors that influence educational research. A-Z of learning was well dealt with. He mentioned 10 points that concerns with quality research. The session was highly informative and were beneficial to the participants.

Prof Rekha Koul, Dean, International, Faculty of Humanities, School of Education, Curtin University, Australia on 'Paradigms and Quality Standards in Educational Research'. In her lecture, she highlighted the various paradigms in research, how the students emotions should be taken care of (personal approach) was dealt in a nice and interesting way. Emotional response to COVID-19, during and after lockdown was explained stage by stage. The lecture was informative, it touched upon the current issue of research and was well received by the participants. The speaker was introduced by Dr. K Praveena, Associate Prof, Department of Education and served as the moderator for this session.

Prof Sandra and Prof Mary Ann, Middle Tennessee University, USA jointly delivered lecture on 'Developing Sustainable Online Instructional Modules for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In their lecture, they have clearly explained the higher education digital capacity frameworks, factors that shape the face of Education in 2030 was well dealt with. The graphical presentation of the various aspects of digitalisation of Higher Education in countries like US, China, India and Canada was statistically recorded. All the questions were answered by the speakers.

During Valedictory Function, Prof S Kabilan, Former Dean, Faculty of Science delivered the valedictory address and highlighted the significance of quality research in education and explained its need. Prof R Babu welcomed the gathering and Coordinator, Prof. V Ambedkar proposed the Vote of Thanks.

### **Online International Faculty Development Programme**

A five-day Online International Faculty Development Programme on 'Community Service and Sustainable Society' is being organized by the Institute of Management Studies and Research, Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak during October 05-09, 2021. The event is sponsored by AICTE Training and Learning (ATAL) Academy, New Delhi. The faculty members of AICTE approved institutions, universities, research scholars, PG Scholars, participants from Government, Industry (Bureaucrats/Technicians/Participants from Industry etc.)/School Teachers and staff of host institutions may participate in the programme.

The community service is the process of assisting ordinary people to improve their own communities by undertaking collective action. It involves unpaid work performed by a person or group of people for the benefit and betterment of their community without any form of compensation. Community service helps people to become active promoters of more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure, and sustainable societies. The main benefit of community service is the creation of a welcoming and inclusive community. Many people participate in community service because they enjoy helping others and improving their community. The community services have become more important in post-COVID-19 era. Community service is a critical component of holistic education as well as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The pedagogy of this programme includes delivering online lectures by subject experts and conducting an online live mediation session. The Subthemes of the event are:

- Community Service.
- Community Service Quality and Management.
- Community Service System Development.
- Resilient and Sustainable Society.
- Community Services and Inclusive Community.

- Community Service Value.
- Corporate Social Responsibility.
- Meditation.
- Human Values and Ethics.
- Community Health Services.
- Community Services and SDGs.
- Health and Happiness.
- Social Outreach.
- Community Services in the Post-COVID-19 Era.

For further details, contact Coordinator, Prof. Ramphul Ohlan, Associate Professor, Institute of Management Studies and Research, Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak-124001 (Haryana), Mobile: +91-9812804349, E-mail: [ramphul.ramphul@gmail.com](mailto:ramphul.ramphul@gmail.com). For updates, log on to: [www.mdu.ac.in](http://www.mdu.ac.in)

### **Short Term Course on Numerical Methods in Engineering**

A four-day Short Term Course on ‘Numerical Methods in Engineering: Advances and Applications’ is being organised by the Department of Mechanical

Engineering, Indian Institute of Technology Ropar, Punjab during July 05-08, 2021. The professionals working in the area of fracture/failure mechanics, computational mechanics, structural integrity, etc. may participate in the Course. The aim of the course is to acquaint the participants with the mechanics and recent advancements in computational mechanics through lectures covering both fundamentals and applications. The Course Contents are:

- Fundamentals of Fracture and Damage Mechanics.
- Introduction to Finite Element Method.
- Advanced Numerical Methods i.e. XFEM/ Meshfree Methods for Engineering Problems.
- Fracture Modelling of Brittle, Quasi-brittle, Ductile and Composite Materials, Bones. etc.

For further details, contact Convener, Dr. Sachin Kumar, Assistant Professor, Indian Institute of Technology Ropar-140001, Punjab, E-mail: [sachin@iitrpr.ac.in](mailto:sachin@iitrpr.ac.in), [akin2021numericalmethods@gmail.com](mailto:akin2021numericalmethods@gmail.com). For updates, log on to: [www.iitrpr.ac.in](http://www.iitrpr.ac.in).

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## ***AIU NEWS***

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### **Anveshan: Student Research Convention: 2020**

A two-day National Level Online *Anveshan*: Student Research Convention: 2020, one of the most important and pioneering activities of Association of Indian Universities, New Delhi was organised in collaboration with Rajiv Gandhi Pradyogiki Vishwavidyalaya (RGPV), Bhopal during December 15-16, 2020. The National level event is widely appreciated across the country for providing an innovative platform for Researchers in general and generating enthusiasm among the upcoming young researchers in particular.

The domains in which Projects (both Individual and Group Projects) were invited are Agriculture, Basic Sciences, Engineering & Technology, Health Sciences, and Social Sciences, Humanities, Commerce, and Law. From each field, 3 projects were already selected from each Zone i.e. East, West, North, South and Central. Each field encompassed 15 projects, thus a total of 75 projects were selected.

Approval of research projects are totally Institutional and particularly bonafide full-time students from Undergraduate to Doctoral Degree level, who are under 30 years of age, were eligible to take part in the convention.

The convention was inaugurated by Dr. Anil Shastrabuddhe, AICTE Chairman, Prof. Sunil Kumar, Vice Chancellor, RGPV University, Dr (Mrs) Pankaj Mittal, Secretary General of the Association of Indian Universities, Dr Amarendra Pani, Joint Director and Head Research, Association of Indian Universities, Dr Usha Rai Negi, Assistant Director, (Research) Association of Indian Universities, Zonal Coordinators of each five zones, Dr Sunil Patil Director, Department of Students’ Development, University of Mumbai, Dr Rajat Ray Dean of Students Jadavpur University, Dr S N Sridhara, Professor and Director, Amity School of Engineering and Technology, Amity University Haryana, Dr S Muthusamy Director, Research, Bharathidasan University, Palkalaiperur

Tiruchirappalli, Prof Vinay Joshi Director, Research, Jagran Lakecity University Bhopal, officials of RGPV and students were present during the event.

Prof Sunil Kumar Gupta, Vice Chancellor of Rajiv Gandhi Prodyogiki Vishwavidhalaya, Bhopal warmly welcomed one and all present there, virtually. He congratulated the students to be the part of the esteemed event *Anveshan-2020*. During his address, he shared with the audience that RGPV has always stood for the finest education and propitious prospect of its students. The Courses and Programmes offered by RGPV make sure that the students are flexible with the variations in response to the new requirements.

Dr Amarendra Pani, Joint Director and Head Research Association of Indian Universities (AIU), New Delhi explained the background of *Anveshan*. He gave a brief background on the history of AIU explaining how it was established *primarily* to promote coordination and connectivity between the universities and recognize interuniversity degrees. The Research Division of AIU as part of capacity building activities regularly organizes various seminars and conferences for strengthening Indian higher education.

Dr (Mrs) Pankaj Mittal, Secretary General of the Association of Indian Universities had filled all the gathering with energy and enthusiasm by her words. She told the students that The only way to discover the limits of the possible is to go beyond them into the impossible.

The Chief Guest of inaugural session and AICTE Chairman, Dr Anil Shastrabuddhe conveyed the message that Research and Innovation are the solutions of the present and the building blocks for the future. He told students that they let you transcend unknown dimensions, push boundaries of the mind and challenge human capabilities. Research and innovation are what drives the human race forward and thus motivated them to be an innovator and to think out of box.

The Inaugural Session was followed by parallel online power point presentation with Question-Answer for each category. Assessment of the projects was done by a panel of experts drawn from various disciplines on various criteria i.e. Scientific Thoughts and Principles (20%), Creativity (20%), Thoroughness (10%), Skill (10%), Relevance (20%), Cost Effectiveness (10%) and Teamwork (10%). In the various categories Agriculture:14 out of 15,

Basic & Applied Science:14 out of 15, Engineering & Technology:14 out of 15 , Social Science:13 out 15 & in Health Science:15 out of 15 projects were presented by participants.

On the Second day of the event, final online oral power point presentation session for gold medal was followed by a splendid Valedictory Function. The Chief Guest of the function was Prof DP Singh, Chairman, University Grants Commission, New Delhi. He said that research and innovation are key factors in bringing transformatory changes and revolutionizing the higher education sector of the country. The need of the hour is that the universities should ensure that campuses evolve into hubs of innovations. Prof. Singh said that the seed of change has already been implanted with the announcement of new National Education Policy NEP-2020 which is an attempt to develop India as a powerhouse of knowledge and excellence. NEP-2020 envisions a comprehensive approach to transforming the quality and quantity of research in India. Further, higher education institutions will focus on research and innovation by setting up start-up incubation centres, technology development centres, centres in frontal areas of research, greater industry academic linkages and interdisciplinary research, including humanities and social sciences research. Establishment of National Research Foundation (NRF) is also proposed under this New National Education Policy for catalysing quality research while funding outstanding peer reboot research and to actively see this research in universities and colleges. We, at UGC and also at Ministry of Education Govt. of India are very conscious of the diverse issues and challenges of expansion and quality, and keeping this in mind, we have come out with a quality mended under which a number of initiatives have been taken including promoting socially relevant, relationally important and globally significant resources. He continued, Friends and my dear students, India have a glorious history and a great legacy in terms of providing many renowned researchers to the world. On this platform, I would appeal to you all for preserving, enriching and carrying forward this legacy. You have a responsibility to stand up to motivate others by setting higher goals for yourself. Every single discovery and every single innovation began with a spark in a curious mind. Let not the spirit of curiosity in you be swayed up by other distractions. Let your mind be a workshop of ideas. The nation needs you and relies on you. He closed with the words, "I once again congratulate Association of Indian Universities and Rajiv Gandhi

Proudyogiki Vishwavidyalaya for organising such a relevant and noteworthy research convention. This spark of innovation is going to enlighten the park of students and ultimately bring glory and accomplishment to our nation. I urge all students and researchers to pursue quality and innovative research with academic integrity for India to become a global leader. My heartfelt congratulations to all the winners and participating students, wish you all the very best in your future endeavours.”

During the function, Vice Chancellor, Professor Sunil Kumar and Secretary General, Dr (Mrs) Pankaj Mittal, Chairman, AICTE, Dr. Anil Shastrabuddheshared their valuable knowledge with the participants and motivated them. During the open feedback session, the participants and zonal coordinators were invited to share their experiences of the event. The appreciated the entire event planning.

Dr Shikha Agrawal, Coordinator, *Anveshan* from RGPV declared the winners of the National Level Convention and Prof. S K Mukherjee Gold Medal. First prize was of Rs 75,000 and Rs 50,000 and Rs 25,000 were for those who secured second and third positions, respectively in each category. Along with this, the best project across all 5 above-mentioned fields was awarded Prof. S K Mukherjee Gold Medal instituted by Association of Indian Universities, New Delhi in the memory of its former President, Late Prof. S K Mukherjee. In the concluding address, Dr Amarendra Pani appreciated all the team members of the Organizing Committee of RGPV and Dr Usha Rai Negi for successfully organizing *Anveshan*. He expressed his sincere thanks to all the people who directly or indirectly supported in making the event a huge success. The Category-wise details of the winners of *Anveshan: Student Research Convention:2020* is given below:

### Social Science

S. No	Position	Name of the Project	Student Name & University	Project Type
1.	1 <sup>st</sup>	RAGE: A Model to Manage Road Rage Incidents in India	<b>Shailesh Jaiswal and Hardik Singh Ahuja</b> Amity University Haryana, Gurugram	Group
2.	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Hurry-Cane: See the world through My Eyes!!!	<b>Debangee Das, HritMukherjee, and Rajanya Dasgupta</b> Jadavpur University, Jadavpur, Kolkata, West Bengal	Group
3.	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Role of Dial Hundred in Emergency Situations and Crime Migration	<b>Abhinav Saxena, Maitreyi Mittal, and Fatima Rauf</b> Jagran Lakecity University, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh	Group

### Agriculture

S. No	Position	Name of the Project	Student Name and University	Project Type
1.	1 <sup>st</sup>	Increase in Production by using Multi Agro Mechanism	<b>Vikrant Sunder Pal, Pankaj Patil, and Kunal Pawar</b> University of Mumbai, Maharashtra	Group
2.	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Ecofriendly and Cost Effective Production of Phytase Producing Bionoculant and its Efficiency in Field	<b>SupriyaPrakash Kusale</b> Shivaji University, Kolhapur, Maharashtra	Individual
3.	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Development of Amylose Sensor for Assessing Ageing of Rice	<b>Shrinivas Deshpande</b> University of Agricultural Sciences, Raichur, Karnataka	Individual

### Health Sciences and Allied Field

S. No	Position	Name of the Project	Student Name and University	Project Type
1.	1 <sup>st</sup>	Electrochemical Sensor for Quick Non-invasive Diagnosis of Kidney and Liver Diseases	<b>Anitta S, Meenakshi S,</b> Alagappa University, Alagappa, Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu	Group
2.	2 <sup>nd</sup>	An Innovative and Affordable Device to Reduce Orthodontic Treatment Time	<b>Varun Mehra</b> Swami Vivekanand Subharti University, Meerut, Uttar Pradesh	Individual
3.	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Spherofast: The Game Changer in Pellet Manufacturing	<b>Anish Ketan Panwalkar and Ashutosh Mahamuni</b> Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune, Maharashtra	Group

### Basic Science

S. No	Position	Name of the Project	Student Name and University	Project Type
1.	1 <sup>st</sup>	Full Face Foldable Safety Helmet	<b>Sanket Sadashiv Kumbhar</b> Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Technological University, Lonere, Maharashtra	Individual
2.	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Flourescence Turn-on and Ratiometric Sensor for ATP in Aqueous Solution	<b>Vidya Rani Singh</b> Pt Ravi Shankar University, Raipur, Madhya Pradesh	Individual
3.	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Automatic Gas Leakage Safety Regulator	<b>Abhinandan Sanjay Khole</b> Sant Gadge Baba Amravati University, Amravati, Maharashtra	Individual

### Engineering and Technology

S. No	Position	Name of the Project	Student Name and University	Project Type
1.	1 <sup>st</sup>	Automated Railway Crossing with Auto Train Speed Control and Live Tracking	<b>Anurag Ramrao Lambor and Gaurav Santosh Dudhe</b> Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune, Maharashtra	Group
2.	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Low-cost Integrated Hydrogen Generation Fuel Cell System for Remote Application	<b>Anirban Mukherjee, Milan Kumar Mandal and Sayantanu Mandal</b> Jadavpur University, Jadavpur, Kolkata, West Bengal	Group
3.	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Fiber Bragg Grating Based Sensor for Medical Applications	<b>Sharmila M, Nivetha S and Aravinth V</b> Annamalai University, Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu	Group

### Prof S K Mukherjee Gold Medal

Name of the Project	Student Name and University
Automated Railway Crossing with Auto Train Speed Control and Live Tracking	<b>Anurag Ramrao Lambor and Gaurav Santosh Dudhe</b> Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune, Maharashtra



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# THESES OF THE MONTH

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## SOCIAL SCIENCES

### A List of doctoral theses accepted by Indian Universities (Notifications received in AIU during the month of April-May, 2021)

#### Anthropology

1. Monia, Landi Pussang. **Cultural construction of childhood and status of differently abled children of Arunachal Pradesh.** (Prof. Sarit Kumar Choudhuri), Department of Anthropology, Rajiv Gandhi University, Itanagar.

#### Commerce

1. Miriyam, Venkatanarayana. **Financial institutions and industrial development: An inquiry into the role of financial institutions of Hyderabad-Karnataka region.** (Dr. H Ramakrishna), Department of Commerce, Vijayanagara Sri Krishnadevaraya University, Ballari.

2. Rajaratnam, Chowtapalli E. **Changing roles and responsibilities of corporate leaders in India: A study with reference to select organizations in the combined state of Andhra Pradesh.** (Prof. G N Brahmanandam), Department of Commerce and Business Administration, Acharya Nagarjuna University, Nagarjuna Nagar.

3. Ranpara, Swati Navneetkumar. **Financial performance of SBI and its associates.** (Dr. F C Shastri), Department of Commerce, Saurashtra University, Rajkot.

4. Sailo, Ngurthanzuali. **An evaluative study of performance of the MGNREGS in relation to tribal women in Mizoram.** (Prof. Bhartendu Singh), Department of Commerce, Mizoram University, Aizawl.

5. Veeresh, M. **Performance and problems of tourism industry: A case study of Hyderabad-Karnataka region.** (Dr. Chalawadi Chanabasappa Irappa), Department of Commerce, Vijayanagara Sri Krishnadevaraya University, Ballari.

#### Economics

1. Amita Rani. **Impact of climate change on Indian agriculture.** (Dr. Surender Singh), Department of Economics, Bhagat Phool Singh Mahila Vishwavidyalaya, Khanpur Kalan.

2. Lalnunmawia, C. **Rural poverty in Mizoram: A multidimensional study.** (Prof. Lalhriatpuii), Department of Economics, Mizoram University, Aizawl.

3. Singh, Priyanka. **A comparative study of allocation of resources by various Finance Commission to Gujarat and Maharashtra.** (Dr. S R Pardeshi), Department of Economics, Gujarat University, Ahmedabad.

#### Education

1. Arora, Supriya. **Study of career aspiration and academic achievement of adolescents in relation to their home environment.** (Dr. Rekha Soni), Department of Education, Tanta University, Sri Ganganagar.

2. Babita Rani. **A Study of growth and development of teacher education programme in Haryana.** (Prof. Nivedita), Department of Education, Chaudhary Devi Lal University, Sirsa.

3. Bhim Singh. **Comparative analysis of government and private schools at elementary level: A Study of Haryana State.** (Dr. Raj Kumar), Department of Education, Chaudhary Devi Lal University, Sirsa.

4. Choudhary, Sukhi. **A comparative study of school environment on creativity of students studying in RAMSA and non government school.** (Dr. Rajkumari Parihar), Department of Education, Tanta University, Sri Ganganagar.

5. Indu. **Comparative study of secondary level student (Boys and Girls) in emotional, social and educational adjustment.** (Dr. Vandana Dua), Department of Education, Tanta University, Sri Ganganagar.

6. Kamboj, Shaleen. **Effectiveness of computer assisted programs in developing English linguistic skills among students of Aarohi schools.** (Prof. Nivedita), Department of Education, Chaudhary Devi Lal University, Sirsa.

7. Krishan Kumar. **Administration of justice through alternative dispute resolution: Role of Lok Adalats.** (Dr. Rajesh Malik), Department of Education, Chaudhary Devi Lal University, Sirsa.

8. Lalsangzuala, J. **Attitude of serving and prospective elementary school teachers in Mizoram towards teaching profession.** (Prof. Lalbiakdiki Hnamte), Department of Education, Mizoram University, Aizawl.

9. Marshal, Amrita J. **Development and tryout of an emotional intelligence enhancement programme for M.Ed teacher trainees.** (Dr. Jignesh B Patel), Department of Education, Children's University, Gandhinagar.

10. Sharma, Manisha. **A comparative study of social values and attitude towards role of co-educational & girls institutions in women empowerment of girls of Rajasthan and Punjab.** (Dr. Saroj Verma), Department of Education, Tanta University, Sri Ganganagar.

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