ASSOCIATION OF INDIAN UNIVERSITIES
AIU INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTRE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

PRESS CLIPPINGS IN EDUCATION

01-31 DECEMBER, 2022

CONTENT

14.	Quota demands unjust, untenable	Editorial	Deccan Hearld	20.	06 DECEMBER
15.	The patriarchal bias of EWS quota	Indrajeet Kumar Jha	Deccan Hearld	21.	06 DECEMBER
16.	How does fundraising for start – ups work in India	Vittal Ramakrishna	Statesman	22.	06 DECEMBER
17.	Teachers' post abolition and NEP 2020	Atul Sarma Ashok Pankaj	Assam Tribune	23.	07 DECEMBER
18.	AB-school logo for apolarised India	Editorial	Deccan Hearld	24.	07 DECEMBER
19.	Digital education for digital India	Sakshi Sethi	Pioneer	25.	07 DECEMBER
20.	The great jobs hunt	Raghuram Rajan, and others	Times of India	26.	07 DECEMBER
21.	India @100: science will lead the path	Gautam R Desiraju and Sharan Setty	Pioneer	27.	08 DECEMBER
22.	Volunteerism through Vidyanjali for education	A Srija and Abdul Momin	Pioneer	28.	09 DECEMBER
23.	The I of Y K Alagh	Shreekant Sambrani	Indian Express	29.	10 DECEMBER
24.	The ayurveda circle	Editorial	Pioneer	30.	10 DECEMBER
25.	Hindi and hind	Mukul Kesavan	Telegraph	31.	11 DECEMBER
26.	उपनिषद में दिखी साइंस की सबसे बड़ी खोज	सुभाष काक	Nav Bharat Times	32.	11 DECEMBER
27.	Bharatiya Bhasha Divas on Dec 11 hails diversity	Raghavendra P Tiwari	Pioneer	33.	12 DECEMBER
28.	Musings of a college Waiting for the NAAC to visit	Anshu Saluja	Deccan Hearld	34.	13 DECEMBER
29.	What drives young entrepreneurs ?	Ramakrisnan Raman	Deccan Hearld	35.	13 DECEMBER

30.	Edtech in the service of learning: The importance of evaluating education technology	Kiran Dham	Statesman	36.	13 DECEMBER
31.	The prejudiced academics	Avijit Pathak	Tribune	37.	13 DECEMBER
32.	विविध रंगो वाला विश्वविद्यालय	ब्रजेश कुमार तिवारी	Dainik Jagran	38.	13 DECEMBER
33.	उच्च शिक्षा में भारतीय भाषाओं को बढ़ावा मिले	राघवेंद्र प्रसाद तिवारी	Nav Bharat Times	39.	13 DECEMBER
34.	A question of 'Sanskar'	Sanah Singh	Millennium Post	40.	14 DECEMBER
35.	Was Einstein wrong, or…	Kaushik Bhowmik	Statesman	41.	14 DECEMBER
36.	मदरसा छाप विधि महाविद्यालय	राजीव सचान	Dainik Jagran	42.	14 DECEMBER
37.	आयुष में बढ़ते अवसर	धीरेंद्र पाठक	Dainik Jagran	43.	14 DECEMBER
38.	School need to teach the basics, not just prepare kids for careers	Devi Kar	Asian Age	44.	15 DECEMBER
39.	Keeping adivasi children in school	Nayakara Veeresha	Deccan Hearld	45.	15 DECEMBER
40.	A transformative movement	Editorial	Millennium post	46.	15 DECEMBER
41.	Ragging: Once a harmless witty banter	Deba Prasad Mishra	Assam Tribune	47.	16 DECEMBER
42.	The way forward for NAAC	B S Madhukar	Deccan Hearld	48.	16 DECEMBER
43.	Learning with machines learning	Suresh Prabhu and Shobhit Mathur	Economics Times	49.	17 DECEMBER
44.	At Kota, a collective failure	Avijit Pathak	Indian Express	50.	17 DECEMBER
45.	Success engineered ~I	Amitabha Bhattacharya	Statesman	51.	17 DECEMBER

46.	औपनिवेशिकता से उबरने की चुनौती	गिरीशवर मिश्र	Dainik Jagran	52.	17 DECEMBER
47.	चिंताजनक घटना	Editorial	Dainik Jagran	53.	17 DECEMBER
48.	A new timetable	Bashaarat Masood and Naveed Iqbal	Indian Express	54.	18 DECEMBER
49.	Success engineered ~II	Amitabha Bhattacharya	Statesman	55.	18 DECEMBER
50.	Unemployment & fallout	Gurbachan Jagat	Tribune	56.	18 DECEMBER
51.	To know or not to know	Navneet Sharma and Furqan Qamar	Deccan Hearld	57.	19 DECEMBER
52.	The rote way: Absence of critical thinking in classrooms hurting India	Kal Krishnan and Roger Marshall	Deccan Hearld	58.	19 DECEMBER
53.	From online gaming to education gaming	Amar Patnaik	Pioneer	59.	19 DECEMBER
54.	ग्रैजुएशन के लिए बेस्ट क्यों है 4 साल का कोर्स	भूपेन्द्र	Nav Bharat Times	60.	19 DECEMBER
55.	Make university management system user - friendly	Chetan Singh and T R Kumaraswamy	Deccan Hearld	61.	20 DECEMBER
56.	An imperative realignment	G Palanithurai	Millennium post	62.	21 DECEMBER
57.	How not to teach	Editorial	Times of India	63.	21 DECEMBER
58.	Cocking a snook	Editorial	Statesman	64.	22 DECEMBER
59.	संस्कृत की महत्ता बढ़ाने वाला शोध	प्रणय कुमार	Dainik Jagran	65.	22 DECEMBER
60.	नई राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति से आने वाले समय में देश में तैयार होंगी सैकड़ो द्रोपदी मुर्मु	Editorial	Dainik Jagran	66.	22 DECEMBER
61.	Unshackling varsities	A K Ghosh	Statesman	67.	23 DECEMBER

62.	हिंदी भी पकड़े अंग्रेजी वाली राह	संतोष ओझा	Nav Bharat Times	68.	24 DECEMBER
63.	India's data deficiency and the need for quality unemployment figures	Krishnan Raj and Kaibalyapati Mishra	Deccan Hearld	69.	26 DECEMBER
64.	Educate to awaken the soul	J S Rajput	Pioneer	70.	26 DECEMBER
65.	Who are professors of practice	Salil Sahadevan	Deccan Hearld	71.	27 DECEMBER
66.	Why parents are adopting homeschooling over traditional learning methods	Nirvaan Birla	Statesman	72.	27 DECEMBER
67.	Rise in adoption of cloud computing by enterprises in India	Jozef De Vries	Statesman	73.	27 DECEMBER
68.	Teacher should play role of friend, parent	Biju Dharmapalan	Pioneer	74.	28 DECEMBER
69.	Let youth succeed	Abhipsha Ray	Statesman	75.	30 DECEMBER
70.	शिक्षा में सुधार का संकल्प	जगमोहन सिंह राजपूत	Dainik Jagran	76.	30 DECEMBER
71.	Vishwaguru	Pratap Bhanu Mehta	Indian Express	77.	31 DECEMBER

The performance of learning

Image over text

SAIKAT MAJUMDAR

Since the beginning of the pandemic, my son, then six years old, has been a busy autodidact, or rather a keen student of Professor YouTube. Beginning with card and magic tricks, he has gone on to acquire the beginnings of piano skills on a rudimentary keyboard, finally graduating to his current obsession — the Rubik's Cube. Popular YouCubers, such as Cubehead and J Perm, now keep him company during his designated screen time. In between, he had a similar period of obsession with the language-learning app, Duolingo, gravitating to Spanish and making enough progress to carry on basic conversation and reading. His sister, on the other hand, prefers to keep her nose buried in books and sits for hours with *Gone with the Wind*, chatting in between with her friends on Discord.

It isn't so much the space between the four years that separate her, a late Gen Z, and him, an early Gen Alpha, as a difference in character and personality that accounts for a gulf I see widening these days — between the desire to learn from books or from performance, virtualised now in everything from recorded videos to interactive apps. I don't know how often one hears references to books in social gatherings outside literary and academic circles, but I'm certainly beginning to lose count of the time I hear people citing 'What Shashi Tharoor said about British rule in an YouTube video', never mind the fact that Tharoor's critique of imperialism has been contained in books by postcolonial historians for many decades now — insights that are unlikely to reach a popular audience not just because they are academic but increasingly because they are books, as opposed to video talks available online.

The character of the times cut across party lines. Chairing a meeting to review the implementation of the National Education Policy this July, the prime minister himself has emphasised that "online education is becoming the order of the day." Along with older models of virtual lectures, such as the UGC-run television shows, the pandemic saw the accelerated use of Swayam Prabha television channels, the digital platform, Diksha, and the various e-Vidya initiatives; most recently, the prime minister has declared his belief that "5G will take education to the next level." The pandemic, alas, has re-awakened us to the brutal reality of the digital divide, where access to device and bandwidth has marked the differences between some, little, or no learning for over two years.

But wherever there is access — and 5G is finally here — virtual, performative learning now does what books used to do once upon a time. Even students opting for text-heavy subjects such as sociology and political science in the civil services examinations turn to BYJU's video lectures and tutorials rather than thumb through books. Even the textbook — the
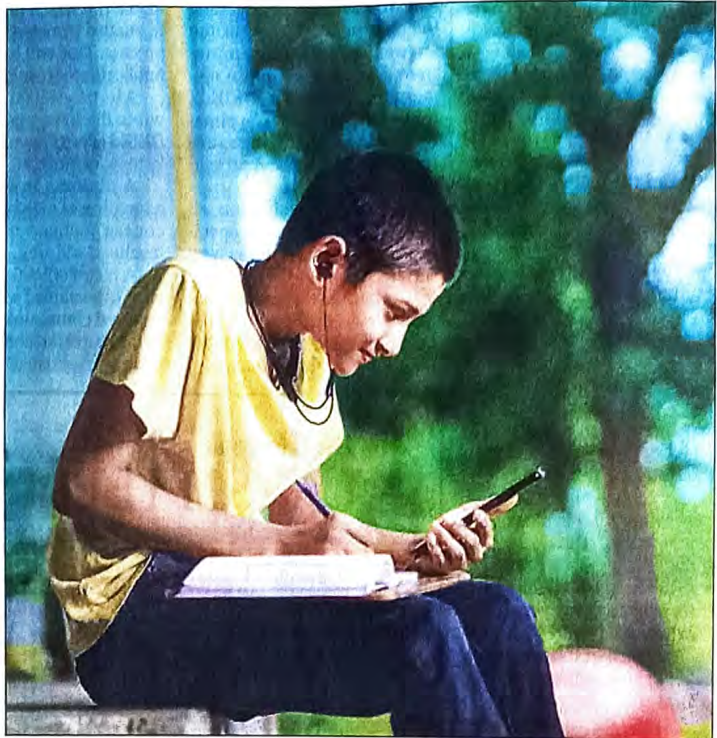
great Indian fetish object — is on its way of being displaced by the text-video.

It's been a complaint of lovers and creators of fiction that people nowadays get their fill of life-narratives from Netflix and social media rather than from novels. But this is now happening to learning as well. I'm not talking of the terrifying joke of WhatsApp University and doctored video-sharing that cause unrest, but more serious — in some cases, seriously professionalised and profit-seeking — virtual platforms. Apple and Spotify podcasts skyrocket in popularity. Speaking personally, while I continue to hear from people who read my writing, increasingly I hear from people who've heard me speak instead, either in real time or recording, including literary festivals and virtual talks organised by universities.

Orality predates print. Socrates warned that the new technology of writing would weaken human memory. Archiving makes us forget, and cell phone-natives cannot imagine a time when one had to remember phone numbers or note them down in diaries. But the fact is that writing, printing and textuality created a new modernity where the wide availability of printed books and the emergence of a middle-class defined the climate of post-Enlightenment Europe, as it shaped the Bengal Renaissance. Are these finally coming to an end? Dipesh Chakrabarty seems to think so. "The long Bengali nineteenth century is perhaps finally dying," he wrote in 2004, even before the so-called iGeneration had properly taken off in the subcontinent. The culture of that century is vividly chronicled by Rosinka Chaudhuri where a shopkeeper in a marketplace, deeply immersed in Michael

Madhusudan Dutt's epic poem, engages in a discussion with the poet about blank verse on a chance encounter without knowing he is speaking to Dutt himself. A certain investment in the culture of reading, in language and literature, particularly in Bengali, Chakrabarty points out, had come to define the measure of one's Bengaliness. An extreme representation of that long nineteenth century would be Nirad C. Chaudhuri whose bookish, indeed textualized, relationship with Europe embodied a 'provincial cosmopolitanism' that has defined the Bengali *bhadralok* throughout this ascendancy of print modernity.

The desire for interactive learning is, in some ways, the desire for a teacher. In a book, as the philosopher, Jacques Derrida, and the novelist, James Joyce, have variously pointed out, the author is, or should be, a bit like god — omnipresent but invisible. In a material sense, this is true even in the book with the loudest and most distinctive first- person voice. But my son tells me that the Duolingo bird tries to make him guilty by doing a sad face when he misses days with the app and is on the verge of losing his 'learning streak'. The green owl cheers and prances in joy when the student cracks the problems. The child knows well that the standardised icons and characters of virtual learning — Dr Binocs or the Green Owl — are not real people who know their students beyond the limits of AI and graphic design. But learners today, curricular and recreational alike, prefer the virtual performance of recorded people or interactive characters/icons over the active agency required to yield the force that turn books that can axe the frozen sea within us.

Saikat Majumdar is Professor of English and Creative Writing at Ashoka University

तकनीक के दौर में गुम होता बचपन

पिछले दिनों साहित्य अकादमी ने भारतीय भाषाओं में बच्चों के लिए लिखने वाले 23 लेखकों को बाल साहित्य के लिए पुरस्कृत किया। बाद में दो दिन के समारोह में इनमें से 21 लेखकों को सुनने और बातचीत का अवसर मिला। अपने-अपने क्षेत्र में बच्चों के लिए दशकों से काम करने वाले इन लेखकों की चिंताएं लगभग वही थीं, जो बच्चों के लिए काम करने वाले अन्य तमाम संगठन व्यक्त करते रहते हैं। सबसे प्रमुख चिंता है कि बच्चे मोबाइल, कंप्यूटर, लैपटाप मिलने से बातचीत करना, खेलना-कूदना, पढ़ना भूल रहे हैं। यह समझ नहीं आ रहा कि कोरोना काल में जो मोबाइल उनके हाथ में पकड़ा दिया गया, उसे वापस कैसे लिया जाए?

पहले जहां बच्चे स्कूलों में अपने खेल की घंटी का बेसब्री से इंतजार करते थे, चित्रकला, नाटक, संगीत प्रतियोगिताएं और तमाम गतिविधियों की बाट जोहते थे, अब उनकी दिलचस्पी इन गतिविधियों में न होकर सिर्फ किसी इलेक्ट्रानिक उपकरण की स्क्रीन में है। एक तरफ तो बच्चों के हाथों में इस तरह की अत्याधुनिक तकनीकें हैं तो दूसरी तरफ लगातार उन्हें तरह-तरह के अपराधों का शिकार भी होना पड़ता है। इनमें यौन अपराध, आर्थिक अपराध और तमाम तरह के साइबर अपराध शामिल हैं।

एकल परिवारों में ज्यादातर माता-पिता अपने-अपने दैनंदिन कामों में व्यस्त हैं, क्योंकि मजबूरी भी है कि काम और नौकरी न करें तो घर कैसे चले, बच्चे कैसे पलें। इसीलिए ऐसे परिवारों के अधिकांश बच्चे डे केयर सेंटर या सहायिकाओं के भरोसे पल रहे हैं। घरों में दादा-दादी, नाना-नानी की अनुपस्थिति ने बच्चों को और भी अकेला किया है। आखिर रात-दिन व्यस्त माता-पिता से बच्चे अपने मन की बातें कैसे करें? बहुत बार तो यह होता है कि बच्चा कुछ कहना चाहता है, किसी बात की जिद करता है तो उसकी समस्या सुनने, उसके निराकरण के बदले उस वक्त उससे पिंड छुड़ाने के लिए किसी चाकलेट या किसी खिलौने से उसे बहला दिया जाता है या डांटकर चुप करा दिया जाता है। बच्चों के प्रति अधिकांश अपराधों में यही बात सामने आती है कि वे अपने माता-पिता को अपराध के बारे में समय पर नहीं बता सके।

क्षमा शर्मा

बच्चों के उचित विकास के लिए परिवार जरूरी है, पर स्त्री विमर्श की एक धारा उसे सिरे से ही नकारती है

बचपन छीन रहे इलेक्ट्रानिक गैजेट ● फाइल

कई बार बच्चे अपराधियों के डर से आत्महत्या तक कर लेते हैं और माता-पिता पछताते ही रह जाते हैं। माता-पिता के तनाव और झगड़ों का असर भी बच्चों पर बहुत बुरा पड़ता है और वे अपने बचपन की बुरी यादों से जीवन भर बाहर नहीं निकल पाते।

विशेषज्ञ कहते हैं कि माता-पिता को अपने बच्चों के सामने कभी नहीं लड़ना चाहिए, लेकिन जो माता-पिता अलग हो जाते हैं, तलाक हो जाता है, उन परिवारों में बच्चों की मुसीबतें और भी बढ़ जाती हैं। वे माता-पिता के झगड़ों के बीच में फंस जाते हैं। जबकि बच्चे के सही विकास के लिए माता-पिता दोनों चाहिए। समस्या यह है कि हर विमर्श एक-दूसरे के विरुद्ध नजर आता है। बच्चों के लिए काम करने वाले उनके सही विकास के लिए परिवार को जरूरी बताते हैं। इन दिनों बुजुर्गों की जो स्थिति हो चली है, उसमें भी परिवार की भूमिका को बार-बार रेखांकित किया जाता है, लेकिन स्त्री विमर्श की एक धारा परिवार को सिरे से ही नकारती है। यह धारा औरतों की हर मुसीबत का ठीकरा परिवार के सिर ही फोड़ देती है। ऐसे में कैसे समस्याओं का हल हो। आखिर बच्चों में बच्चियां भी होती हैं और फिर सिर्फ बच्चियों की

ही क्यों, बच्चों की भी बात होनी चाहिए। किसी लड़के के मानवाधिकार लड़कियों से कम नहीं होते। सभी बच्चों को सही पालन-पोषण, सही खान-पान, देखभाल, शिक्षा, मनोरंजन, अपनी बात कहने और सुनने की आजादी का अधिकार होना चाहिए।

लेखकों की चिंता मातृभाषाओं के सवाल पर भी थी। कहा भी जाता है कि मातृभाषाओं को जानने से बच्चों का सही विकास हो सकता है, मगर जमीनी सच्चाई सालती है। साधन-संपन्न माता-पिता अपने बच्चों के लिए मातृभाषा के मुकाबले अंग्रेजी को प्राथमिकता देते हैं। इसका एक बड़ा कारण है कि अंग्रेजी को बच्चों की सफलता और उज्ज्वल भविष्य से जोड़ दिया गया है। एक बहुराष्ट्रीय कंपनी में काम करने वाली महिला ने बताया कि मातृभाषा के माध्यम से पढ़ने वाले बच्चों के बायोडाटा नौकरी के वक्त एक तरफ खिसका दिए जाते हैं। लेखकों ने यह भी कहा कि वे किसी भी भाषा के विरोधी नहीं हैं। अंग्रेजी के भी नहीं, लेकिन मातृभाषाओं को ज्यादा प्राथमिकता मिलनी चाहिए। बहुत से शोधों ने यह साबित किया है कि बच्चा गर्भ में ही अपने घर वालों द्वारा बोली हुई भाषा को न केवल समझने लगता है, बल्कि आवाज से पहचानने भी लगता है। अभिमन्यु की कथा भी लगभग ऐसी ही है, लेकिन जब से देश में मध्य वर्ग का विस्तार हुआ है, तब से शिक्षा का मतलब मातृभाषाओं के मुकाबले अंग्रेजी को मान लिया गया, बना दिया गया। यह हर जगह दिखता है। एक लेखक ने तो यहां तक कहा कि मजबूरी में उसे अंग्रेजी में अपना भाषण पढ़ना पड़ रहा है। सवाल है कि आखिर लेखकों की इन वाजिब चिंताओं पर कैसे ध्यान दिया जाएगा? कैसे मातृभाषाओं में भी पढ़ाई करने पर बच्चों को नौकरी तथा अन्य काम-धंधों के अच्छे अवसर प्राप्त होंगे? कैसे वे अपने मन की बात अपने परिवार वालों को बता सकेंगे? कैसे उपेक्षा या डांट के बजाय उनकी समस्या हल हो सकेगी? कैसे वे हिंसा से बच सकेंगे? कैसे बच्चे अकेलेपन की समस्या से मुक्त होंगे? कुछ लोग सलाह देते हैं कि अनाथालयों और वृद्धाश्रमों को अगर जोड़ दिया जाए तो बच्चों एवं बुजुर्गों का अकेलापन कम हो सकता है।

(लेखिका साहित्यकार है)

निंदनीय कृत्य

जेएनयू परिसर में दीवारों व शिक्षकों के कमरों के बाहर अगड़ी जातियों के लिए नारे लिखा जाना निंदनीय है। मामला तब और भी गंभीर हो जाता है, जब यह सामने आता है कि ऐसी घटना देश के सर्वाधिक प्रतिष्ठित विश्वविद्यालयों में से एक की है। शरारती तत्वों ने स्कूल आफ इंटरनेशनल स्टडीज के द्वितीय परिसर, स्कूल आफ लैंग्वेज, लिटरेचर व कल्चरल स्टडीज के द्वितीय परिसर और अन्य स्थानों पर नारे लिखे हैं। इस घटना के बाद शिक्षकों ने भी नारों को ट्वीट कर लिखा है कि उन्हें स्वयंसेवक होने पर गर्व है।

इस मामले में कुलपति ने जांच के आदेश दे दिए हैं और ऐसी उम्मीद की जानी चाहिए कि जल्द ही दोषियों का पता लगाकर उनके खिलाफ सख्त कार्रवाई की जाएगी, लेकिन किसी शिक्षण संस्थान में इस तरह की घटना को कतई स्वीकार नहीं किया जा सकता। कुलपति का यह कहना भी स्वागतयोग्य है कि जेएनयू समानता में विश्वास करता है। इस तरह की घटनाएं कतई बर्दाश्त नहीं की जाएंगी और ऐसी हरकत करने वालों के

> जेएनयू में नारे लिखने वालों की पहचान कर उन पर सख्त कार्रवाई की जानी चाहिए, ताकि ऐसी घटनाओं की पुनरावृति को रोका जा सके

खिलाफ जीरो टालरेंस की नीति अपनाई जाएगी। जेएनयू में पूर्व में भी ऐसी घटनाएं सामने आई हैं, जिन्होंने इस प्रतिष्ठित शिक्षण संस्थान की छवि धूमिल करने का काम किया है। यहां देश के टुकड़े करने के नारे लगे हैं, तो यहां महिषासुर की पूजा कर भारतीय संस्कृति पर प्रहार करने का प्रयास भी किया है। इस तरह की घटनाएं निश्चित तौर पर जेएनयू की छवि पूरी दुनिया में खराब करती हैं। ऐसे में इनपर सख्ती से रोक लगाए जाने की आवश्यकता है।

SKUAST-K MODEL OF GLOBAL EDUCATION:
A way forward for leadership in science and innovation

▲ Nazir Ahmad Ganai

▲ Parvaze A Sofi

India towards knowledge superpower

India is now recognised as a key player in global geopolitical engagements. India's rise as a strong nation has been a result of a strong political dispensation aiming to steer the country of 1.4 billion people into the league of elite nations, driven by the ethos of Unity in Diversity and strong national commitment to rise as a Vishwa Guru. As a nation with one of the largest young populations (~28%) and a country tipped to be the youngest population by 2030, India is contemplating empowering them as skilled and knowledgeable changemakers. Globally the demand for higher education is expected to grow exponentially from 100 million students currently to more than 250 million by 2025. This growth will be particularly driven by countries like India. Much of India's progress in recent years has been driven by outstanding human resource output in and outside the country. India's performance in key sectors such as agriculture, health, IT, space, manufacturing and service sector has been commendable, helping it become the World's 3rd Largest Economy. Despite improving its performance across all indicators by 15.74% between 2010-2018, India still lags in Global Youth Development Index at 133rd rank, disproportionate to its techno-political standing in the world, attributed to the disproportionate flexibility and autonomy in multiple tiers of the education system.

> **INDIA'S ASPIRATION AS VISHWA GURU**
> INDIA'S ASPIRATIONS TO BE THE KNOWLEDGE SUPERPOWER AND A $10 TRILLION ECONOMY, LIES IN ITS KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY DRIVEN BY ECO-SYSTEM OF INNOVATIONS. IT DEMANDS A PARADIGM SHIFT IN OUR POLICY – IMPROVING OF OUR RANKING IN SPENDING ON EDUCATION FROM 144 TO 50, AND GIVING FLEXIBILITY AND AUTONOMY TO UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES TO INNOVATE FOR THE PERCEIVED KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY.

During the last 20 years, India has remarkably transformed its higher education landscape through widespread access to low-cost, high-quality university education at all levels resulting in better enrolment numbers and enhanced learning outcomes. A strong and autonomous university system has enabled India to resolve the longstanding tension between excellence and equity. This, coupled with large-scale reforms, has given India a 70 million strong student population as a force to reckon with, comprising potential thought leaders, changemakers, researchers and academicians, and entrepreneurs positioned at the helm of knowledge creation, and driving the engine of its US$ 3 trillion economy.

> **PARADOX OF DEVELOPMENT**
> WHILE INDIA TAKES PRIDE IN HAVING LARGEST YOUTH POPULATION, THE LARGEST EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND IS EMERGING AS THE FASTEST GROWING ECONOMY AND THE STARTUP NATION OF THE WORLD, YET 133RD RANK IN GLOBAL YOUTH

> **DEVELOPMENT INDEX AND FEWER THAN 25 UNIVERSITIES IN TOP 200 UNIVERSITIES, FIGURES TOWARDS SOMETHING REALLY LACKING.**

Why India needs to act

Despite these strides of progress, India's higher education institutions are not yet the best in the world. Less than 25 universities figuring among the top 200 best institutions is paradoxical to the fact that India's post-secondary education system is recognised as one of the best in the world. This bizarre disproportionation has led the national policy planning think tanks to reassess the country's position vis-à-vis its future directions for education to act as a tool for national development. India's policy dispensation has set ambitious targets for development indicators to march from a $ 5 trillion economy to $ 10 trillion by 2030, with much of India's progress expected from knowledge-driven economic progress. India aims to be the Knowledge Superpower, and Shrestha Bharat, through a system of education that transforms today's youth into tomorrow's innovators, creators, nation builders, leaders and change makers. It is with this pursuit that India brought a new education policy (NEP-2020) 36 years after the last policy was enacted with an aim to help India to take a quantum lead in the next century through a highly competitive and flexible science education system that will be driven by innovation, discovery and knowledge and has a visible impact in discovery landscape of the world. Such systems, practised in the West, characterised by flexibility and autonomy in thought process, ideation and execution in all domains of their activity such as governance, recruitment, human resource management as well as perspective policy planning for developing short and long-term roadmaps encompassing all the hierarchies of the education system from K12 to the university system resulting in coherent progress at all levels. The policy aimed at creating a flexible education system that helps India create knowledge leaders, that can help the country solve the contemporary challenges and adapt and absorb new material in novel and changing fields, such as the rise of big data, machine learning, and artificial intelligence. The policy aims at creating a globally competitive system of education driven by innovation, discovery and technology development that will help India not only improve its human resource output but also capture the global technology and services market. The policy leverages substantial flexibility and autonomy to institutions encompassing K12 to university education to realign themselves to target

> **NEP-2020: INDIA'S RESOLVE TOWARDS TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION**
> INDIA ENACTED A NEW EDUCATION POLICY IN 2020 TO REMOVE THE BOTTLENECKS THAT HAVE PRECLUDED INDIA FROM HARNESSING THE POWER OF THE LARGEST YOUTH POPULATION BY INFUSING REVOLUTIONARY IDEAS THAT FAVOUR GREATER FLEXIBILITY AND CHOICE TO STUDENTS TOWARDS PROMOTING ACCESS AND EQUITY AS WELL AS PROMOTING INSTITUTIONAL AUTONOMY TO BRING INNOVATIVE REFORMS. THE POLICY AIMS AT IMPROVING THE SKILL SETS, LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES AND POISE NEXT-GEN STUDENTS FOR PROPELLING INDIA TOWARDS AN ECONOMIC AND INTELLECTUAL POWER TO RECKON WITH.

For the new system of education to deliver social and economic impact, as well as intellectual value it is imperative to have access, equity and quality in the process of human capital development and accomplish the broader goals country has set for 2030 and beyond. There is a need for an education system that is transformative and innovative across all the levers of higher education: from curricula and pedagogy to the use of technology to partnerships, governance, recruitment and funding. This is especially important in view of new drivers of action such as globalization, Intellectual property rights, new frontiers such as AI, ML, Big Data analysis, Biotechnology, nanotechnology, Sensors, Communication revolutions etc. Our new crop of educated youth needs

to be skilled and empowered to handle new challenges posed by a globalized environment with a focus on national development.

Towards reformed agricultural education: ICAR vision and SKUAST-K initiatives

Agriculture is a key player in national development and is one of the resilient sectors of the economy as demonstrated during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the sector faces many challenges such as (i) Below average productivity (to 60% of the world average), (ii) Declining profitability (iii) rising competitiveness under globalisation, (iv) poor farm-to-market linkages, (v) Subsistence scale (vi) Huge research impact gaps, (vii) low level of mechanization and lack of value addition (viii) Sub-optimal Supply Chain Management, (ix) Greater challenges to sustainability due to natural resources depletion, biotic and abiotic stresses. In order to create a competent human resource that can help the nation address new and emerging challenges and help sustain our leadership in key areas of agriculture, India needs to realign its agricultural higher education towards greater responsiveness and build a strong and resilient agriculture sector that not only helps India to fulfil its domestic food, nutrition and livelihood security commitments but also gain leadership position in these strategic sectors.

India has developed one of the finest models based on the land grant pattern of the USA with substantial autonomy for the system to operate. India has one of the largest human resources in agriculture research and education in form of ICAR and its institutions as well as state agricultural universities that are catering to national as well as regional human resource and technology requirements of the country. With such a system, India has been able to give to this world some of the finest science leaders in agricultural research that have shaped modern research platforms across the globe. The system has helped India progress from just 50 million tonnes in 1950 to more than 300 million tonnes in 2022. A similar system has been allowed to flourish at state levels and SKUAST-K is the best demonstration of such an autonomous university research and education system that has helped the state in fulfilling its commitments to human resource development and improving food and nutritional security imperatives.

Well before NEP-2020, ICAR had envisioned a need to transform the Indian agricultural education system and heralded a holistic and far-reaching national initiative of NAHEP funded by the World Bank to realign the higher education in agriculture to global standards, leveraging greater freedom for reforms, innovative policy frameworks and sought to develop all the pillars including faculty, students, matching infrastructure as well as policy and governance freedom. SKUAST-K also earned the honour of being a proud partner in this national initiative through competitive pitching of its vision for a holistic education system that is led by innovation, discovery, technology development and entrepreneurship development by creating a learning environment that is inclusive, stimulating with a wide range of learning experiences and supported by most modern physical infrastructure and human resource, with a freedom to access, assess, adapt and apply knowledge to think independently so

SKUAST-K MODEL: A SYMBOL OF GROWTH

DRIVEN BY DISRUPTIVE THINKING SKUAST-KASHMIR UNDER THE AMBIT OF ICAR-WORLD BANK FUNDED NAHEP HAS BEEN AN OUTSTANDING EXAMPLE OF INSTITUTIONAL PROGRESS DRIVEN BY DISRUPTIVE THINKING IN ALL SPHERES OF ACTIVITY. THE POLICY AND ACTION FRAMEWORK DEVELOPED BY SKUAST-K HAS BEEN RECOGNISED AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL AS A MODEL TO EMULATE. THE MODEL IS PERFECTLY ALIGNED TO NEP-2020 AS WELL AS RALLIES OVER THE FUTURISTIC EDUCATIONAL MODEL THAT IS FLEXIBLE, AUTONOMOUS, TECH-DRIVEN AND EMBRACES NEW FRONTIERS OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY AS DRIVERS OF FUTURE GROWTH IN AGRICULTURE.

as to develop a sense of appropriate judgement and collaboration.

The vision and action framework proposed by SKUAST-K for an outcome-based education was appreciated by US experts and in recognition of the innovative and futuristic model for overhauling Agri education in India. ICAR leveraged the onus of developing a working model of the stated innovations that can be replicated across the country. SKUAST-K drew parallelism in its proposed model with NEP-2020 and used the flexibility and institutional will to develop a working model that was driven by the mantra of creating a globally competitive and socially responsible human resource that embraces the spirit of creativity, innovation, discovery and leadership to become change makers and contribute towards the broader national goal of becoming a Knowledge Superpower.

The model of agricultural education of SKUAST-K has four major levers viz., Excellent education through outstanding teaching and learning driven by pedagogical innovation, flexibility and choice for students, Impactful Research that drives innovation and discovery for science-based solutions, Leadership and management skills to ideate, prioritise, strategize, and execute educational and research imperatives of state, and Building Professional Practice and competence. The model is expected to build and operate upon greater flexibility, choice and freedom to create institutional mechanisms for such manoeuvres. Setting bigger goals and larger developmental targets requires outstanding human resource support and as such requires matching freedom and flexibility in the recruitment process where the focus is on suitability rather than

OUR MODEL OF IDP-SKUAST-K
A SPINNING WHEEL OF KNOWLEDGE

LINKING EDUCATION WITH INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

eligibility and skill rather than qualification. The changes system seek to embrace new normal learning from global leadership in education and research from some of the best institutions across the world.

Developing the Working Model: March towards New Normal

The key factors contributing to the success of SKUAST-Kashmir in ideating, pitching and developing a working model were the freedom and flexibility leveraged under NAHEP, the institutional will and the quick spin-off coming from the application of the working model in the university. Within a span of three years, SKUAST-K became the fastest progressing State Agricultural University, reaching the top 10 SAUs of the nation, getting the Band Excellent category in Atal Innovation Ranking in first attempt. Outstanding scholarly achievements of faculty and students at national and global level, the increased inflow of research grants, local engagement to global impact, international faculty, improved engagement with industry, faculty and student startups, good governance, institutional reforms and overall improvement in learning infrastructure and ecosystem made us a preferred destination for higher education.

Our broader shift in policy mindset was based on the premise that in order to be impactful, higher educations has to come out of classrooms and do away with the structural bottlenecks. The institutions need to move away from existing systems towards adopting new norms such as Creativity, Innovation, Discovery and Technology. Such a shift was possible through the inbuilt flexibility of all components of our system viz., faculty, students, stakeholders, and governance system for setting futuristic targets and making a course corrections.

Major Foundations of SKUAST-K Model

A. A connected network of domains and stakeholders: Our model is based on the premise that education is not a stand-alone institution and cannot deliver unless it is connected by domains as well as players. The connections increase the outcome by making the system responsive. Our model seeks to integrate education, research, industry, and stakeholders such as farmers, consumers and governments to create a holistic set-up that delivers solutions to problems and improves the system output.

B. Flexibility of curriculum: Our model is based on a flexible curriculum where students have the freedom of choice to select courses that suit their academic and research pursuits in line with the demands of the national and global job market and industry. We created a curated semester system comprising mainstream academic courses, as well as other courses for upskilling and reskilling. The university has created a broad-based and diverse cafeteria of courses for students to choose from. The students have complete freedom within the institutional framework of regulations to choose from such cafeteria courses and these courses are duly accounted for through another innovative toolkit viz., NextGen© transcript that is a record of accomplishments in academic and skill courses.

C. Innovation and Discovery driven education: SKUAST-K is poised to be the first innovation-led farm university in India with academic and research programmes aligned towards translational research that could help develop technology-based solutions to farm sector problems. University

OUR SLOGAN of IDP-SKUASTK

D C I D E

Design your Curriculum for Interdisciplinary Education

TO

LEED

Leadership, entrepreneurship, employment, discovery

Curriculum : Flexible, Choice based and Inter-disciplinary

CURRICULUM DESIGN
TO BRIDGE ACADEMIC-SKILL DISCONNECT

of our model validation, we have recorded a significant increase in scholarly output of students at national and international levels.

F. Reforms in recruitment: SKUAST-K has reformed its recruitment policy to attract outstanding talent to meet its future requirements of human capital development. We have made a policy shift from Eligibility to Suitability, Knowledge to Skills and Expectations to Deliverables. This requires great institutional freedom in order to hire a pool of talented human resources that can help us fulfil our social commitments as well as help us land where we aim to be. The reforms stem from a principled stand of the National Policy paper of NAAS that sought to do away with any centralized system of recruitment for SAUs in view of their specialized requirements.

G. Increased global visibility: Reaching out to new target groups: SKUAST-K has changed the landscape of its engagement from a regional player to an internationally engaged institution with strong linkages with globally accredited academic and research institutions. This has helped us land ourselves in the international educational market with a poise to be the preferred destination for foreign students in the coming years. We are creating a matching infrastructure and an ambience that embraces the values of Kashmiryat and multicultural diversity to become an institution to look out for.

H. Alignment with NEP-2020: During the last two years, we have achieved many firsts in aligning our education system with the broader policy domains of NEP-2002 making us one of the very few universities to lead the national mission towards competent human capital development.

I. Building Institutional capac-

ity including state of art Smart classrooms, Tech-enabled video conferencing systems, a state of art Discovery and Innovation Centre that will serve as a hub of innovative pursuits for developing technology-based solutions, A Center for Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning, Tech-enabled Library and Information Services, Model instructional farms and laboratories, improved research capability to foster translational research to create an institutional mechanism for offering outstanding education and research aimed at churning future leaders and developing research output that addresses challenges facing agriculture as well as help the state develop into a model technology-driven and knowledge-based bioeconomy.

Greater autonomy for building impactful Universities- A strong Rationale

Universities are seats of higher learning building human resource and scientific capacity at the regional and national level and thus helping states and the nation be technology ready for meeting the challenges of the future. The administrative, governance and recruitment process of universities have certain unique features that warrant enhanced financial and governance autonomy.

SKUAST-K is a striking example of autonomy lead progress. In the last few years, riding on the support system and autonomy provided by GoJK and the financial and administrative support of ICAR, SKUAST-K has emerged as one of the fastest-progressing institutions of higher learning in J&K with strong performance indicators in teaching, research, student performance and research and innovation output. Universities across India in general and SKUAST-K, in particular, have a strong internal and external monitoring system for teaching, research and extension in form of various statutory bodies in which state government has ample representation to the extent of commissioner secretaries whereas the apex governing body of the university is headed by Hon'ble Lt Governor of J&K. Therefore, there is already a substantial government role in mainstreaming the functioning of university in line with the state policy priorities.

The academic, research and extension, as well as other ancillary domains of the university such as fund procurement and utilisation as well as recruitment, are constantly evolving process and the university has a well-structured system of creating an ecosystem that helps it stay relevant. In terms of the recruitment process, the system followed by the university is one of the most transparent and specialised processes that comprise a multitier screening system based on the set procedures laid down by various governing bodies such as ICAR, UGC, MHRD as well as J&K CSR. The universities as such should continue to enjoy freedom and autonomy in all domains of their functioning to help them grow and fulfil their mandated commitments in the overall development of the State.

Prof Nazir Ahmad Ganai is Vice Chancellor of SKUAST-K and Prof Parvaze Ahmad Sofi teaches plant breeding at FoA, SKUAST-K. They can be reached at drnazirahmad@gmail.com.

is proactively pursuing an ecosystem that promotes innovation and discovery with a focus on technology & product development, technology & product commercialisation and patenting. This has led to a flurry of patent applications from the university and seven patents in just one year post-NEP 2020 and 42 more under administrative processing.

D. Policy initiatives for entrepreneurship and Startups: SKUAST-K has the privilege of being the first agricultural university in India to draft and enact a Startup Policy that seeks to create an enabling ecosystem for promoting entrepreneurship and Startups at both faculty and student level. The policy aims to create an institutional mechanism for benefit sharing and IP holding rights, which is something first of its kind. As a result of this initiative, two faculty members and five students have set up their own Startup companies.

E. Reforms in assessment: SKUAST-K has made far-reaching changes in the assessment system with a focus on fostering the development of cognitive faculties in students and helping them build analytical skills, critical thinking as well as problem-solving skills that will create future change-makers. During the last two years

Post-1947 architecture merits conservation

RAJNISH WATTAS
FORMER PRINCIPAL, CHANDIGARH
COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE

The recent laissez-faire approach to pulling down modern buildings to make way for 'newer' facilities is worrisome. Paucity of land, greed of hungry capital and tacit political patronage often combine to weave business interests where there is 'the price of everything, but value of nothing'. Luminaries are lamenting this mindless 'bulldozer' and 'wrecking ball' approach to modern icons in the name of making room for new, glossy pastiches of shallow architecture.

IT was just a year back that India's world-renowned business school, the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmedabad, celebrated 60 years of its inception. And today, ironically, it is talking about demolishing some of its iconic core buildings. Ostensibly, the reason cited is that with decay, they are now beyond structural restoration and, therefore, raise safety concerns.

We need to pause and reflect. One is not talking about just any building developed by an ordinary mind, but a rare masterpiece of modernism designed by none other than Louis Kahn, feted all over the world as a genius of architecture.

Are great institutions only bricks and mortar or do they embody more? In their timeless structures are embedded collective memories of their alumni — hotly-contested debates outside classrooms, impromptu colloquiums in corridors and the buzz of camaraderie and laughter of the country's best and brightest.

A defining feature of the IIM-Ahmedabad is its numerous cuboid-brick structures punctuated by arched and circular 'moon windows' carved out in mute facades. The juxtaposition of masses and voids weaves an ethereal poetry inspired by the ancient and vernacular architectural forms of India. These openings are also designed as light wells and natural cooling systems imparting the interiors a shaded coolness, protected from Ahmedabad's harsh climate. "He designed more than just a collection of buildings; it is a citadel of learning. It weaves together solids

MASTERPIECE: A defining feature of IIM-Ahmedabad is its cuboid-brick structures punctuated by 'moon windows'. PHOTO CREDIT: VASTU SHILPA FOUNDATION

and voids, light and shade, materiality and immateriality in a timeless manner," writes eminent architectural author and critic William JR Curtis. In fact, he is the one who set the alarm bells ringing across the global architectural fraternity about the demolition plans. This has now led to a chorus of protests from leading lights of the profession, cascading by the day.

Luminaries are lamenting this mindless 'bulldozer' and 'wrecking ball' approach to modern icons in the name of making room for new, slick and glossy pastiches of shallow architecture devoid of a great, timeless soul.

Can we ever imagine the dreamy spires of Oxford or Cambridge being pulled down to make room for utilising more floor area ratio (FAR) or sprucing up the old moss-laden stone facades for more tacky, glossy, new-age claddings?

So marvellous are the present-day techniques of conservation architects and other related experts in adaptive reuse of old buildings that while retaining their external authenticity, they are retrofitted with the best of amenities inside. And Indian structural engineers are none behind the world's best to shore up some merely 60-year-old buildings!

Modern architectural heritage is particularly vulnerable to such vagaries of capricious erasures. There is very little protection available to them under the existing laws covering mainly ancient monuments. Also in the case of modern buildings with so many competing claims, there will be a need to establish their outstanding merit by experts enjoying unquestioned trust. The other limitation is that as most of them are functional, everyday-use buildings sans the mystique, romance and veneration that old historic forts, palaces or places of worship enjoy, there is little popular support to preserve them. Even UNESCO included the category of modern heritage for recognition only in 1975. And it is this clause that perhaps will protect Le Corbusier's Capitol Complex, Chandigarh, one day from the fall of a whimsical sledgehammer!

Sometime back, there was even talk of demolishing Corbusier's Mill Owners' Building along the Sabarmati river in Ahmedabad. But then better sense prevailed and the devouring mercantile interests were defeated. The recent laissez-faire approach to pulling down modern buildings to make way for 'newer and better' facilities is worrisome. Paucity of land, greed of hungry capital and tacit political patronage often combine to weave business interests where there is "the price of everything, but value of nothing".

Just a couple of years ago, it was the Hall of Nations complex at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, that despite concerted and impassioned protests by international architectural experts, was pulled down to make way for a new 'state-of-the-art' business-cum-convention centre. The fascinating structure designed by architect Raj Rewal and India's foremost structural engineer Mahendra Raj was the first of its kind to build a huge column-less hall to showcase exhibits at the India Trade Fair held in 1972, marking 25 years of Independence. The structure was both ingenious and indigenous as space frames were usually built in steel internationally. "But, since that could not be afforded in India at that time, the alternative was to make it in prefab concrete," recalls Rewal.

At the time of Independence, India had only colonial edifices built in eclectic, neo-classical styles or some art deco buildings in big cities. In a great act of farsightedness, it invited two world-famous masters — Le Corbusier and Louis Kahn — to come and build.

While Corbusier went on to raise buildings in Chandigarh and Ahmedabad, Louis Kahn — then designing the Assembly building of the new capital city of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) — came to design the IIM. Inspired by the presence of these two masters, many young, talented Indian architects like BV Doshi, Achyut Kanvinde, Charles Correa and Raj Rewal, also took leaps of faith and returned home to participate in the great adventure of building in a free India. They brought with them a unique combine of nationalism and internationalism.

No wonder, the recently concluded exhibition organised by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, titled 'Projects of Independence Architectures of Decolonisation in South Asia' had the largest display from India. These projects ushered in an era of independent India finding its architectural voice and idiom. They merit conservation and celebration. Not bulldozers.

पाठ्यक्रम का हिस्सा बनें गुमनाम नायक

यह सुनिश्चित किया जाए कि षड्यंत्र से नेपथ्य में धकेल दिए गए इतिहास के नायकों को यथोचित सम्मान मिले

प्रणय कुमार

विस्मृत नायकों को जानने की बढ़ी ललक ● फाइल

स मय सदा एक सा नहीं रहता। सत्य अंततः प्रकाशित होता है। छल-बल से आरोपित एवं प्रायोजित स्थापनाओं को जनसामान्य के गले उतारने की कितनी भी कोशिशें क्यों न की जाएं, वे लंबे कालखंड तक नहीं टिकतीं। अनुकूल अवसर एवं परिवेश पाते ही देश के साथ नाभिनाल संबंधों से जुड़ा उसका संतानवत समाज अपनी मूल पहचान की ओर निश्चित लौटता है। भारतीय समाज भी इन दिनों अपनी राष्ट्रीय एवं सांस्कृतिक अस्मिता को लेकर सजग हुआ है। वह अपनी ऐतिहासिक विरासत को संजोना चाहता है। वह लोक में प्रसिद्ध नायकों-महानायकों के बारे में विस्तार से जानना चाहता है। अकादमिक जगत और इतिहास की पाठ्य-पुस्तकों द्वारा उसके समक्ष अब तक जो इतिहास परोसा गया, उससे वह सहमत नहीं। उसे वह अधूरा, एकांगी एवं औपनिवेशिक मानसिकता से ग्रस्त पाता है। उसे इन पुस्तकों में अपनी संस्कृति, धर्म, ज्ञान-परंपरा, लोक एवं साहित्य आदि के दर्शन नहीं होते, बल्कि इन्हें पढ़ने से हीनभावना विकसित होती है। ये राष्ट्रीय विस्मृति एवं स्वाभिमानशून्यता का संचार करते हैं। इनमें आक्रांताओं का यशोगायन तो खूब किया गया है, परंतु साहस एवं दृढ़ता के साथ उनका प्रतिकार करने वाले देश के वीर सपूतों की घनघोर उपेक्षा की गई है। इनमें पराजय को ही भारत की नियति सिद्ध करने की कुचेष्टा की गई है। जबकि दुनिया जानती है कि यह एकमात्र ऐसा देश है, जो अपनी सनातन संस्कृति की सत्यता को बनाए रखने में लगभग सफल रहा है। क्या कोई पराजित सभ्यता अपने जीवनमूल्यों, आदर्शों, परंपराओं, मानबिंदुओं की रक्षा कर सकती थी? कदापि नहीं। सत्य यही है कि भारत का इतिहास पराजय का नहीं, बल्कि संघर्ष, शौर्य एवं पराक्रम का है। देश का कोई भी भूभाग ऐसा नहीं, जहां विदेशी आक्रांताओं को निरापद शासन करने दिया गया हो। हर कालखंड में इस देश में ऐसे महापुरुष हुए, जिन्होंने इन आक्रांताओं के विरुद्ध स्वतंत्रता की अलख जलाए रखी और उनके दुर्बल पड़ते ही अपने राज्य और प्रजाजनों को उनके अन्याय-अत्याचार से मुक्त कराया, परंतु दुर्भाग्य से ब्रिटिश इतिहासकारों ने इतिहास संबंधी जो मिथ्या धारणाएं गढ़ीं, उसे निहित स्वार्थों की पूर्ति एवं छद्म पंथनिरपेक्षतावादी राजनीति के नाम पर स्वतंत्रता के पश्चात भी निरंतर जारी रखा गया।

यह सुखद है कि देश के अलग-अलग भूभागों से आने वाले जिन नायकों को षड्यंत्रपूर्वक विस्मृति के गर्त में धकेल दिया गया था, आजादी के इस अमृत काल में केंद्र सरकार की पहल से उनकी चर्चा सामान्य जन के बीच पुनः होने लगी है। उनके प्रति और अधिक जानने की आम जनों की इच्छा तीव्र हुई है। चाहे 'मानगढ़ धाम की गौरव गाथा' कार्यक्रम के माध्यम से भील समुदाय से आने वाले महान स्वतंत्रता-सेनानी गोविंद गुरु को याद करने या बेंगलुरु शहर के संस्थापक नादरप्रभु केंपेगौड़ा की 108 फीट ऊंची कांस्य-प्रतिमा का अनावरण करने या इसी वर्ष जुलाई में आंध्रप्रदेश के भीमावरम में महान स्वतंत्रता-सेनानी अल्लूरी सीताराम राजू की 125वीं जयंती पर वर्ष भर चलने वाले समारोह की शुरुआत करने या जून में मुंबई राजभवन में 'क्रांति गाथा गैलरी' का शुभारंभ कर बासुदेव बलवंत फड़के, चाफेकर बंधु, बाल गंगाधर तिलक, वीर सावरकर, बाबा राव सावरकर, क्रांतिगुरु लाहूजी साल्वे, अनंत लक्ष्मण कान्हेरे, भीखाजी कामा और राजगुरु जैसे क्रांतिकारियों की स्मृति को संजोने या रांची में भगवान बिरसा मुंडा स्मृति उद्यान सह स्वतंत्रता सेनानी संग्रहालय का उद्घाटन करने या बहराइच में महाराजा सुहेलदेव-स्मारक तथा पानीपत में पानीपत संग्राम संग्रहालय के शिलान्यास आदि करने की बात हो-वर्तमान केंद्र सरकार अतीत के इन गौरवशाली व्यक्तित्वों के प्रति श्रद्धावनत दिखाई देती है। ऐसे प्रयास जहां राष्ट्रीय चेतना का संचार करते हैं, वहीं इनसे युवाओं के भीतर राष्ट्र के प्रति गौरव, भक्ति एवं कर्तव्यपरायणता की भावना विकसित होती है।

षड्यंत्र से नेपथ्य में धकेल दिए गए इतिहास के इन नायकों को यथोचित सम्मान देने-दिलाने की श्रृंखला में बीते दिनों प्रधानमंत्री मोदी ने पूर्वोत्तर के शिवाजी कहे जाने वाले अहोम साम्राज्य के महान सेनापति लचित बरफुकन को उनकी 400वीं जयंती पर श्रद्धापूर्वक याद किया और युवाओं को उनके जीवन से 'राष्ट्र प्रथम, राष्ट्र सर्वोपरि' का भाव ग्रहण करने की प्रेरणा दी। लचित बरफुकन ने केवल पूर्वोत्तर भारत को ही नहीं, अपितु पूरे दक्षिण-पूर्व एशिया को तत्कालीन मुगलिया सल्तनत की मजहबी कट्टरता से बचाए रखने का अभूतपूर्व कार्य किया। बंगाल से आगे मुगलों की सत्ता के निर्बाध विस्तार में वे सुदृढ़ प्राचीर की भांति डटे और खड़े रहे। उन्होंने अपने सीमित संसाधनों के सहारे विभिन्न जनजातियों को साथ लेकर मुगलों की विशाल सेना से डटकर मुकाबला किया और उन्हें सरायघाट की लड़ाई में बुरी तरह पराजित किया। यह पराजय इतनी बड़ी थी कि उसके बाद कोई भी मुगल शासक असम पर कुदृष्टि डालने का साहस न कर सका। चाहे अकबर हो या औरंगजेब, कुतुबुद्दीन ऐबक हो या इल्तुतमिश, बख्तियार खिलजी हो या इवाज खली, मुहम्मद बिन तुगलक हो या मीर जुमला, असम में अहोम राजाओं के शौर्य के आगे उन्हें झुकना ही पड़ा। 1206 से 1671 तक मुस्लिम आक्रमणकारियों द्वारा असम पर 22 बार आक्रमण किया गया, पर उस पर स्थायी आधिपत्य उनके लिए सपना ही रहा। यह दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण है कि ऐसे महान अहोम साम्राज्य और उसके प्रतापी सेनापति पर इतिहास की पाठ्य-पुस्तकें मौन हैं। स्पष्ट है कि इतिहास की पाठ्य-पुस्तकों को नए सिरे से लिखे जाने की आवश्यकता है।

(लेखक शिक्षाविद एवं 'शिक्षा-सोपान' संस्था के संस्थापक है)

response@jagran.com

Personality development course

■ Sailen Das

The year 2022 marks the 75th anniversary of India's independence. With pace of time, we do see some changes in its policy and environ despite the snail's pace of implementation as we are known for the popular adage 'land of lahe lahe'. However, the ideas in education sector from hundred years back imposed by our British rulers back are still considered valid today. In their times, the rulers required some native clerks and at the most, some junior officers to run the administration. They needed these people to draft some basic things, type, read and understand applications to 'put up' to the British officer. One did not have any role in policy making or brainstorming – nor was it encouraged. But even today our education system, including that of Assam, seems to run along the same trail. As a result, the subjects and curriculum at the present college level have failed miserably to develop good number of courageous, competent, confident persons that we need for a strong nation. This is because of the fact that one with a bachelor or even a Master degree may be looking for a job as a clerk. We even see hundreds of technical graduates in clerical and other Grade III posts working as you happen to drop in any office.

Moreover, the mushrooming of coaching centres for medical, engineering and for civil services exams speaks poorly of the adequacy of the basic education system and taking a big toll on the mental health of the students and creating immense financial pressure on the part of the guardian leading to corruption. Whether the education system will produce employed people or build human resources is also an important question now !

According to the latest news, following the New Education Policy adopted by the government, the High School Leaving Certificate Examination (HSLC) will be history from the next year that is to say 2023 onwards. The new education policy has been introduced in the country with an objective to bring a much needed radical change in our education sector. Although unpleasant, it must be admitted that the old and traditional education system in Assam in particular has done nothing but generate degrees in our society. To date, we have lagged far behind for some folktale and theory based -centric courses and some theoretical lessons.

Rendering practical knowledge has been given a back seat except in medical education. For which, after obtaining the degree, a graduate has to acquire some practical skills to turn into a useful worker. To date, subjects such as public relations and skills development and job prospects such as Communication, Journalism, Food Processing, Tourism, Social Work, photography, etc. from higher secondary level have not been included.

In such a scenerio, the battle for radical change in the education system of Assam under the dynamic leadership Chief Minister of Assam seems to be futile. If we do not try to change the education system with new subject matter, then it will be like pushing our talented generation into more darkness.

As a personality development trainer and Inspirational Speaker this writer has held hundreds of workshops and lectures at various educational programs in Assam and the Northeast. This has provided a clear picture of the ground situation - the teacher at college level does not teach anything about building self-confidence, time management, body language, utilizing the power of subconscious mind, life skills, soft skills etc. What is taught in the classroom is hardly inspiring and only pushes for rote learning.

Present college education does not explain the fact that a student cannot do anything in today's world without developing one's personality. There are two reasons for this – the first is the laxity of our education system, and the other is - not imparting adequate training to the teachers in a timely manner. I am yet to attend a workshop outside Guwahati that could be started on scheduled time. The same is true for any social functions managed by products of these institutions.

The fact is not that we lack skilled teachers amongst us who can give something new, something interesting, something useful. But getting lost in the simple mindset of 'running the job' the number of people who just 'work by the watch' are proliferating. On the other hand, when a certain teacher tries something novel, the internal politics of the college raises its ugly head to defeat the noble cause by ridiculing and negative campaigning. There are other creative steps by the higher education department and university authorities to instill confidence amongst the students by inspiring them for self development except those mandatory refresher courses. The same age-old practice of giving importance to students just going by marks obtained against a certain number of chance questions is still going strong, fully supported by the media and student and various social organizations going gaga over the toppers.

If our teachers do not bother to think of creating a vibrant atmosphere, if the government in power does not work earnestly to include fresh subject matters matching with changing scenario then all those high pitched declarations comparing our upcoming generations with the human resources of developed countries would largely turn futile.

GADFLY

Learning without burden

In his time as a nominated member of the Rajya Sabha in 1989, R K Narayan made an ardent speech on the woes of schoolchildren carrying overloaded schoolbags, calling it a national madness. "More children on account of this daily burden develop a stoop and hang their arms forward like a chimpanzee while walking," he said. An average child carried bags strapped to his back like a "pack-mule", he said. "The hardship starts right at home when straight from bed the child is pulled out and got ready for school even before his faculties are awake. He or she is groomed and stuffed into a uniform and packed off with a loaded bag on her back," he said.

In many of his stories set in late-colonial India, Narayan's surface-level geniality often gives way to facing the subterranean frustrations of Indian society. Somewhat like Charles Dickens, much of Narayan's oeuvre has grappled with the role of education (at the school, college, or university) and its messy relationship with society. In novels like *Swami and Friends* and short stories like *Father's Help*, there's a rich comic observation of the absurdity of educational life and childhood. In other stories like *Ishwaran*, there's mordancy over what failing an exam repeatedly can do to a young human.

Clearly, Narayan was concerned deeply about education as a life experience, and how many systems ruined it for generations of young Indians. He wrote of life nearly a century ago. Yet so much of that feeling that Indian school or college life connotes, is extant.

Narayan's words in the Rajya Sabha stirred up like-minded souls working in education at the time. It triggered eminent educationists-scholars like Prof Yash Pal and later Prof Krishna Kumar to reflect profoundly on the nature and trauma of education (at all levels) in India. Prof Yash Pal passed away in 2017, leaving a redoubtable bequest on educational thinking. Prof Krishna Kumar writes in English and Hindi so thoughtfully that he seems really like a poet who happens to be a teacher, and treats education as his leitmotif to explore experience. One of his books is called *A Pedagogue's Romance: Reflections of Schooling,* and is dedicated to Prof Yash Pal. Pause on that title, please. Can

Rahul Jayaram
the Vidyashilp University academic believes we are living through the apocalypse

@rajayaram

one imagine a teacher who thinks of teaching, learning, and the classroom experience as forms of wonder and romance? But really, isn't that the whole point of it? The fact that our education is far removed from such ways of thought makes one wonder how big-hearted intellects like Yash Pal and Krishna Kumar continued to exist, dissent, and thrive in the despondent spheres of Indian educational thought and policymaking.

I know I speak from the position of a teacher at a private institution. But to see so much evidence, as we saw now recently, of schools in Karnataka and other parts of India, not having the fundamentals that schools should possess, is dismaying. In tracts that Yash Pal or Krishna Kumar have written separately almost 30 years back, the realities of Indian education are captured only too well. How can some of the basic conditions not have fundamentally changed for the better now?

R K Narayan's Rajya Sabha speech initiated the formation of a committee in 1993 to examine school education by the then ministry of human resource and development. Prof Yash Pal headed it and brought out a heart-breaking document called "Learning Without Burden", with chapter headings like 'Joyless Learning', 'Textbook as the 'Truth', 'Observation Discouraged', 'Teaching Everything'. They hold true today. Where does one fix the accountability for making Indian education a transgenerational nightmare? The buck must stop somewhere. When? Where?

Skilling scheme has miles to cover

Under the ongoing version of PMKVY, out of four lakh youths trained, only 30,599 have got job placements

NAJIB SHAH

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour, Textiles and Skill Development recently submitted its 36th report on the implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY).

It may be recalled that the PMKVY seeks to promote skill development by providing free training programmes and monetary rewards for obtaining skill certification. The aim of the programme is to remove the "disconnect between demand and supply of skilled manpower, building a vocational and technical framework, skill upgradation, building new skills and innovative thinking". A vision of a 'skilled India' is what is sought to be achieved.

India is a country with about 65% of its youth in the working age group. The only way we can possibly reap the demographic advantage is through skill development. As the standing committee report states, "It is acknowledged that skill and knowledge are the driving forces of economic development. With one of the youngest population levels, India can realise its demographic dividend through a workforce that is trained in employable skills and is industry-ready."

The Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has spearheaded PMKVY to drive the skilling programme across the country through the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras (PMKK), state-of-the-art training centres. The PMKVY scheme was launched in 2015 to encourage and promote skill development with an initial outlay of Rs 12,000 crore. The scheme was grant-based, providing free-of-cost training and skill certification in more than 1,800 skill roles to increase the employability of youth. It was to be implemented through Centrally Sponsored Centrally Managed (CSCM) and Centrally Sponsored State Managed (CSSM) components.

It is against this backdrop that the report makes significant reading. Currently, PMKVY 3.0 launched in January 2021 is in operation. The report highlights the fact that despite revisions in the scheme, the problems of the earlier versions persist. The report specifically highlights the underutilisation of funds. In the 3.0 version, only 72% of the funds have been utilised. Thus, there has been low distribution and underutilisation of funds.

The report has rightly pointed out that the success of the skilling programme depends entirely on the placement of skilled personnel.

Under PMKVY 2.0, out of the 91.4 lakh candidates who were said to have been trained, only 21.3 lakh were placed. The ongoing version has an even poorer record — out of the 4 lakh trained, only 30,599 (8%) have been placed.

Obviously, either the training has made little difference to the skillset of the candidates or the skilling given is not in areas — in either case, it defeats the purpose of the scheme. The ministry, however, has in its report on impact assessment stated that there has been a 15% increase in the mean monthly income of the trained candidates.

The committee has not been too impressed with the ministry's assessment. It observed that "the very purpose of imparting training and certifying the candidates is defeated when placement statistics is abysmally low". The need for the training programme to be aligned with industry needs cannot be over emphasised.

Similarly, the report observes that gross underutilisation of funds undermines the intent of the scheme. It goes on to add, "Needless to say, the ministry ought to pay serious attention towards addressing the impediments so as to leverage the placement/self-employment of the trained/certified candidates to a sizeable extent as well as to maximise utilisation of earmarked funds."

The committee has also commented on the high percentage of dropouts — nearly 20% have dropped out after starting the training. The reasons ranged from the distance of the training centres from residential areas to the lack of accessibility to jobs.

The report is significant in the context of the growing unemployment in India. As on Nov 22, as per CMIE, the unemployment rate was 7.72% — up from the September rate of 6.43%. (Unemployment rate is the percentage of people in the labour force who are unemployed, people who are willing to work but do not have a job). The unemployment rate was said to be 8.5% in urban areas and 7.34% in rural areas.

The prime minister had in October announced a drive to fill up 10 lakh jobs. Appointment letters have been given to nearly 1,46,000 newly inducted appointees in two rozgar melas; the second mela was held on November 22.

The PM highlighted the importance of skilling India's youth for a brighter future. "Today, we are emphasising the skill development of youth. Under the PMKVY, a huge campaign is going on to train the youth according to the needs of the industries." The PM informed that 1.25 crore young people have been trained under the Skill India Abhiyan.

The parliamentary committee's report would suggest that the work to translate training into employable jobs is still some distance away.

(The writer is chairman (retired), Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs)

DH/5/6

FIRST COLUMN

BETTER TIES WITH STUDENTS IS THE KEY

Teachers must invest in students to make them go the extra mile

RAJ **RANI GOEL**

Relationship building with students is instrumental in students' success, and it may be one of the most underrated skills for educators today. Here are a few reasons why this relationship is very important. Setting clear goals, being fair while enforcing rules and regulations, showing compassion, providing each student with fair and objective feedback, and fostering a feeling of school pride are the methods that a teacher may connect with every student in the classroom.

Relationships between students and teachers are also crucial for building great relationships with students, which can lead to better academic achievements. Positive student-teacher connections offer significant academic benefits for our most vulnerable students. This means that concentrating on connections increases equity in the classrooms. Students who have learning difficulties benefit the most from the quality of interactions they build with teachers.

Children who feel isolated from their environment are more prone to behave out in school. Although it is common for young children to despise schools, it is undesirable when this attitude begins to impair their grades and disrupts the learning environment for other children.

We need to avoid this by creating a personal relationship with each child and discovering why there is a problem with children's behav-

ior. It creates a healthy and thriving classroom atmosphere. Students have more fun in a classroom where they have a personal connection with the teacher. It turns out the same with the teacher. It creates the atmosphere for increased joy and lower feelings of anxiety

If we provide a nice environment where children may develop their emotional and social intelligence, students can progress healthily over time. Keeping in mind that if we are kind to these students, they will respect and trust the teacher. They will aspire to emulate and develop the same sense of accountability and compassion.

When students and instructors engage positively, it helps students to create good mental strength, especially for less interactive kids and those who have any form of difficulty. Children who have learning issues, on the other hand, frequently have poor self-esteem. The affection and care will aid in the development of a sense of self-worth and pride in the students. That is beneficial to their mental health.

It helps the teacher to interact with parents with much more ease. Nobody wants to show up to a parent's teacher conference and have nothing to say about somebody's child. By being genuinely interested in your students and planning activities to create a good relationship, phone calls to parents will be much easier. More importantly, parents appreciate these kinds of things.

It produces an environment that incorporates mutual respect. The most important aspect of this relationship is that it creates good mutual respect between the teacher and students. As there will be good respect between them it automatically helps in wellbeing of both and helps them to understand each other.

There is a lot to be gained through strong relationships between students and teachers. Students are motivated to work hard when they have positive relationships with their teachers, because they feel that someone is paying attention to them. Since it will provide the foundation for not just their exceptional academic accomplishment but also for their passion for learning and for cultivating a positive mindset, developing good relationships with the students should be the teachers' top focus.

(The author is Managing director, Satluj Public School, Ellenabad)

Pitfalls in Haryana's MBBS bond scheme

SOHAM D BHADURI
HEALTH POLICY EXPERT

Chhattisgarh is a standout example that used a combination of higher salaries, postgraduate study benefits and improved living & practice conditions for doctors, coupled with a higher penalty. Evidence shows that it paid off for the state, not just in terms of filling vacancies, but also in increasing healthcare utilisation. Absenteeism in rural areas is an even more crucial problem that requires to be tackled in a similar spirit.

THE Haryana Government's new bond policy for MBBS students, promulgated in early November, has caused a commotion. Originally, it posited a bond amount of Rs 40 lakh, constituted in a tripartite arrangement involving the state, the student and the bank, and a compulsory government service period of seven years after graduation.

On November 30, following protests, the state made some revisions, bringing down the amount and service period to Rs 30 lakh and five years, respectively, while factoring in postgraduate residency within the service period and offering a contractual job guarantee within a year of graduation.

Alongside, the Union Government is reportedly contemplating to scrap bonded service policies altogether, following the recommendations of the National Medical Commission. While confusion and controversy prevail, there is a case for revisiting its underpinnings so as to be able to conceive an effective policy approach towards compulsory service stints.

Compulsory service stints have long existed on the global picture, with the first known programme originating as early as in the early 20th century. Their putative aim is to incentivise students who have availed the government-subsidised medical education to serve for a pre-defined period in the public sector, mainly in rural areas, in an act of 'giving back to society'. They come in varied shapes and configurations — ranging from service in return for scholarships as in Nepal and Indonesia to rural recruitment, training and placement as in Thailand. What needs to be remembered,

UNFAIR: Haryana's bond policy for MBBS students seems to be directed more at indemnifying the state and its cost recovery rather than incentivising public service. TRIBUNE PHOTO

however, is that compulsory rural service comprises an act of giving back to society, not necessarily to the government.

On the contrary, Haryana's policy, involving banks and having an untenably long service period, seems to be directed more at indemnifying the state and its cost recovery rather than incentivising public service. This is further exemplified by two other factors: first, the number of applicants has exceeded the announced vacancies in the recent past and the second, the recent Rural Health Statistics (RHS), 2020-21, shows a surplus of rural primary health centre doctors in the state against their requirement. This contradicts the spirit of such measures because irrespective of compulsory public service clause, the state is obliged to invest in medical education given its public good characteristics, and the fact that doctors continue giving back to society even while in the private

sector or abroad.

Besides, such measures conflict with and can negate the positive effects of many recent initiatives taken towards increasing the strength of doctors. Over the last decade, the country has witnessed considerable growth in the number of private and government medical seats and ambitious private-public partnerships in medical education. Further, vernacularisation of medical education to increase its access to marginalised sections has been prominent on our agenda. By dissuading students from pursuing medicine, more so from poorer sections, such policies stand to pose a tall entry barrier in medical education and deliver detrimental results.

Should compulsory rural service be scrapped altogether? The fact that there is a strong moral and social case for students to serve back their subsidies mil-

itates against this. Reports such as the RHS can underplay the human resource situation in rural areas, and in a situation of known scarcity of doctors, even a possibly small contribution made by bonded-service candidates can make a significant difference.

The thinking around scrapping bond policies rests on the premise that such policies are largely outdated and that significant medical educational reforms have taken place since their introduction. This is anything but true. Most of the primeval characteristics of Indian medical education such as training concentrated in tertiary-care hospitals, lack of a strong community-care emphasis, and a predilection for specialisation and sub-specialisation haven't undergone a significant change over the years. Rather, evidence indicates that medical educational costs have increased sharply over the past decade. This, coupled with the advent of public-private partnerships, could stand to exacerbate the tendencies of graduates to sub-specialise and practise resource-intensively in the private sector.

The need of the hour is evidence-based, well-balanced interventions to attract recent graduates into rural areas that are sensitive both to societies' and students' needs and aspirations. On the societal side, it is necessary to ensure that such interventions are cost-effective and don't overly burden the exchequer, since the very motive of these interventions is to recover public investments made in medical education. The answer to this lies in distinguishing between rural recruitment and retention. While the latter is the

desirable end goal, addressing rural-doctor retention over long periods will be cost-intensive, since the rural-urban dichotomy is primarily a development problem. Rather, making periodic, short-term recruitments attractive is easier to tackle and would require fewer tweaks in existing policies. While this will come with a high but predictable attrition, this is an inevitable trade-off.

On the students' side, the ideal mix should consist of a combination of strategic interventions, incentives and disincentives in a rough 50:40:10 ratio. Towards this, inspiration can be drawn from many global and national precedents. For instance, evidence supports the role of rural reservations, rural-based training and improvement in practice conditions, as exemplified by countries such as Thailand.

Chhattisgarh is a standout example that used a combination of higher salaries, postgraduate study benefits, and improved living and practice conditions for doctors, coupled with a higher penalty. Evidence shows that it paid off well for the state, not just in terms of filling vacancies, but also in increasing healthcare utilisation. Absenteeism in rural areas is an even more crucial problem that requires to be tackled in a similar spirit.

Governments shouldn't be tempted by harsh regulatory instruments simply because they entail fewer direct costs. Neither should potentially advantageous avenues such as compulsory rural service be repudiated outright. Instead, the way forward lies in finding a favourable 'middle path' that creates a win-win situation for society without alienating its doctors.

Quota demands unjust, untenable

Even as 'forward' communities like Vokkaligas and Lingayats are clamouring for a larger pie of reservations in Karnataka, it has emerged that less than 20% of the backward castes have found space in politics, leaving hundreds of communities without elected representatives of their own. While the politically and socially empowered Vokkaligas and Lingayats, besides Muslims, are categorised as Other Backward Classes (OBC), only 156 of the 805 backward castes have found representation in local body elections since 1996. These castes fall within Category A and B of the OBC quota. This is one of the findings of the Justice K Bhaktavatsala Commission which was set up to study the political representation of backward classes. It only points to how the powerful communities among the OBCs dominate the election scene, while the smaller and less influential ones continue to be marginalised. Some experts have suggested that rotation in reservations should be introduced so that the unrepresented backward castes find at least a toehold in the political apparatus. It would thus be wise for the state government to study how this can be achieved. Merely increasing the percentage of reservation, as it has just done, will at best help strengthen communities that are already well-entrenched in society. It will not further the cause of the most deserving.

'Forward' communities are already well represented, face no discrimination

With Assembly elections round the corner, major communities have upped the ante, with politicians and religious heads jumping into the bandwagon. The Vokkaliga community has set January 23 as the deadline for the government to increase its quota from 4% to 12% in the OBC reservation matrix. Leaders have demanded that all sub-castes also be included in the reservation so that the entire community can claim various benefits. The Panchamasalis, a powerful sub-sect of Lingayats, are demanding that they be moved from Category 3B to 2A, which will enable the community to corner a larger share of reservations.

The origin of reservation was the caste-based discrimination and the practice of untouchability within the Hindu community which led to the social, political and economic ostracisation of certain sections for centuries. It is not a poverty alleviation programme, for which there are many other schemes, but an affirmative action of not just providing jobs but also ensuring representation and participation in decision-making. The dominant communities which are now fighting the quota battle have not been subjected to social boycotts or other such forms of discrimination faced by SC/ST and backward castes. Acquiescing to their demands will reinstate the age-old hegemony of the upper castes over the lower and thereby defeat the very purpose of reservations, which is to correct this historical injustice. 6/6

The patriarchal bias of EWS quota

INDRAJEET KUMAR JHA

Priyanka, a 26-year-old girl from a remote village in Bihar, belongs to an upper-caste but extremely poor family. Despite the odds, she graduated from a college that was miles away from her village. After her graduation, her parents, who barely scraped by, started to pressurise her for marriage. But Priyanka was determined to transform her lot and empower herself through education. She burned the midnight oil and cleared the entrance exam to pursue an LL.B. from a reputed university. Her parents agreed to support her endeavour on the condition that she would pay for her own education through private tuition and marry a boy of their liking.

Although her financial hardship continued unabated, fortune seemed to smile on her when the Parliament passed the 103rd Constitution Amendment Act in 2019 and inserted articles 15(6) and 16(6) in the Constitution to extend the benefit of reservation to the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) in government jobs. It brought a glimmer of hope not only for Priyanka but zillions like her who were sunk into a miasma of despair and poverty. But soon their hopes were shattered owing to a particular clause in the law that smacked of deep patriarchal bias.

To put things in perspective, the government notification says persons who are not covered under the scheme of reservation for SCs, STs, and OBCs and whose gross family income is below Rs 8 lakh are to be identified as EWSs for the benefit of reservation. It further says that the term "family" for this purpose will include the person who seeks the benefits of reservation, his/her parents and siblings below the age of 18, his/her spouse and children.

Thus, the criteria of income and assets defined here include the spouse's income. As a result, when Priyanka, who got married to a government employee, approached the authority to get an EWS certificate, she was declared non-eligible as the gross annual income of her husband from all sources exceeded Rs 8 lakh. She was not only deprived of the benefits of affirmative action, but her dream to get a government job became even more distant as, after the 10% EWS reservation, she had to compete in the remaining 40% seats.

There are numerous girls like her whose wings were clipped in one fell swoop.

According to the data of the National Family Health Survey-5 (2019–21), as many as 23.3% of women aged 20–24 were married before they turned 18. In rural India, the number stood at a staggering 27%. Poverty and early marriage have a direct relationship because families that are struggling to make ends meet cannot afford to keep a girl unmarried at home.

The income of the spouse therefore cannot compensate for the past financial hardship and mental anguish of the poor girl, nor can it make her eligible overnight to compete with her privileged counterparts who studied in prestigious institutions. Is it fair to turn a blind eye to the prolonged struggle of a girl and deny her the benefits of reservation just because, after their marriage, the income of her spouse exceeds the criteria fixed by the government? It is not only insensitive and patriarchal but also a mockery of the idea of economic justice.

The travesty of justice for the financially vulnerable women of the upper caste appears even more farcical when we examine the criteria for OBC reservation. In determining the "creamy layer" for the OBCs, it is clearly mentioned that if a woman from the OBC category gets married to a Class I officer, she will continue to be the beneficiary of reservation. The "creamy layer" status of the candidate is determined by the income of her parents, even after her marriage. The income of the girl or her spouse will have no bearing on her eligibility to get benefits from the reservation.

Income is indeed the main criterion in deciding the creamy layer for both OBC and Economically Weaker Sections reservations, but on what grounds the income of parents is counted in the former and that of the spouse in the latter defies all logic and reason.

The irony is that neither the government nor the Supreme Court paid any attention to this loophole. The purpose of EWS reservation is undeniably to extend the benefit of reservation to the most vulnerable sections of the population.

Now that the court has given its seal of approval to reservations for Economically Weaker Sections, the time is ripe for the government to redress the shortcomings of the act and make it more inclusive for women.

(The writer works at ARSD College, University of Delhi.)

How does fundraising for start-ups work in India

VITTAL RAMAKRISHNA

There is no denying the fact that the Indian start-up environment has advanced significantly. The country's young, inquisitive populace is a significant factor in the increase in entrepreneurs. 65 per cent of Indians, according to expert data, are between the ages of 25 and 35, which significantly contributes to the growth of Indian start-ups. The key to a successful start-up is the idea or concept that aims to solve latest human concerns. In fact, according to industry experts, India is ranked second in the world for the quality of its innovations, and it has recognized start-ups that are resolving issues in 56 different industrial sectors, including 13 per cent from IT services, 9 per cent from healthcare and life sciences, 7 per cent from education, 5 per cent from professional and commercial services, 5 per cent from agriculture, and 5 per cent from food and beverage.

Apart from that, there are numerous things that need to be taken into account while raising a start-up, with funding being the most important one. When looking for investment, there are several possibilities on the market, including angel investors, venture capitalists, and many more. However, your start-up must present a solid argument to convince investors to fund your business. A competitive advantage, a strong management team, and consumer validation are the three major factors that investors look for in a potential investment. If your start-up has all three of these qualities, you have a very good chance of convincing the investors.

START-UP FUNDRAISING: WORKING

The first step for start-ups looking for funding is the pre-seed funding round followed by a seed round, and then series A, B and C subsequently. Company valuation, without a doubt, is the most essential component that comes as a requirement for these rounds. A start-up's maturity, management, market size, track record, profit, and risk are all taken into account when determining its valuation. These factors might affect the kind of investors that show interest in the business and the amount of funding it will be able to raise, going ahead. Once the valuation is done, the start-up moves ahead with the funding rounds. There is no certified time period in which a company would find an investor. For some, it could be months, while for others, it could be weeks. In the end, the goal is to find the right investor.

Below given are the funding rounds every start-up goes through in order to raise funds:

PRE-SEED FUNDING:

The initial stage of investment is known as pre-seed funding. In this case, investors give companies financial support so they may start creating their products or services in exchange for equity. Since the business is in its early stages, this round, simply put, entails investing in an idea.

SEED FUNDING:

Followed by pre-seed funding is seed funding which involves investment raised by a start-up based on the adoption of its idea in the market. Investors are more likely to be interested in a firm that offers a distinctive solution to an issue. There are fewer investors investing in this round of funding because the firm is still in its early stages and has a high likelihood of both success and failure.

SERIES A FUNDING:

After utilizing seed funding to develop a product and build a customer base, next comes the series A funding round. This round is typically a larger round of funding with a higher valuation. The funds earned in this round are utilized to increase the company's product offerings, clientele and to create a long-term growth strategy.

SERIES B FUNDING:

Start-ups jumping into the series B funding round have developed an established place in the market and people are familiar with their product offerings. The funding raised in this round is directed towards developing a loyal customer base by bringing in new talent, increasing sales and marketing, developing new technologies, and providing accessible customer assistance. Apart from that, this stage of funding gives entrepreneurs a chance to try out interesting theories and develop a strong business strategy.

SERIES C FUNDING:

Start-ups that enter this round of funding are successfully established in the market and require this extra funding to add new products to the offerings, diversify into new markets or buy or merge with other businesses in order to increase their valuation. New investors enter the picture as investment in this round becomes less risky, which may lead to firm growth.

FIND YOUR FUNDING

The Indian start-up ecosystem has drastically evolved. In fact, India boasts the third-largest start-up ecosystem in the world, according to Startupindia. Funding is the primary aspect that creates the framework for a startup's expansion and development. Finding the appropriate source of capital is, therefore, absolutely essential for anyone hoping to launch a start-up. When it comes to raising funds, there are several rounds involved, starting with seed funding and continuing with series A, B, and C. While deciding on the round of funding, startup owners need to take into account their current position in the marketplace and then, based on that, look for investors.

The author is CEO, founder of [...]

Teachers' post abolition and NEP 2020

■ Atul Sarma, Ashok Pankaj

The Government of Assam abolished 8000 elementary school teachers' posts on November 8, 2022 and justified it on the ground that it had in 2020 provided regular pay scale to 11206 contract teachers appointed under the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA). The government could also justify its decision on the basis of higher pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) at 21 at the primary and 14 at the upper primary levels as compared to the corresponding national average of 26 and 19.

However, a closer look at the status of elementary school education in the State suggests that this decision implies abdication of the responsibility by the State to provide universal free and compulsory education to 6-14-year-old children, as mandated by the Right to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009; that is also a fundamental right under Article 21(A) of the Constitution. We argue that this action also implies exclusion of the children of the poor and those residing in remote and inaccessible areas from school education. Further, this goes against the thrust on "quality inclusionary and equitable" school education of the National Education Policy, 2020. It (NEP 2020) states, "Inclusive and equitable education – while indeed an essential goal in its own right – is also critical to achieving an inclusive and equitable society in which every citizen has the opportunity to dream, thrive and contribute to the nation. The education system must aim to benefit India's children so that no child loses any opportunity to learn and excel because of circumstances of birth or background."

In this context, ground realities in Assam are disturbing. First, the number of government and government-aided schools in the State declined by 1646 and 1125 respectively between 2019-20 and 2021-22. Similarly, the number of teachers at Govt schools decreased by 575 and more sharply at Govt-aided schools by 3107 between 2020-21 and 2021-22. Secondly, the density of schools varies widely across districts as also across rural and urban areas. Thirdly, as per the UDISE (Unified District Information System for Education) 2021-22, the number of single-teacher elementary schools is quite high at 7.5 per cent of the total number of government elementary schools. Fourthly, almost 99 per cent of the single-teacher elementary schools are in rural areas. Similarly, the number of single-teacher elementary schools is quite high in relatively backward Bodoland districts of Baksa (152), Udalguri (305), Kokrajhar (241) and in tribal populated hilly districts of West Karbi Anglong (188) and Dima Hasao (218). Finally, untrained and upper primary teachers constitute as much as 30.3 per cent at primary schools and more than one-third at the upper primary level as compared to the national average of 11.3 per cent and 11.4 per cent respectively.

No wonder, the drop-out rate at the lower primary and upper primary levels is significantly high in Assam. In 2021-22, it was 6 per cent at the primary level – 6.8 per cent for boys and 5.2 per cent for girls, much higher than the all-India average of 1.5 per cent – 1.6 per cent for boys and 1.4 per cent for girls. The dropout rate at the upper primary level was even higher at 8.8 per cent – 10.1 per cent for boys and 7.6 per cent for girls, against the national average of 3.0 per cent – 2.7 per cent for boys and 3.3 per cent for girls.

In contrast, private schools in the State have grown at a fast pace, especially in the decade of 2010s, and paradoxically, after the enactment of the RTE Act. Private unaided elementary schools rose to 17.45 per cent in 2019-20 from only 3.82 per cent in 2009-10. Notably, private schools not only increased their share in the total elementary schools, but also in enrolment. In 2021-22 private schools constituted 15.89 per cent of the total elementary schools and enrolled 18 per cent of the total children enrolled in the State.

...Assam has large remote and inaccessible areas such as hills and *char*s. Private schools being exclusionary, have neither obligations nor impetus to reach out to the children of those areas. It is imperative for a state like Assam with high incidence of poverty and presence of geographical inaccessible terrains – consisting of flood plains, hills and forest areas – to provide quality government elementary schools for the children of those areas as also those of the poor.

Pupil-teacher ratio is also higher at private elementary schools. In 2021-22, private schools in Assam enrolled 19.25 per cent of the children, who were served by 19.28 per cent of the total elementary school teachers in the State. In contrast, government schools enrolled 76.89 per cent of the children, but were served by only 74.49 per cent of the total elementary school teachers. Private schools propagate their strength as having better PTR, and consequently, better learning outcomes. They strategically project themselves as providers of better education in a society where education is not only a great leveller, but it also facilitates socio-economic mobility.

At the same time, the general perception that private schools provide quality education is buttressed by some popular surveys, showing better learning outcomes of private schools as compared to government ones. This seems to have impacted government decision of closing down/amalgamating Govt schools as also the recent abolition of teachers' posts.

Increasing privatisation of school education in the State has several serious implications. First, it amounts to denying right to education, particularly to the children of the poor. Second, private schools being inherently profit motive driven, are less likely to be established in the remote and inaccessible areas. Third, it creates a dualism in the education system in terms of better quality private education for the children of higher income classes and poor quality of government schools for the poorer segment. Such dualism is pernicious; it perpetuates and even widens class differences and in turn, worsens income and wealth distribution in the society.

These implications are far more serious for Assam. For, 32.7 per cent of its population are multi-dimensionally poor as against the national average of 25.01 per cent. This means that almost one-third of Assam's population cannot afford access to private schools for their children.

Similarly, Assam has large remote and inaccessible areas such as hills and *char*s. Private schools being exclusionary, have neither obligations nor impetus to reach out to the children of those areas. It is imperative for a state like Assam with high incidence of poverty and presence of geographical inaccessible terrains – consisting of flood plains, hills and forest areas – to provide quality government elementary schools for the children of those areas as also those of the poor.

Overall, there is a strong case for the State to give more attention and allocate greater amount of resources to provide accessibility to quality elementary education and step up efforts for achieving universal free and compulsory education of 6-14-year-old children in the State.

Inherently profit-driven private education is beyond the means of a very large section of Assam's population. For reaping demographic dividend in the new technology era, larger investment rather than squeezing Govt expenditure on quality inclusive education is a way forward as it is consistent with the socio-economic realities as also with the thrust of the NEP 2020.

A B-School logo for a polarised India

The controversy over the redesign of the logo of India's premier management institute, the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIMA), has not ended with the adoption of the new logo by its board. The controversy involves quite a few issues which touch upon IIMA's identity, its self-image, and the decision-making process in the institute. It has adopted and unveiled the logo, which it says is "simple, bold and global", and reaffirms its identity and reflects its legacy. The institute has said that it had held consultations with stakeholders and incorporated the feedback in the new logo. Ever since the proposal for a change of logo was made known some months ago, there have been dissenting voices and objections. The need for a change was questioned in the first place, with many, including former alumni, faculty and others, finding no reason to change an established and well-recognised logo.

Though it is claimed that consultations were held before the new logo was finalised, there are complaints that they were scanty and inadequate. There were protests and even a resignation by a dean over the matter. The most important objection to the new logo was over the tampering with or dilution of the jaali motif in the original logo, taken from the Sidi Saiyyed mosque of Ahmedabad. The logo had combined the kalpatharu in the Indian tradition with the idiom of fine Islamic art, working out a fusion that represented the essential unity of India. The intricate flower and branch design has been done away with in the new logo. The Sanskrit tagline 'Vidya Viniyogadvikasa' (development through application of knowledge) has been retained, but all elements of the earlier logo, including the name of the institute, have been changed, edited or shifted to create the new one.

> **IIMA logo change was unnecessary, except to please political masters**

The criticism that this was done to de-emphasise the idea of a composite and inclusive culture that informed the original logo is valid. It gains credibility in the light of the many recent attempts to rewrite and sanitise history and to eliminate Islamic elements from it and from local and national traditions. These attempts have now gained momentum. Many monuments and institutions are being reassessed, repositioned, or renamed in accordance with the new political climate and its imperatives. It is unfortunate that the country's topmost management institute has taken such a decision. A logo contributes to the brand of an institution, and there was little need and justification for IIMA to change it now. Even if it had to be done, it should have been on the basis of wider consultations and a consensus, without changing the basic character of the original logo. 7/6

Digital Education for Digital India

SAKSHI **SETHI**

"Technology will not replace great teachers but technology in the hands of the great teachers can be transformational" – George Couros

Technology is one of the keywords of our world, yet it is also one of the most confused forms of elite and systematic knowledge. The usage of this term has changed immensely since the 20th century, and with time it has continued to evolve, thereby helping in improving not only the productivity of business enterprises and individuals but has also played an important role in developing human civilization.

There is no denying the fact that technology has brought a revolution in many operational fields - be it gadgets or faster modes of communication or even the education sector. The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in tremendous change in the traditional educational system, wherein the concept of online classes and usage of laptops has replaced the traditional way of teaching in classrooms and through books. Digital education in India which was the sole source of learning for students in the country during the pandemic. Today, with the click of a button, students have immediate access and privilege to quality information available worldwide. They can gain practical and technical knowledge. Innovative audio-video features can enhance their cognitive level, the study materials can be downloaded and saved for future reference. Teachers too can coordinate with students through electronic (e) classrooms and impart knowledge and share their ideas and resources and utilise the resources available on the internet for their various project work, research, etc.

It is often said, technology will become the wings that will allow the educational world to fly farther and faster than ever before. Online learning has changed our perception of education, making the education sector improve over time and adding to the comfort factor in our lives. The Government of India has announced several initiatives as part of its education campaign with the aim of benefitting the students belonging to different strata of society. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) initiated DIKSHA- Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing as part of PM eVidya, under the Atma Nirbhar Bharat programme which is the "One Nation; One digital platform" aiming to bring together the efforts of online, digital and on-air educational modes towards education. It is a national platform for schools across India, containing quizzes and courses for teachers and students. Similarly, many other technology-based initiatives such as Vidyadaan, SWAYAM, e Pathshala, Shiksha Vani and many more under this platform have brought a sea change in the lives of the people of the nation.

These initiatives by the government are the powerful repository of educational resources that can be accessed by students, teachers, researchers and parents anytime as per their convenience. The best part about these portals is that they are user friendly and are available in different languages - English, Hindi, Urdu and Sanskrit making them powerhouse of knowledge which is useful on pan India basis as people speaking different languages can make use of them and improve their learnings and capabilities to become informed and better human beings. The users can download the relevant educational material from these portals/ platforms and use them later as per their convenience. Broadcasting through radio also helps students living in remote areas to access knowledge. DTH channel with sign languages - DAISY is also available for hearing impaired students. These latest technological advancements in the field of education have put India on a high pedestal.

India plays a significant role in the global education industry and in the coming years is expected to become one of the largest global talent providers. However, the need of the hour is to ensure that our students get a high-quality education coupled with hands-on practical experience. Our curriculums need to be skill-focused, more personalised and up to date.

Digital agility through digital education is the need of the hour. For digital education to be successful, the teachers should be imparted sufficient and efficient training so that they become comfortable in these new age modes of education. This, along with well-equipped infrastructure and internet connections should be made available in the remotest areas of the country to derive true benefits of this mode of education. Electronic gadgets and technology at affordable cost should be made available for the weaker sections of the society, making digital learning cost-effective and giving equal opportunities to everyone. Through this mode, learning can be made more interactive and engaging between the learner and the teacher. Digital education will immensely help in addressing India's vast cultural and language diversity.

India is favourably placed to reap the benefits of digitalisation of education that can change 'how and what' we learn and will certainly help in bridging the gap in interaction between the teacher and the student in near future. However, to be useful, digital education should complement the traditional mode of physical education and should not be at its cost. The benefits of physical education can't be undermined as personal touch and interaction also play a great role in the children's development. Both these modes should supplement each other. Only then will the country be able to reap the true benefits of Digital education by dramatically improving the learning capacity of the students and leading India to the path of glory.

(The author is a teacher at a reputed school in Delhi. The views expressed are personal)

> ## INDIA PLAYS A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE GLOBAL EDUCATION INDUSTRY AND IN THE COMING YEARS IS EXPECTED TO BECOME ONE OF THE LARGEST GLOBAL TALENT PROVIDERS

P10|6

The Great Jobs Hunt

Too few Indians are seeking work and mostly among those working quality of employment isn't great

Raghuram Rajan, Rohit Lamba and Rahul Chauhan

India needs faster GDP growth, of course. But the quality of economic growth matters as much as its quantity. Specifically, growth must translate into good quality jobs. Unfortunately, on that count, we are not doing well.

Timely, reliable jobs data are important, and we have relatively few such sources in India. The objective of collecting such data is for the government to make more informed policy decisions, not show it in a bad light. At any rate, let's start by triangulating the jobs data we have.

The big picture

The two large-scale datasets – the government's quarterly urban Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) and Centre for Monitoring the Indian Economy's Consumer Pyramids Household Survey – peg India's unemployment rate at 7.2% and 8% as of September and November 2022 respectively. This means, around 3.5-3.9 crore Indians of working age population, who are willing and able to search for jobs, aren't able to get one.
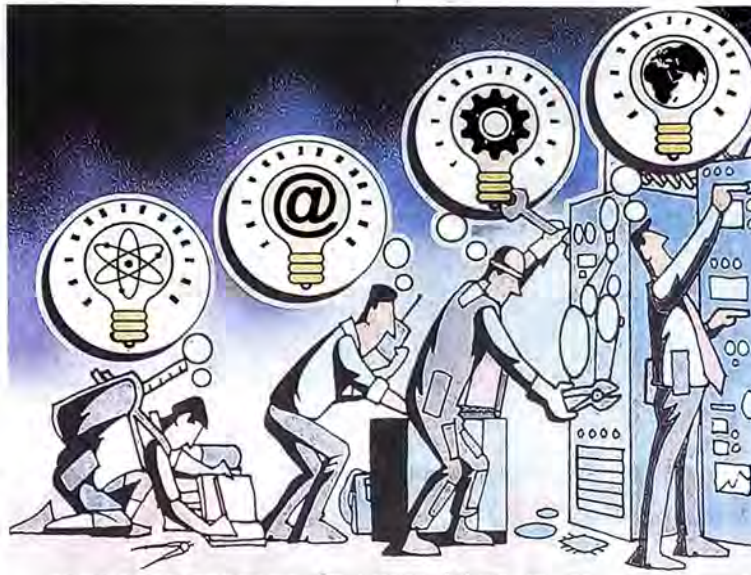
The unemployment rate only counts those who are unemployed and looking for jobs. If you are unemployed but not looking for jobs – for example, a 24-year-old preparing for exams for public-sector jobs or a 35-year-old who has given up looking – you are not counted.

Moreover, this metric is silent on the quality of jobs, and their productivity. For instance, five people manning a small retail store or tilling a small field, when only two would be sufficient, is disguised unemployment, but it does not show up in these numbers.

Too few look for jobs

Digging deeper, the labour force participation rate in India – the fraction employed or looking for a job – is currently around 46%. So, for every 100 Indians of working age, a staggering 54 are not participating in the labour force.

To put things in a comparative perspective, the labour force participation rate in 2021:

- In Brazil was 58%,
- In Indonesia 68%,
- In all OECD countries 60%.

Missing women

The gender breakup is more worrisome still. At 19%, the female labour force participation rate in India is even lower than Saudi Arabia. Prominent thinker Chandra Bhan Prasad has pointed out that it may be a matter of pride for some with rising incomes that females in the family are not required to undertake unsafe manual jobs.

Yet it is equally an indictment of a system that cannot offer women attractive jobs outside the home that they can get to, and do, safely. According to the ILO, the gender discrepancy is enormous even for the well-educated – in 2019, only 30% of Indian females with tertiary education participated in the labour force as compared to 81% for males.

Whatever the reason, a large portion of productive female labour does not work outside the home. Beyond the

A large portion of productive female labour does not work outside the home. Beyond the direct loss in productivity, we are losing out on the new ideas and valuable changes that more diversity in the workplace would bring

direct loss in productivity, we are losing out on the new ideas and valuable changes that more diversity in the workplace would bring.

Youth unemployment has also been increasing steadily – it stood at 22% in 2019 (and was 28% in 2021) as compared to 18% in 2010. Remember, those still studying or taking exams are not included in these numbers. According to CMIE data, we do see a jump in males participating in the labour force after the age of 25. Something - possibly preparation for exams for public sector jobs that only a lucky few will get – is keeping a sizable chunk of youth from joining the labour force even after getting a college degree.

Returning to farms

What about the quality of jobs? The PLFS indicates 46.5% of the labour force works in the agriculture sector today as compared to 42.5% in 2019. This increase is not just a pandemic effect. Between 2018-19 and 2019-20, agricultural employment increased by 3.4 crore while industry and services employment only grew by 93 lakh. Regular salaried employees too have dropped from 24% in 2018-19 to 21% in 2020-21.

The most plausible interpretation of these facts is that the quality and number of non-agricultural jobs on offer has regressed. If so, we may be the only developing country that is pushing people back to agriculture, an alarming indictment of our efforts at job creation.

Rajeev Chandrasekhar, minister for IT and skill development, wrote in these pages that 8 lakh jobs will be created over the next five years by the government's flagship Production Linked Incentives scheme. Given that such subsidies are being directed into capital-intensive industries, this is arguably an optimistic number. Furthermore, the estimated cost in government subsidies will be Rs 2 lakh crore, amounting to Rs 25 lakh per job created. By any account, this is an enormous subsidy per job.

Given that 50 million job seekers will come on the labour market over this period, and crores are already looking for jobs, the multiplier effect of each PLI job has to be implausibly large to meet the need. PLI, alone, cannot be the solution.

The spontaneous outburst of our youth in response to the army's Agnipath Scheme reinforces the data suggesting we are failing on job creation. Government, private sector, and civil society must come together to find a sustainable way to create more and better jobs. India should not be a negative outlier among nations in this matter.

Rajan is a professor at the University of Chicago, and Lamba is an assistant professor at Pennsylvania State University and Chauhan is a research scholar

India@100: Science will lead the path

GAUTAM R DESIRAJU   SHARAN SETTY

Without substantial progress in the fields of science and technology, it would be an onerous task to meet challenges & turn India into a developed country

On August 15, 2022, when India turned 75, Prime Minister Narendra Modi exhorted us all to enjoin ourselves on a journey where India would transform into a developed nation by 2047 that is by the time we would have completed a century as an independent country. The keynotes of his address were the three facilitators of such a trajectory—the fact that we have become an aspirational society, that there is now a cultural and civilisational re-awakening amongst Indians, and that the world is taking our claims of attaining our rightful place at the global high table seriously.

Twenty-five years are not such a long time in such a scheme of things, and it is clear that without substantial progress in science and technology, it would be difficult to attain this 'developed' tag. There should be a well-defined roadmap accordingly for Indian science if it is indeed to achieve developed status. These matters have been highlighted by the recent assumption of the Presidency of G20 last week in Bali, Indonesia.

More specifically, Science-20, or S20, the Science Engagement Group, has been set up by the Government.

In no time, Union Minister Jitendra Singh chaired a high-level review meeting to oversee the preparations for the S20 Summit meetings. Scheduled to be held in Coimbatore in July next year, the theme of the S20 Summit meeting will be 'Disruptive Science for Innovative and Sustainable Growth'. Complementing those are the side events under the theme of 'Research Innovation Initiated Gathering' (RIIG).

The sub-themes for RIIG gathering will be Materials for Sustainable Energy, Scientific Challenges and Opportunities towards Achieving a Sustainable Blue Economy, Biodiversity and Bio-economy and Eco-Innovations for Energy Transition. The government is hopeful that the summit will foster a cooperative climate where encouraging frameworks for environmentally friendly technologies can be created. In addition to that, technology transfers, creation of a global start-up ecosystem and assertion of IP sharing is on the agenda.

In terms of numbers, it is easy to see that with a growth rate of 7.8 per cent in GDP this year, the $5 trillion economy target will be achieved by 2026-27 (unless there are drastic fluctuations in oil prices). With the possible switch from fossil fuels to renewables, one may envisage a $9 trillion economy by 2031-32 and a $40 trillion economy by 2047, whereby we would be within the top three countries of the world in absolute monetary terms and not just PPP numbers.

What should we do to achieve the 2047 target? R Jagannathan and Ashish Chandorkar have written in Swarajya on what we must concentrate on. Additionally, we would add that education, health including pharmaceuticals and women's

> **OUR WEAPONS PROGRAMME AND ENERGY NEEDS HAVE A COMFORTABLE BUFFER SUPPORT IN THE FORM OF OUR R&D PROGRESS IN THORIUM TECHNOLOGY. ALL THIS WAS POSSIBLE BECAUSE THE DAE WAS ALLOWED TO RUN USING ITS OWN CLOSED, CAREFULLY SELECTED GROUP OF SCIENTISTS**

(Gautam R Desiraju of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, is a member of the S20 Engagement Group of the Government of India. Sharan Setty is an Associate Editor at Swarajya)

health, exports, taking into account demand-supply imbalances, nutrition including fertilisers, water including ocean and polar research, climate change, genomics, advanced materials including nanomaterials, robotics, electric and solar powered vehicles, drones, outer space, and IT, in general, are essential sectors where scientific methodology practised by experts needs to be translated into globally competitive technology.

Given the compressed 25-year time scale, we simply cannot avoid imported solutions in certain bottleneck areas. This requires a well thought-out foreign policy keeping India's interests paramount and noting that a country may switch between being a friend, neutral, or adversary depending on the circumstances. On the economic front, technical matters need to be synergised with issues of scalability, skill development, blockchain technology, artificial intelligence, and supply chain inadequacies—quite a package.

A vital aspect of progress is a proper management of education. Since the time of India's independence, successive governments have paved the way for accessible education to all. Institutions of higher learning — IISc, IITs and IIMs have given the world a cursory glance at what India is truly capable of. Despite all this, a lot more needs to be done to modernise our education system and the overall infrastructure that facilitates it.

In this regard, the primary concern is investment. At present we spend around 0.8 per cent of our GDP on education and research. This number needs to be bootstrapped up to say 3-4 per cent of

the GDP at the very least. China made these heavy investments starting around 1990: the results are apparent today with their thriving scientific ecosystem. Given the present state of our healing economy, the required amount for the government alone to bear is too much of ask. The role of the private sector in the education sphere is not just necessary but needs to attain dominance under careful regulation.

However, there is yet another aspect that needs to be considered. Given again the compressed 25-year time scale, and the fact that any fundamental change in education will start showing results only after 15 years, we urgently need a strategy that optimises the usage of the resources we currently possess. In the meantime, \the government should start vacating the business of running educational institutions in terms of funding, admissions, and administration. The disparities between central and state universities must be removed because the vast majority of students attend the latter.

Most of the technological and R&D heft that India needs should come from mission-oriented government laboratories with no educational component, and from corporate research laboratories that dovetail closely with government laboratories. The IITs cannot be expected to solve problems of scalability, economic leverage and supply chain management. Their activities can at most take one to the level of good start-ups but that is insufficient for the big, basic breakthroughs that India 2047 needs. The USA moved quickly in the Vannevar Bush dispensation in the early 1950s because of a perfect syn-

ergy between academia, industry and government, mostly their defence laboratories. A similar strategy is underway in China's civil-military fusion. We should aim for nothing less.

The Department of Atomic Energy is a wonderful example as to how a government scientific department should be organised, independent of educational undertakings. Beginning in the 1950s, we were subject to draconian restrictions with regard to the import of uranium ores to make fissile U-235, an essential component for nuclear weapons. India developed its own route via thorium extracted from monazite sand beaches. India has the largest supplies of thorium in the world, with comparatively poor quantities of uranium. India has projected meeting as much as 30 per cent of its electrical demands through thorium by 2047.

Our weapons programme and energy needs have a comfortable buffer support in the form of our R&D progress in thorium technology. All this was possible because the DAE was allowed to run using its own closed, carefully selected group of scientists (and a very small number of student-employees). This provision needs to be extended to all non-educational scientific laboratories and institutions that have been charged with the duty of rapidly translating science into immediately applicable technologies, strategic security, and towards products and services.

The when, what, and how having been defined it now requires the political will to effect these changes so that we may all proudly hold our heads high by 2047 as citizens of a truly developed nation of the world.

Volunteerism through Vidyanjali for education

Experiments of volunteers coming out to help in imparting education have been immensely beneficial in strengthening school infra

A SRIJA

ABDUL MOMIN

(A Srija is an Economic Adviser to and Abdul Momin is Consultant in the Ministry of Education)

National Education Policy 2020 recommends enhancing learning outcomes of students by involving community and volunteer efforts for one-on-one tutoring, holding extra help classes, teaching support and guidance. These objectives recommended by the NEP were conceived through the program called 'Vidyanjali'- a school volunteer initiative wherein volunteering was proposed to be done in non-monetary form directly to the schools through a tech-based common platform.

The initiative is aimed at strengthening school infrastructure and enhancing the quality of education by seeking community support in different domains of school education. The volunteers could be local individuals, civil societies or corporates, people from the Indian diaspora and NRIs. Vidyanjali seeks community involvement in the efficient functioning of the schools in the neighbourhood, especially government and government aided schools.

Though volunteering for a social cause has been an integral part of Indian culture, the uniqueness of the Vidyanjali initiative is that it provides a tech-enabled smooth platform which connects the schools with the volunteers located in any part of the country. Very often, a common citizen is left wondering how to volunteer for a social cause and schools on the other hand look out for assistance to meet the diverse yet small needs of the school which does not get covered in through their annual budget allocations.

Many a time, shortage of teachers leaves students deprived of education. Vidyanjali provides an opportunity to address these gaps. Launched in September 2021, with active volunteers participation, the programme is gradually gaining traction among citizens. It has proven its strength by successfully managing to attract a good number of volunteers and onboarded schools on the portal. As on date, there are over 3.87 lakh government and government-aided schools on board and over 102683 volunteers have registered on the Vidyanjali portal. The volunteers under Vidyanjali have shown great deal of enthusiasm by contributing to the schools in terms of assets as well as services. For instance, there are cases where volunteers have donated about 52122 ceiling fans/water purifiers/drinking water facility and other services to schools in Assam.

Similarly, in Delhi we have volunteers providing subject assistance, mentoring, teaching art & craft and music to the students. Moreover, school girls are getting self-defense training, while volunteers are providing assistance in developing basic civil infrastructure and other classroom needs, including ICT-based learning material and devices such as tablets, mobile phone, LCD, stationary, books, laptop, and flip white board, etc., to the schools across the country.

Almost 9.27 lakh children have benefitted from this volunteering programme. The next step is to rope in bulk contributions from corporations, civil societies to schools across the State to strengthen them. The success of the programme rests on the effort put in by the states/UTs in getting the program on board through regular training sessions rendered to district/block level functionaries, as well as heads of schools to onboard the schools on the portal and place their request. The volunteers can contribute only if the schools are registered on the portal and place their request.

Volunteers could even be common citizens like us. We all have the urge to contribute back to the schools that we passed out from. People having expertise in sports can impart sports training to the children, doctors can organize medical camps and conduct health/mental wellbeing lectures/workshops.

Companies/groups/organizations can assist schools in building additional classrooms/toilets for girls/ ramps for children with special needs/ICT labs/Smart classroom /residentials hostels for students/electricity/water and internet connections etc. As alumni, self-employed or salaried professionals all of us can support our alma-mater in various ways. The exhaustive list on which volunteers can contribute is available on the Vidyanjali portal.

Beneficially, the programme does not minimize the responsibilities of the Government rather it supplements/complements and strengthens the efforts of the Governments taken for the betterment of the whole education continuum in the country. The people volunteering under Vidyanjali do it selflessly. They cannot claim their services as full-time experience, while the schools cannot treat them as full-time teachers/staff of the school. The programme is fully based on the true spirit of volunteerism and with a very clear intention to tap the resources available with the community for catalyzing the needs of schools and volunteers connected through extensive use of technology and community outreach programs on a single platform.

THE I OF YK ALAGH

He bridged the gulf between economic theory and administration

SHREEKANT SAMBRANI

YOGINDER K ALAGH wrote a column "A Note of Trust," in this paper on December 27, 2016. He talked about his "great grandfather, the great beagle so to say," who graciously handed out a large one paisa coin (what we called the dhabboo paisa) to the many children who touched his feet in obeisance. The column was about demonetisation, which took the reader through a fascinating narrative of history and the concept of money as a store of value and how that was destroyed by a stroke of administrative fiat. It also challenged the South Asian aam aurat's long-held belief in saving under all circumstances.

That was quintessential Alagh: Simple folksy wisdom disguising deep insights, all in just 700 words. I wrote to him saying that his column was easily the best among the literally hundreds of opinions I had read since November 8. He replied, "Thank you Sambrani Saheb. I wrote it in fun but while it was generally liked, I got the short end of the stick from the Sangh Parivar." That, too, was typical Alagh, sure of his scholarship and no false modesty, but with a great sense of proportion.

I G Patel, who also read his columns, and I would often discuss what he wrote. We shared a small joke that Alagh could squeeze in a lot more words in the allotted space because many of them comprised a single letter, which was also the thinnest in the alphabet.

The reason why the Alagh columns invariably became first-person accounts was because he had such a vast repertoire of experi-

> India has a long list of economic bureaucrats, but none was so multi-dimensional as Alagh. And his erudition was complimented by his prolific writing in popular as well as academic media.

ences of all aspects of economic policy and administration, both in India and on the international stage. His spectrum of expertise was easily the widest among all the columnists I have been learning from. That includes, besides Patel, international luminaries such as Paul Krugman, Tom Friedman and Joseph Stiglitz. He also did not take lightly his role as an academic economist. He had effectively bridged the gulf between economic theory and administration. India has a long list of economic bureaucrats, but none was so multi-dimensional as Alagh. And his erudition was complimented by his prolific writing in popular as well as academic media.

I first met Alagh in 1971. He was then at the Sardar Patel Institute of Economic and Social Research in Ahmedabad. I had just joined the faculty of the Indian Institute of Management in the same city. He had organised a seminar by a visiting scholar on input-output analysis and planning. I raised some issues rather vehemently and insisted on speaking longer. He had to remind me that it was the visitor's seminar, not mine.

That was the start of a good association. The last time we met was in a seminar organised by the Darshan Itihas Nidhi on entrepreneurship in port cities in Gujarat. I had some points to raise in the concluding session. Alagh was the chair, and so I prefaced my remarks by saying that I would remember his advice from our first meeting. He had a hearty laugh. That brought our association to a full circle.

Among the many contributions that Alagh made to the development history of India, none was more significant or more impactful than his work on the Narmada project. He was its early champion and pursued its planning regardless of changes in government. He worked long himself and drove a team of dedicated young staff to prepare exhaustive plans and analyses. As he was to write several times in the last 20 years, it was perhaps the most thoroughly planned development project covering all aspects including the reach of the canal network and the welfare of the displaced.

The withdrawal of the World Bank support for the project on environmental and rehabilitation policy grounds in the 1990s did not affect his commitment to the project. He believed that this was a wrong decision and lent full support to all the state governments which pursued it, ranging from the Chimanbhai Patel ministry in the early 1990s to the Narendra Modi governments 10 years later.

If the Narmada project today has become the lifeline of Gujarat, a good part of the credit must go to this Great Beagle of Indian development economists. He gave countless dhabboo paisa's worth to his adopted state. That will be remembered long after those who gave him the short end of the stick are consigned to the dustbin of history.

The writer taught at IIM, Ahmedabad and was the founder-director of the Institute of Rural Management, Anand

The ayurveda circle

Among ancient India's biggest gifts to the world, we must embrace it emphatically first

Union Minister of State for Tourism Shripad Naik has rightly advocated the need for giving benefits of 'Ayurveda' to the world. The 9th World Ayurveda Congress is being organised by the World Ayurveda Foundation with support of the Union Ministry of AYUSH and Government of Goa. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the valedictory session on December 11. "It (Ayurveda) is not just medicine, it's our tradition. We need to give benefits of it to the world," he said. "Ayurveda has been facilitated by the setting up of a separate Ministry of AYUSH, credit of which goes to Modi" Naik added. He also said that the Modi government took Yoga to the world. And that is perhaps where he was off the mark. Indeed the AYUSH ministry was formed to give fillip to the alternative medicines especially Ayurveda but has it achieved its objective is rather questionable. More than 5,000 delegates and 200 delegates from 30 countries are attending the congress. Though conclaves like this do help, the minister and the government at large should understand that it takes more than just words to make a system popular. Equating it to Yoga would be wrong as Yoga was already popular in the west and the credit for that certainly does not go to the government.

The Ministry of AYUSH, is responsible for developing education, research and propagation of traditional medicine systems in India. The Department of Indian Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy (ISM&H) was made into a ministry by the Modi Government in 2014. But in its eight years there is hardly anything that AYUSH can be proud of. It started with much fanfare but has delivered nothing. It promised 100 AYUSH hospitals across the country were proposed, an Institute of Naturopathy in Pune at the cost of Rs 1,000 crore and posting 4,000 AYUSH practitioners across the country. Perhaps the AYUSH ministry can throw some light on the progress made. Somewhere the ministry lost its sense of direction and got embroiled in unnecessary controversies with its advisories which were not backed by scientific research. It failed to provide an infrastructure for alternative medicine and create awareness about the alternative medicines. The minister would do well to come up with a viable plan to provide facilities for the alternative medicines. Before that happens it would be just lip service to a great cause by the union ministers, nothing more.

English's hegemony in the Indian endeavour

Hindi and Hind

MUKUL KESAVAN

The takeover of NDTV by Gautam Adani is seen as the capitulation of the last all-India news organisation that consistently challenged the narratives sponsored by Narendra Modi's government and the *sangh parivar*. This is broadly correct, given the foam-flecked sycophants who front-up television news elsewhere. But the fall of NDTV is a metaphor for something larger — the fatal self-absorption of English-speaking *desis*.

In some ways, NDTV represented the strengths of anglophone India: liberal, highly educated, densely networked elites, benchmarking best practice elsewhere to pioneer non-*sarkari* broadcasting in India in the post-Doordarshan age. Equally, the organisation represented an incestuous Lutyens' elite that had acquired its liberalism too easily. Its members had come by their convictions by talking to other English-speaking *desis* without feeling the need to converse with the rest of India, the other ninety-nine per cent.

This isn't to suggest that their commitment to pluralism and other progressive ideas was shallow or misplaced, merely that their ideas and rhetoric hadn't been road tested in public debate and retail politics. One of the differences between Pakistan and India is that anglophone Indians succeeded in creating an English public sphere. India's ecosystem of English-speaking bureaucracies, both governmental and corporate, English newspapers, magazines and television channels, English-medium schools, colleges, publishing houses, advertising agencies and writers who dealt exclusively in English achieved critical mass and became something of a world unto itself. It was a world in which the anglophone Indian could win a substantial audience or readership, in which she/he could achieve real and substantial professional success.

It was a public sphere that was at once cosmopolitan and insular; cosmopolitan because it was so plugged into the world that English opened up, and insular because it dealt with non-English speaking India at one remove, at second hand. We see this in various ways: in North Indian urban professionals who never subscribe to a Hindi newspaper or magazine, in the near-total ignorance of Hindi fiction or poetry amongst hyper-educated liberals who otherwise describe themselves as 'voracious' readers,

mukulkesavan@hotmail.com

and in the inexplicable indifference to the misery that higher education in English inflicts on Indians who don't know English well.

It's important to understand that India's anglophone elite creates and recreates itself every generation with meticulous premeditation. It's quite difficult to become linguistically deracinated when you're surrounded by people who speak your mother tongue. Till the age of six, I only spoke Hindi. I was socialised into English in school *via* its library, which was crammed with fiction in English. By the time I began teaching Indian history to university students, Hindi had become a transactional language that I used to buy things with.

My experience is not necessarily representative. Many English-speaking Indians of my generation who are not North Indian aren't just fluently bi-lingual, they are multi-lingual. Also, middle-class anglophones in Bengal and Kerala and Maharashtra are often expressive in both English and their mother tongues. This decoupling of the vernacular from intellectual work and expressiveness is particularly marked in North Indian anglophones, but it is something of a trend all over India.

This secession from *desi* languages has real world implications. I taught history in Jamia Millia Islamia, a Central university in Delhi, for thirty-five years. Most teachers in my department taught in both Hindi-Urdu and English, partly because there were students in class who weren't from the Hindi heartland, partly because the historical literature even for Indian history is principally published in English, and partly because having learnt history in English, we were comfortable lec-

turing in it.

Some lecturers did bi-lingual teaching better than others but English remains the default language for higher education in the humanities and social sciences. The cost of English's hegemony became apparent to me when I began supervising dissertations written by research students. To make an argument in a language that you only imperfectly know while trying to follow academic protocols is not just frustrating, it is humiliating. When a Bengali or Tamil intellectual with rudimentary Hindi tries to speak publicly in Hindi, he sounds inarticulate and comical. When an articulate Hindi-speaking MPhil student from Azamgarh tries to write about military-fiscalism in English in his dissertation, he might sound incoherent because he is translating from and re-translating into a language he doesn't wholly know. In effect, the main product of India's academic industry is alienation.

This is an academic example but English's inert hegemony deranges lives in every field of human endeavour. And because the English public sphere in India, though numerically small, is lucrative enough to reward its stakeholders, even the most progressive of them do very little to reform the system. This has consequences. When the majority of university students realise through long experience that the game is rigged in favour of a minuscule ruling class of anglophones, it delegitimises the value of education, of expert knowledge, of the distinction between truth and nonsense. In a context like this, when a demagogue like Modi takes a swipe at the likes of Amartya Sen with a motto like 'hard work is bet-

ter than Harvard', knowing anglophones might snigger but it resonates amongst people who have been at the receiving end of this privileged knowingness forever.

There is, whether we like it or not, a direct link between the comedy of Rahul Gandhi speaking Hindi and us. Modi and Amit Shah, Gujarati politicians both, made it their business to be rhetorically effective in Hindi. Congress dynasts like Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and his son didn't because they were entitled dynasts. It's clear now that politicians who can't do retail politics in Hindi/Hindustani have no future as all-India politicians. Any politician who doesn't recognise this infantilises himself. This is why a figure like Rahul Gandhi, despite his sincerity and his commitment to the hard work of the Bharat Jodo Yatra, can be dismissed as the prince-in-waiting of the *babalog*.

So long as anglophone Indians choose to live mainly and unselfconsciously in English, they remain charter members of the *babalog*. Which returns us to the death of NDTV as we know it. The real absence created by Adani's hostile takeover is not the passing of NDTV 24x7 but the fact that NDTV's outstanding anchor/reporter/editorialist, Ravish Kumar, no longer has a television platform. *His reach and standing* as NDTV India's principal figure dwarfed the reach and the influence of NDTV's English channel, valuable though it was. Ravish's standing reminds us that you can't be a public figure without a public, that in the Union as it's currently constituted, you cannot speak for Hind or to it, without Hindi. To cede Hindi to the Hindi*wallahs* is to cede Hind.

उपनिषद में दिखी साइंस की सबसे बड़ी खोज

■ सुभाष काक

दंतकथाओं में एक मायावी पेड़ है, कल्पतरू। कहते हैं यह सभी इच्छाएं पूरी कर देता है। भारतीय सभ्यता के ज्ञान और निधि का यही पेड़ है। तमाम राजा और सम्राट इसके भौतिक पक्ष को देखते रहे। सिकंदर के अभियान से लेकर तुर्कों के आक्रमण और कोलंबस की यात्रा से ब्रिटिश साम्राज्य तक- सभी के केंद्र में भारत इसी कारण था। भारतीय गाथाओं, दर्शन और रहस्यवाद का चमकता पहलू विश्व को लुभाता रहा। यहां तक कि यूनान लौटते समय सिकंदर अपने साथ एक योगी को ले गया।

भारतीय विचारों ने चीन और दक्षिण-पूर्व एशिया को ही प्रभावित नहीं किया, बल्कि इसने पश्चिमी सोच पर भी गहरा असर डाला। पिछले 300 बरसों में इन विचारों और ज्ञान के अन्वेषण ने यूरोपीय व अमेरिकी समाज को बदल दिया। पिछले 100 बरस की बात करें तो कई महान लेखकों और वैज्ञानिकों ने भारतीय विचारों से प्रेरणा ली है।

20वीं सदी की शायद सबसे बड़ी बौद्धिक खोज है क्वांटम थिअरी। इस सदी में हमें जो शानदार तकनीकी सफलता मिली है, उसके पीछे यही सिद्धांत है। इस सिद्धांत को रचने वालों में एक हैं इरविन श्रोडिंगर (1887-1961)। इस सिद्धांत को पूरा करने से पहले 1925 में एक जगह उन्होंने लिखा कि क्वांटम मकैनिक्स की खोज वेदांत के केंद्रीय विचारों को रूप देने का प्रयास है। इरविन श्रोडिंगर ने लिखा है, 'आपका यह जीवन जो आप जी रहे हैं, वह इस पूरे अस्तित्व का एक टुकड़ा मात्र नहीं, बल्कि एक निश्चित अर्थ में संपूर्ण है। इसे ब्राह्मणों ने उस पवित्र और रहस्यवादी सूत्र में विदित किया, जो बहुत ही आसान है। वह सूत्र है, 'तत् त्वम असि, यह तुम हो या फिर इन शब्दों में, 'मैं पूरब में हूं। मैं पश्चिम में हूं। मैं ऊपर हूं और नीचे हूं। मैं यह पूरा ब्रह्म हूं।'

श्रोडिंगर की 1944 में आई पुस्तक 'वॉट इज लाइफ' में भी वैदिक विचारों का उपयोग किया गया। उस वक्त आते ही यह पुस्तक विख्यात हो गई थी। डीएनए कोड की खोज करने वालों में से एक फ्रांसिस क्रिक का कहना था कि इसी पुस्तक ने उन्हें इतनी बड़ी खोज की राह दिखाई। अगले कुछ बरसों में श्रोडिंगर, हाइजेनबर्ग और उनके अनुयायियों ने एक ब्रह्मांड गढ़ा। यह नया विचार उस वैदिक अवधारणा से मेल खाता है, जिसके अनुसार सब कुछ एक में है। सचाई की खोज के लिए अपने अनुसंधान के कारण वह वेदांतवादी हिंदू बन गए। वह वेद, योग और सांख्य दर्शन पर ग्रंथ पढ़ते थे। फिर उसे अपने शब्दों में लिखा और फिर आखिरकार उन पर भरोसा करने लगे। उनके पसंदीदा ग्रंथ थेः उपनिषद और भगवद्गीता।

श्रोडिंगर की जीवनी लिखने वाले वॉल्टर मोर ने बताते हैं कि श्रोडिंगर ने पश्चिम के धार्मिक विचारों को खारिज कर दिया। श्रोडिंगर यूरोप की कई यूनिवर्सिटी में प्रफेसर रहे। 1933 में उन्हें नोबेल पुरस्कार मिला। हिटलर के दौर में नाजी विचारों के विरोध के कारण उन्हें पद गंवाना पड़ा और वह इंग्लैंड चले गए। कुछ साल आयरलैंड में रहे। दूसरे विश्वयुद्ध के अंत में वियना लौटे, जहां 1961 में उनका निधन हुआ। क्वांटम मकैनिक्स सामान्य तर्क के परे है। यह रसायन और जीव शास्त्रों के रहस्यों की

Dall E 2 image generator

क्वांटम मकैनिक्स देने वाले इरविन श्रोडिंगर अपने बिस्तर के बगल में हिंदू धर्मग्रंथों की एक कॉपी रखते। उनका मानना था कि पश्चिम के विज्ञान को आध्यात्मिक जड़ता से पूरब ही बचा सकता है।

व्याख्या करता है। श्रोडिंगर ने साफ लिखा है कि चेतना एक एकता है। वह तर्क देते हैं, 'अंतर्दृष्टि नई नहीं है। महान उपनिषदों में आत्मा = ब्रह्म को मान्यता है। इसका आशय हुआ कि व्यक्तिगत अस्मिता सर्वव्यापी है।' उन्होंने कहा था कि चेतना के बहुवचन का विचार और कई आत्माओं की धारणा सरल है। उन्होंने माया के चलते बहुवचन की धारणा पर विचार किया, 'दर्पण वीथि (आईनों की गैलरी) से वैसा ही भ्रम बनता है। और वैसे ही गौरीशंकर (सागरमाथा) और माउंट एवरेस्ट को विभिन्न घाटियों से देखने पर एक ही चोटी बनती हैं।'

श्रोडिंगर कहते हैं, 'वेदांत सिखाता है कि चेतना अनोखी है। सभी घटनाएं एक सर्वव्यापी चेतना में निभाई जाती हैं। निर्वाण शुद्ध रूप से आनंदपूर्ण ज्ञान की स्थिति है। इसका किसी व्यक्ति से कोई लेना-देना नहीं है। अहंकार या उसका अलग होना एक भ्रम है। मनुष्य का लक्ष्य अपने कर्म को सुरक्षित रखना और विकसित करना है। जब मृत्यु होती है तो कर्म जीवित रहते हैं और अपने लिए दूसरा चरित्र बनाते हैं।' 'ऐसा कोई ढांचा नहीं है, जिसमें हम एक से अधिक चेतना पा सकें। यह केवल कुछ ऐसा है, जिसे हम लोगों की भौतिक बहुलता के कारण बनाते हैं, लेकिन यह गलत निर्माण है।' श्रोडिंगर बताते हैं कि इसका समाधान उपनिषद में है। उनके अनुसार, 'बहुलता केवल आभास है, यथार्थ नहीं। यह उपनिषदों का सिद्धांत है। और केवल उपनिषदों का ही नहीं। ईश्वर के साथ मिलन का रहस्यमय अनुभव इस विचार की ओर ले जाता है, पर यह सच है कि पश्चिम की विचारधारा ने इसका कड़ा विरोध किया है। क्वांटम फिजिक्स में जो विचार विचित्र लग रहे थे, भारतीय दर्शन के बारे में बातचीत के बाद अचानक ठीक से समझ आने लगे।' श्रोडिंगर का कहना था कि पूरब से पश्चिम में कुछ ब्लड ट्रांसफ्यूजन की जरूरत है ताकि पश्चिम के विज्ञान को आध्यात्मिक जड़ता से बचाया जा सके।

महाखंड भारत

Bharatiya Bhasha Divas on Dec 11 hails diversity

When Indian languages become the medium of education from primary to higher level, India will realise its soul

RAGHAVENDRA P TIWARI

India is a country of diversities. The multicoloured geographical construct of the country is such that it embraces several cultures. Diversity in lifestyle, beliefs, faith and food habits amaze foreigners. Language is a key component of such diversities. Man has tirelessly acquired language to express and communicate. With language, he contemplates. The original text of human intelligence, the Rigveda, says in reference to language that 'the steadfast man utters the language with a mind purified like flour filtered in a sieve and pure virtue is established in speech. Saint Kabir said, "Sanskrit hai koop jal, bhakha bahta neer." Poet Tulsidas, despite being a Sanskrit scholar, created literature in Awadhi and Braj - the

two prominent regional languages. The languages of modern times are the result of continuous refinement over a long period of time. Just as threshing chaff is removed from the food grains, the redundant and archaic language is removed through its consistent usage.

December 11 is the birthday of modern Tamil poet Subramaniam Bharathi. Educated in Tamil Nadu and Varanasi, Bharathi enthused the public with his writings during the Swaraj struggle and is considered a bridge between north and south. He composed fiery songs imbued with the spirit of nationalism. The decision of the Government of India to celebrate this day as 'Bharatiya Bhasha Divas' is really com-

mendable.

It is well known that Indian languages occupied the backseat under British rule. These languages were despised due to Macaulisation of education. Consequently, English received protection and promotion. English was imposed on Indians as the medium of administration and education. It was around 1929 that the philosopher Krishna Chandra Bhattacharya emphasized on the 'Swaraj of Language' to inculcate Swaraj in thoughts as Swaraj was the dream and dreams are seen only in the mother tongue.

About 20 per cent of the Indian languages have become extinct in the last 50 years and many are on the verge of extinction. For centuries, the traits of our civilization have

been preserved in local languages, culture and public life.

The recommendation of the National Education Policy-2020 is succinct that 'as far as possible, at least up to grade five and even till grade eight and beyond' the mother tongue/local/regional language should become the medium of instruction. Higher quality textbooks should be made available in the mother tongue in all subjects, including sciences and technology. The decision of Madhya Pradesh Government to impart MBBS education in Hindi language is exemplary. The inauguration of engineering books, technical glossaries and e-Kumbh portal in Odia language by the President of India Draupadi Murmu is also a trend-setter for the promotion of regional

languages. The National Testing Agency has added a new chapter in the sphere of language promotion by conducting Combined University Entrance Test in 13 Indian languages. It should be the endeavor of the educationists to make available all disciplines of knowledge in Indian languages at the earliest.

The beginning may be with translation but the ultimate aim should be to write original texts in Indian languages. To fructify this, the 'Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation' will have to be established soon. However, there are genuine concerns of the stakeholders. The 'National Translation Mission' should be strengthened to perform effectively. Although the NEP talks about education in the moth-

er tongue till pre-secondary level, there is no clarity on the medium education at higher level. In such a scenario, there is an apprehension in the minds of the parents that if English will be the medium of education in future, why should they not educate children in English medium from primary education itself. Government should address this concern on priority. To strengthen multilingualism, every Indian should learn more than one Indian language, so that the eternal culture of unity in diversity remains engraved in the minds of the public and India reaps the dividends of linguistic diversity.

Irony is that the Indian languages, which have been the mother of global culture,

are themselves struggling to get rid of colonialism, imperialism and marketism. Realizing this, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that making inspiration from the NEP efforts will be made to teach all technical courses including medical and engineering in the mother tongue.

When Indian languages become the medium of education from primary to higher level, India will be able to realise its soul in the light of its rich tradition of knowledge and knowing. In essence only those languages survive which are used by the people.

Hindi poet Bhartendu Harishchandra endowed with modern consciousness, says "Nij bhasha unnati ahai sab unnati ko mool, bin nij bhasha gyan ke, mitat n hiy ko sool"

(The author is Vice-Chancellor, Central University of Punjab, Bathinda)

Musings of a college waiting for the NAAC to visit

ANSHU SALUJA

I am a public college in a tier-2 city of northern India. I would rather not reveal my identity and stay anonymous since I am going to be visited soon by a team of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC). Established in 1994, the NAAC evaluates and accredits different Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The self-professed objective of NAAC is to "make quality the defining element of higher education in India." The preparatory work for NAAC's accreditation process is undertaken in a straight-jacketed fashion by most HEIs, with each step of the way being carefully considered and calibrated.

There is little room for spontaneity or surprise impromptu checks by the Body. The spirit of creativity and inquiry, which is so important to the advancement of education, is given short shrift, and strict adherence to procedures is emphasised.

In my case, the visit is due to take place in early 2023, and I am at the centre of hectic preparations as such. I am being spruced up with new noticeboards, signboards, fresh coats of paint, and green, leafy plants. A mine of information about curricular and co-curricular activities conducted over the past five years is being unearthed and, at times, manufactured. This raking up and, I dare say, making up of the past record is crucial for my senior management, for if everything is done properly, it might well translate into a high grade from the NAAC. What tangible benefits this process of grading will eventually spell for me as an institution of higher learning or for my students is, as yet, unclear to me. I am only listing out some elements of the frantic activity underway to prepare me for the impending visit.

Mock drills and trials are being routinely conducted to prepare my students and staff to face the NAAC team. Elaborate databases are being collated. There is particular emphasis on cataloguing skill enhancement courses, offering possibilities for employment generation. The extent to which these courses are actually beneficial for students remains a marginal concern, however.

Detailed lists are being compiled not just of existing curriculum and programmes but also of available information and communications technology equipment. Care is being exercised to take note of their make, model, design, and exact number, while the actual functionality of equipment and whether it can be accessed by students and teachers on a day-to-day basis seem like issues of little interest.

Digital teaching and learning, the organisation of smart classes, and the use of online resources emerge as catchphrases here, while the problem of limited internet connectivity, that colleges like me usually face remains for the most part unresolved. My case is not starkly different from many other HEIs within the country, forced to function with no or, at best, gravely inadequate internet access.

As preparations for NAAC's visit and accreditation proceed apace, I see schemes of student mentoring, counselling and support being hastily framed and executed on paper. Similarly, the deplorable record of resources and facilities that can allow for or improve accessibility on campus for people with various types of disabilities is only now gaining attention.

Photographs of a few isolated ramps and elevators within the premises are being snapped and collected in haste to serve as evidence of a concerted institutionalised effort in this direction. For the sake of showcasing my academic excellence before NAAC, students who have passed out from here over the past decade are being hunted and tracked down. Those who have qualified for a national-level examination, got placed in a reputed company or organisation, and secured high-paying jobs are being cajoled and persuaded to share their photographs, certificates, and other details. Names and personal records of the so-called "student achievers" are being bandied about with little concern for safeguarding their identity or privacy. Alumni groups and associations, long defunct, have been brought to life. And new ones have been cobbled together at the instance of the faculty and management.

Amidst this hectic activity, I wonder to what extent I am really accomplishing my core goal of imparting quality higher education, for which I am soon to be tested by the NAAC. These musings lead me to ponder other key questions: Can the present system of grading and accreditation plug the glaring gaps in higher education in India, or does this system itself require critical scrutiny and overhauling?

(The writer is a historian.)

What drives young entrepreneurs?

Ramakrishnan Raman explores the reasons behind the increase in student-led small businesses

Being an entrepreneur is considered "cool" by young and new-age students pursuing their graduation in engineering or management. There are several reasons for this trend. The reasons behind the increase in student-led small businesses are many. Analysing them throws an insight into the industry and the kind of education that should be imparted.

▶ **The urge to solve problems:** There is a plethora of problems that exist today, both in urban and rural areas. Today's new-age student entrepreneurs aspire to build business models that can solve these problems in an effective way. They can afford to do it without bothering much about the EMIs to pay or the family to manage. Many are supported financially by their family, which gives them the luxury to take the entrepreneurial plunge.

▶ **The urge to have full control over their destiny:** As entrepreneurs, they call the shots while dealing with all the problems at hand. They have the freedom to take fast decisions that ultimately determine the success or failure of their business. Also creating their own startup gives them the opportunity to have full freedom over its destiny. No one can get in the way of the vision that they have created for the company.

▶ **The urge to take on bigger challenges early in life:** The new-age student entrepreneurs want to take on bigger and more complex challenges early and want to solve them in an innovative manner. Leading a startup and the team members on a growth path is a huge challenge. The obstacles that they would face along the way will provide them with an experience that they won't find anywhere else. This is one more reason for new-age student entrepreneurs to go the entre-preneurial route.

▶ **The urge to be a role model for others:** The new-age student entrepreneurs want people to look up to them. They want to become role models for their family and friends by building a successful startup. They know their success can serve as motivation and inspiration to many. This is one reason among many for new-age student entrepreneurs to choose entrepreneurship as a career option.

▶ **The urge to constantly innovate and never be bored:** The new-age student entrepreneurs want to constantly innovate and they always have a bucket list of to-do lists which are futuristic. They get an adrenaline rush when presented with new challenges, which their startup does and keeps them on their toes.

▶ **The urge to get evaluated as a unicorn:** The new-age student entrepreneurs want their startup to be evaluated as a unicorn which is worth a billion dollars. The sooner this happens, the more delighted they are. They do everything possible for the valuation to increase and leave no stone unturned for the same. With several startups getting funded, getting the buck from High Net worth Investors or angel investors is also a possible route that they aspire to go to build their dream. Some of them plan for an IPO and make the startups really large.

▶ **The urge to have full control over their workspace:** There are a few new-age student entrepreneurs who want to express their creativity by having a highly creative office environment. An office with no dress code or an office with dry-erase paint allowing anyone to write their to-do lists on the office walls and then erase the same or even a full espresso bar to keep them and their employees full of caffeine! They can make all of this happen!

▶ **The urge to contribute to society:** There are a few new-age student entrepreneurs who aspire to solve societal problems. Social entrepreneurship excites them and hence they take the entrepreneurial plunge and make a difference in society and also in themselves.

▶ **The urge to make their hobby, their career:** Earn a living doing what they love is not a possibility for all. The present-day new-age student entrepreneurs want a comfortable living doing what they love and also earning money. The aspiration for converting their hobby into a career and making good money from it makes them turn to entrepreneurship. So it's a win-win situation for them!

▶ **The urge to get publicity and limelight:** There are several avenues where new-age student entrepreneurs are awarded and respected for the business that they build. The government also awards and recognises innovative startups. So, the hunger for media and press acknowledgement that their startups get is extremely satisfying for them. The recognition for the hard work that they put in helps fuel their inner fire and this is one more reason for them to take the entrepreneurial journey.

(The author is the director of SIBM, Pune)

EdTech in the service of learning: The importance of evaluating education technology

KIRAN DHAM

Technological advancements in the educational sector are enhancing the communicative and expressive capabilities of teachers as well as students in the learning environment. It is offering more flexibility in educational activities while easing the way to access resources, learn remotely, and visualise complex information with graphical representations. This growing democratisation of technology access is making education available to all students and, hence, serving its intended purpose. The aim of education in the modern era has now become to merge character development with cognitive growth while ensuring that learning is integrated, interesting, and engaging. Now, let us delve into how technology has changed the educational landscape in the modern era.

The implications of technology in learning

Education, which underwent a paradigm shift in the last two years, is just one of the many industries where technology has proven to be a crucial catalyst for change. Parents' attitudes towards education were also altered by the pandemic while making children more receptive to online education. Technology dependence mobilised education and made high-quality education available in remote areas of the country. Information is now gathered, accessed, analysed, displayed, and transferred differently by students and teachers thanks to new-fangled methodologies.

Having said that, we understand that digitalisation in education intends to improve the learning experience; however, there is little evidence of how learning effectiveness is enhanced. Therefore, there is a need to evaluate the educational technologies to know their impact at the school and system level.

Evaluating the impact of technology: Why does it matter?

Currently educational technology solutions are being integrated into educational settings without a clear purpose or a way to assess its effectiveness. It is necessary to evaluate educational technology in order to determine its usefulness, perceived ease of use, functionality, and accessibility. It is also critical to develop a comprehensive understanding of how technology affects learning rather than focusing on just one or two aspects of education.

Technology like interactive displays, digital boards, tablets, language labs and many more needs to be purposefully aimed at supporting better learning outcomes in order for it to be useful in classrooms. It should be able to define the purpose of the technologies adopted and comprehended in the learning system while pinpointing success indicators with better evaluation and assessment procedures. We must realise that technology adoption typically entails the replacement of an existing educational provision with a new one; however, it must focus on improving the learning outcomes. Given the breadth of the educational technology field and its growing importance in India, methodologies and frameworks for evaluating technology use in education are urgently needed.

Framework for analysis

Today's educational systems require a contextual understanding of the unique implementation circumstances and the contextual elements that interacted with the technological intervention to produce a particular result. The framework needs to be created with an understanding of how well schools, teachers, and the system can develop and adapt. Furthermore, it must assess important factors like the technology's intention, the implementation process, the success criteria, the modification strategies, and the opportunity costs. Listed below are some methods to analyse educational technology:

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA):

This instrument consists of eight key dimensions: learning, affective, behavioural, and technological, design, pedagogy, community, and institutional environment. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA): It is a statistical technique used to find latent underlying associations or patterns in data gathered from classrooms that is quantitative in nature.

Qualitative analysis:

It is employed in a variety of contexts, including evaluative ones, to investigate and comprehend the experiences and viewpoints of participants.

Way forward

Future-proofing the Indian EdTech sector will depend on elements like hybrid learning, access to cutting-edge technology, creative teaching methods, and lower learning costs. Digital learning tools will be vital in places where the teacher-to-student ratio seems to be off. Another important factor that will probably aid in the growth of the EdTech sector in the coming years is internet usage.

According to a report from the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), India will have 900 million active internet users by the end of 2025, with smaller towns hosting 40% of these users. With this tremendous growth, India will soon develop into a hub for EdTech thanks to such widespread internet penetration and expanding collaborations between private and governmental organizations. Thus ensuring all the development in improving educational experiences EdTech sector with it's innovated technological solutions are showing growth making education accessible to all by creating a better learning platform for students.

The author is CEO Globus Infocom

The prejudiced academics

Stereotyping destroys what liberating education ought to do — dialogue, faith in human possibilities

AVIJIT PATHAK
SOCIOLOGIST

FEASIBLE UTOPIA: A dialogic learning community that encourages empathy. ANI

> Explaining and critiquing terrorism or religious fundamentalism is one thing, and stereotyping people on the basis of their faith and nationality quite another.

VIOLENCE is not merely brute and physical. Quite often, it is cultural and symbolic. And this sort of violence manifests itself in the act of stereotyping a religious/ethnic community, or a group of people with certain caste identities through prejudices and negative gestures. And it is sad that this violence is so deeply rooted in our collective psyche that even 'educated' people are not altogether free from it.

Take, for instance, what happened in recent times in Bengaluru's Manipal Institute of Technology. A professor, as a viral video indicates, compared a Muslim student's name with Ajmal Kasab — one of the convicted terrorists in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack. It was like denigrating the student's religion; it was nothing but an act of stereotyping every Muslim as a potential terrorist. Think of the humiliation the student passed through in the classroom amid the presence of silent and passive classmates. 'Being a Muslim in this country and facing all this every day', as he reminded his professor, 'is not funny.'

Even though the professor was heard of offering an apology, the fact remains that our classrooms, far from being truly dialogic, humane and symmetrical, often act as sites of symbolic violence — say, the silence imposed on a Dalit/marginalised student through the act of stereotyping her as someone belonging to a 'non-meritorious'/'reserved' category; or, for that matter, seeing every Muslim girl wearing the hijab as orthodox, conservative and potentially fundamentalist. Quite often, students as well as teachers tend to normalise and perpetuate this violence.

Likewise, in yet another incident in Jawaharlal Nehru University, several walls on the campus were reported to be defaced with nasty slogans: 'Brahmins leave the campus'/'Brahmins-Baniyas: we are coming for you'/ 'There will be blood'. Yes, in a university like JNU that is characterised by hyper-political passions, it is not surprising that there are allegations and counter-allegations — the continual exchange of toxic words and symbols perpetuated by 'rightists' as well as 'Left-Ambedkarites'.

However, what is really tragic is that far from engaging in a sociologically sensitive and intellectually nuanced political debate, the university community is becoming increasingly toxic — a site of cultural/symbolic violence. For instance, in this case, it is like stereotyping every student/teacher who happens to be born in the so-called 'forward caste' as necessarily a blind follower of *Manusmriti* — an oppressor who can never change himself/herself.

This act of stereotyping takes us nowhere; it destroys what liberating education ought to do — dialogue, critical reflection, faith in human possibilities, and a quest for collective emancipation.

In this context, as a teacher with a deep interest in reflexive/critical pedagogy, I wish to raise three points.

First, without the nuanced art of critical pedagogy, it is not possible to distinguish a structural issue from the easy game of stereotyping people. For instance, we ought to understand terrorism, or for that matter, religious fundamentalism as a socio-political question. Of course, there is something called terrorism in the world; and it is not impossible to see it as an attempt to restore 'religious purity' as defined by the orthodox priest craft, or initiate a 'civilisational war' against the onslaught of modernity, globalisation and associated cultural symbols. We have seen this sort of terrorism in, say, Iran and Afghanistan. Likewise, we have witnessed all sorts of fundamentalism — a non-hermeneutic/orthodox/monolithic notion and practice of one's religious identity.

And with critical pedagogy, we must understand this phenomenon — its authoritarian/patriarchal seeds, its violent practices, or its location in a highly asymmetrical/uneven world.

However, understanding, explaining and critiquing terrorism or religious fundamentalism is one thing, and stereotyping people on the basis of their faith and nationality quite another. For instance, even if there is terrorism in the name of Islam, not every Muslim is a terrorist; the way not every Hindu is necessarily a proponent of militant Hindutva.

Gandhi, to take a striking illustration, did not behave the way a Hindu fanatic does. And who can deny that there are innumerable Muslims amongst us who love Nizamuddin Auliya and Jalaluddin Rumi rather than the likes of Ayatollah Khomeini and Osama bin Laden. And, as the recent incident in Iran has revealed, there are Muslim women who can assert their democratic rights, fight for their freedom, redefine feminism, and resist the dictates of authoritarian fundamentalists. Did the professor concerned in Manipal University forget this pedagogic art?

Second, as far as the caste question is concerned, it is important to distinguish the critique of casteism as an ideology, or a violent/hierarchical practice from a shallow/generalised judgment on everybody who happens to be born in the so-called 'forward caste'. Every 'forward caste' professor/student need not necessarily be a casteist; instead, it may not be altogether impossible to find him/her participating in the movement for collective emancipation. Yes, JNU students must resist Brahminism as an oppressive ideology or institutionalised hierarchy — the way the likes of Jyotirao Phule and Dr BR Ambedkar did.

However, critiquing Brahminism, and asking all 'Brahmins' to leave the campus are two different things. To take an analogy, it is like saying that every white European was necessarily a colonialist, and, thereby, forgetting the humanistic aspirations of the likes of Charles Andrews and Romain Rolland who were with Gandhi in his quest for decolonisation.

And third, as students/teachers — particularly those who find themselves in privileged locations — we ought to be rigorously reflexive. Despite our political correctness, we might still carry inflated egos, and look at the deprived castes or marginalised religious communities with some sort of paternalism. This must go.

Instead, as a feasible utopia, I would propose a **dialogic** learning community that encourages empathy, compassionate listening and dignified egalitarian relationships.

विविध रंगों वाला विश्वविद्यालय

जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय (जेएनयू) एक बार फिर सुर्खियों में है। इस बार विश्वविद्यालय परिसर में जाति का जहर घोलने का काम किया गया। इसमें दोराय नहीं कि ऐसे कृत्य जेएनयू के दीर्घकालिक महत्व को कमजोर करते हैं, क्योंकि शिक्षक और विद्यार्थी की कोई जाति नहीं होती। कहा भी गया है कि 'जाति न पूछो साधु की, पूछ लीजिए ज्ञान।' 1969 में अपनी स्थापना के समय से ही जेएनयू हमेशा ही उत्कृष्टता, रचनात्मकता और बौद्धिकता की अनवरत खोज में रहा है। हालांकि वहां कई बार विचारधाराओं का टकराव होता रहा है, पर कभी लोगों ने शालीनता नहीं छोड़ी, लेकिन अब ये विरोध विद्रूप होते जा रहे हैं। जेएनयू की एक खास छवि रही है। विचारों की दुनिया में तो इसका विशेष स्थान है। दुख की बात यह है कि कुछ लोग इसकी इसी लोकप्रियता का दुरुपयोग अपने एजेंडे एवं नैरेटिव को आगे बढ़ाने के लिए करते रहे हैं। उन्होंने विश्वविद्यालय परिसर को खेमों में बांटकर इसकी वर्षों की कमाई गई प्रतिष्ठा को धूमिल करने का काम किया है।

अमेरिका की हार्वर्ड यूनिवर्सिटी की तर्ज पर बनाए गए इस विश्वविद्यालय में प्राचीन नालंदा से लेकर मास्को एवं पेरिस विश्वविद्यालय सहित लंदन स्कूल आफ इकोनमिक्स तक के विचार समाए हैं। जेएनयू ने गरीब परिवारों से आने वाले छात्रों के लिए भी गुणवत्तापूर्ण शिक्षा प्राप्त करना संभव बनाया है। सामान्य आरक्षण के अलावा जेएनयू एकमात्र ऐसा शिक्षा संस्थान है, जहां महिलाओं, गरीबों एवं पिछड़े क्षेत्र से आने वाले छात्रों को अतिरिक्त वरीयता दी जाती है। उच्च शिक्षा की आकांक्षा रखने वाले देश के तमाम युवाओं का यहां पढ़ने का सपना होता है। इसी कारण इस विश्वविद्यालय की महत्ता बनी हुई है। विश्व की लगभग सभी भाषाएं यहां पढ़ाई जाती हैं। जेएनयू में सामाजिक विज्ञान, आधुनिक विज्ञान के साथ ही बदलते समय में स्कूल आफ मैनेजमेंट और स्कूल आफ इंजीनियरिंग भी आरंभ हुआ है। यहां यूपीएससी के आकांक्षी हैं तो दूसरी तरफ शोध उन्मुख विद्वान भी। मंत्री, अकदामिक विद्वान, चर्चित नौकरशाह देने का श्रेय भी जेएनयू को है। लगभग आठ हजार से ज्यादा छात्रों और करीब 450 शिक्षकों वाला यह संस्थान भारत की

डा. बृजेश कुमार तिवारी

अनावश्यक विरोध-प्रदर्शनों के अलावा भी जेएनयू की एक बड़ी तस्वीर है, जिसकी अनदेखी नहीं की जानी चाहिए

राष्ट्र विरोधी गतिविधियों पर लगाम आवश्यक • फाइल

सभी रैंकिंग में शीर्ष पर रहता है। इसका नाम दुनिया भर के अच्छे विश्वविद्यालयों में भी शामिल है। यहां की समालोचनात्मक मानसिकता उच्च बुद्धि की सूचक है। जेएनयू शिक्षा जगत और बाहरी दुनिया के बीच संबंधों पर खुलकर संवाद करता है। वास्तव में जेएनयू सवाल करना, बहस करना एवं असहमति को स्वीकार करने की क्षमता विकसित करता है। इसीलिए विश्वविद्यालय जीवंत चर्चाओं के लिए जाना जाता है। देश के सबसे बड़े राष्ट्रीय पुस्तकालयों में से एक जेएनयू लाइब्रेरी सहित पार्थसारथी राक्स (कैंपस के जंगल में छोटा-सा टीला) और गंगा ढाबा आज भी बौद्धिक चर्चाओं के केंद्र हैं। यह भी माना जाता है कि विभिन्न विषयों की तह तक जाने की जैसी चाह जेएनयू में है, वैसी अन्यत्र कहीं नहीं।

कुछ 'टुकड़े-टुकड़े गैंग' के चलते कोई भी इस विराट विश्वविद्यालय को गलत रूप में चित्रित नहीं कर सकता, क्योंकि इन चंद लोगों के अलावा जेएनयू के ज्यादातर विद्यार्थी अपने काम से देश को गौरवान्वित करते रहे हैं। राष्ट्र निर्माण में इस विश्वविद्यालय और इसके छात्रों की अहम भूमिका

है। प्रत्येक वर्ष जेएनयू के कई छात्र-छात्राएं प्रशासनिक, पुलिस और विदेश सेवाओं में जाते हैं। अभी हाल के वर्षों में भारतीय आर्थिक सेवा में शीर्ष रैंकिंग के साथ ही लगभग 70 प्रतिशत चयनित उम्मीदवार जेएनयू के ही थे। आज इसके पूर्व छात्र-छात्राएं नीति संस्थानों और मीडिया के उच्च पदों पर आसीन हैं। साथ ही कई विश्वविद्यालयों के कुलपति, महत्वपूर्ण शैक्षणिक संस्थानों के अध्यक्ष एवं अनुसंधान संस्थानों के निदेशक जेएनयू से जुड़े हैं। कई देशों के राष्ट्राध्यक्ष भी जेएनयू से ही पढ़े हैं। फिल्मी दुनिया तक के कई चर्चित नाम जेएनयू के पूर्व छात्र-छात्राएं रहे हैं। स्थापना के पांच दशकों के बाद आज भी जेएनयू दुनिया के तमाम विकसित देशों की सूची में इतनी काबिलियत तो रखता ही है कि उसे कोई नजरअंदाज न कर पाए।

पिछले दिनों जेएनयू की चर्चा उसकी दीवारों पर लिखे गए कुछ अपशब्दों के चलते हो रही थी, पर शायद ही कभी यह बताया गया हो कि इसी विश्वविद्यालय में सेना को समर्पित एक 'वाल आफ हीरोज' भी स्थापित है, जहां 21 परमवीर चक्र पुरस्कार विजेताओं के चित्र प्रदर्शित किए गए हैं। विरोध-प्रदर्शनों के अलावा भी इस विश्वविद्यालय की एक बड़ी तस्वीर है, जिसमें देशभक्ति है और कुछ कर गुजरने का जज्बा और नेतृत्व करने का साहस है। जेएनयू में भारतीय संस्कृति के सभी रंग झलकते हैं। वहां छोटे-बड़े सभी राज्यों के छात्र-छात्राएं अध्ययन करते हैं। परिसर में इमारतों, छात्रावासों, सड़कों और सुविधाओं के नाम भारतीय विरासत और संस्कृति से लिए गए हैं। यह भारत की सबसे अच्छी सांस्कृतिक और भौगोलिक तस्वीर का प्रतिनिधित्व करता है।

यह लगभग तय है कि राजनीतिक और वैचारिक आधार पर आरोप-प्रत्यारोप का दौर तो चलता ही रहेगा, लेकिन इसके साथ ही हमें ऐसी गतिविधियों को भी रोकना होगा, जो राष्ट्र-विरोधी हैं या राष्ट्र की संप्रभुता के खिलाफ हैं। आज यह आवश्यक है कि किसी भी वैचारिक सोच से ज्यादा हम सभी राष्ट्रीय हित में बात करें। भारतीयता जेएनयू की विरासत है और इसे मजबूत करना हमारा कर्तव्य है।

(लेखक जेएनयू के अटल स्कूल आफ मैनेजमेंट में प्रोफेसर हैं)

response@jagran.com

उच्च शिक्षा में भारतीय भाषाओं को बढ़ावा मिले

प्रतियोगी परीक्षाओं में अनुवाद का स्तर अच्छा नहीं होने से छात्रों को मुश्किलों का सामना करना पड़ता है। 'राष्ट्रीय अनुवाद मिशन' को अधिक संपन्न बनाना चाहिए

राघवेंद्र प्रसाद तिवारी

ऋग्वेद में भाषा के बारे में लिखा है- धीर पुरुष वाणी को चलनी में छने हुए सत्तू के समान परिष्कृत रूप में उच्चारित करते हैं। वाणी से उनका सख्य भाव ज्ञात होता है। वाणी में लक्ष्मी (पवित्र गुण) प्रतिष्ठित होती है। जिस तरह चलनी से अपशिष्ट छानकर खाने योग्य अनाज रख लिया जाता है, वैसे ही भाषा में जो अपशिष्ट रहता है, उसे दूर करके ही भाषा व्यवहार में आती है। इस बारे में देश की आजादी की लड़ाई के दौरान अपनी लेखनी से जनता में जोश भरने वाले आधुनिक तमिल कवि सुब्रमण्यम भारती के जन्मदिवस 11 दिसंबर को 'भारतीय भाषा दिवस' के रूप में उत्सव की तरह मनाने का उपक्रम अभिनंदनीय है।

सपने मातृभाषा में ही देखे जाते हैं: विदेशी राज में भारतीय भाषाओं का क्षरण हुआ। दार्शनिक कृष्ण चंद्र भट्टाचार्य ने 1929 के आस-पास ही विचारों में आजादी के लिए भाषा के स्वराज पर जोर दिया था क्योंकि 'स्वराज एक सपना था और सपने मातृभाषा में ही देखे जाते हैं।' भारत की विडंबना यह रही कि आजादी मिलने के बाद सरकारों ने भारतीय भाषाओं के विकास और संरक्षण पर जोर न देकर अंग्रेजी राज का अनुगमन किया। इस अंधानुकरण का नतीजा है कि 'कोस कोस पर पानी बदले चार कोस पर बानी' वाले देश में 50 सालों में लगभग 20 प्रतिशत भाषाएं विलुप्त हुईं। फिर भी स्थानीय भाषाएं हमारी संस्कृति की प्राणवायु बनकर उसे विकसित करने में अतुलनीय योगदान दे रही हैं।

मातृभाषा में होगी पढ़ाई: इस संदर्भ में राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति-2020 की यह अनुशंसा काबिल-ए-तारीफ है कि 'जहां तक संभव हो, कम से कम ग्रेड 5 तक लेकिन बेहतर यह होगा कि ग्रेड 8 और उससे आगे तक भी शिक्षा का माध्यम घर की भाषा/मातृभाषा/स्थानीय भाषा/क्षेत्रीय भाषा होगी। सार्वजनिक और निजी दोनों तरह के स्कूल इसे मानेंगे।' हाल ही में मध्य प्रदेश में एमबीबीएस की पढ़ाई हिंदी में शुरू हुई है। माननीय राष्ट्रपति द्वारा उड़िया भाषा में निर्मित अभियांत्रिकी की पुस्तकें, तकनीकी शब्दावली और ई-कुंभ (भारतीय भाषाओं में ज्ञान) पोर्टल का अनावरण भी क्षेत्रीय भाषाओं के विकास के लिहाज से शानदार पहल है। नैशनल टेस्टिंग एजेंसी ने कॉमन यूनिवर्सिटी

Dall E 2 image generator

कॉमन रूम

एंट्रेंस टेस्ट (सीयूईटी-यूजी) का 13 भारतीय भाषाओं में आयोजन कर भाषा विकास के क्षेत्र में नया अध्याय जोड़ा है। शिक्षाविदों का प्रयास है कि जल्द से जल्द संपूर्ण ज्ञान-विज्ञान भारतीय भाषाओं में उपलब्ध हो।

इसके लिए 'भारतीय अनुवाद एवं व्याख्या संस्थान' की स्थापना करनी होगी। शुरुआत भले ही अनुवाद से हो, लेकिन लक्ष्य भारतीय भाषाओं में मूल पुस्तकें लिखने का ही हो।

चिंताएं भी कम नहीं : इस संदर्भ में कुछ चिंताएं भी हैं। विभिन्न प्रतियोगी परीक्षाओं में अनुवाद का स्तर संतोषजनक जनक नहीं होने से छात्रों को मुश्किलों का सामना करना पड़ता है। 'राष्ट्रीय अनुवाद मिशन' को अधिक संपन्न बनाना चाहिए। उच्च शिक्षा में भारतीय भाषाओं को लेकर स्थिति स्पष्ट नहीं है। ऐसे में अभिभावकों के मन में आशंका होगी कि यदि आगे चलकर अंग्रेजी ही शिक्षा का माध्यम होगी तो क्यों न हम अपने बच्चों को प्रारंभिक शिक्षा भी अंग्रेजी माध्यम में ही दें। इन चिंताओं को समझते हुए शिक्षाविदों और सरकार को समुचित कदम उठाने चाहिए। बहुभाषावाद को सशक्त बनाने के लिए प्रत्येक भारतीय को एक से अधिक भारतीय भाषाएं सीखनी चाहिए।

संस्कृति की संवाहक : जो भारतीय भाषाएं वैश्विक संस्कृति की जननी रही हैं, आज वे स्वयं साम्राज्यवाद और बाजारवाद से स्वतंत्र होने के लिए छटपटा रही हैं। इसे समझते हुए प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने कहा है कि 'राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति से प्रेरणा लेते हुए, अब चिकित्सा और इंजीनियरिंग सहित सभी तकनीकी पाठ्यक्रमों को मातृभाषा में पढ़ाने की कोशिश की जाएगी।' भाषाएं वही जीवित रहती हैं, जिनका प्रयोग जनता करती है। जब प्राथमिक से लेकर उच्च शिक्षा का माध्यम भारतीय भाषाएं बनेंगी, तभी भारत अपनी ज्ञान और विचार की समृद्ध परंपरा से परिचित हो पाएगा। आधुनिक चेतना से संपन्न हिंदी कवि भारतेंदु हरिश्चंद्र कहते हैं, 'निज भाषा उन्नति अहै, सब उन्नति को मूल। बिन निज भाषा ज्ञान के, मिटत न हिय को सूल।'

(लेखक पंजाब केंद्रीय विश्वविद्यालय के कुलपति हैं)

A question of 'sanskar'

The time is ripe for India to shed the quaint, regressive notions attached to the term 'sanskar' and liberate women from socially imposed constraints

SANAH SINGH

Precisely 20 years after the Government of India began its post-liberalisation era 'Incredible India!' campaign in order to poise the country as a marketable tourist destination for international tourists, a video depicting the horrific harassment of a Korean woman in Mumbai by local men went viral on the Internet. For a nation that has long held the value of *Atithi Devo Bhava* — a relationship wherein the guest is akin to God, sacrosanct to itself — the fact that multiple countries have issued cautionary advisories for women travelling to India is proof that this is not an isolated incident. The woman, who just so happened to be livestreaming when the incident occurred, stated that her 'apparent friendliness and willingness to engage in the conservation' had been blamed by people as a reason for her to be harassed.

In contemporary discourse surrounding sexual harassment of women, explanations behind such offences range from the bizarre (wearing jeans, eating chowmein) to the commonplace (her clothes, her behaviour, her promiscuity). Every way in which a woman may have possibly 'erred' to warrant such a crime, is considered, and sought to be corrected with the imposition of social constraints issued 'for their own safety'. Women are thus single-handedly burdened with taking responsibilities for offences committed against them with every possible reason. To err against one's *'sanskar'* — the word used to refer to one's etiquette and culture alike — is akin to committing sacrilege. The word itself has become embedded in inherently **Brahmanical-Hindu understanding** of cultural,

> **Every way in which a woman may have possibly 'erred' to warrant a heinous crime is considered, and sought to be corrected with the imposition of social constraints issued 'for their own safety'**

societal and even partisan propriety. Being considered *sanskari* requires one to be an adherent of a majoritarian-partisan specificity. And to be an *'un-sanskari'* woman is therefore equated to being un-Indian. Yet, as many of my elders would well-intendedly assure me that our *sanskar* is our pride and legacy, that it is the reason why we as a cohesive society have created a lot of *'Incredible Indians!'*,

The Sanskrit word 'samskāra' refers broadly to "putting together, doing well, making perfect, a type of solemn recognition and getting ready", or "mental impression, recall" of our past actions. Yet the commonly held interpretation of the word would point to the collection of 'virtues' that one is said to inculcate throughout his/her life. The accumulation of our religion, our culture, and our etiquette, among many intangible aspects of social life, would be thought to be involved in the determination of what **constitutes a 'virtuous' per-**

son. Yet, some of the most virtuous individuals this country has given rise to, would be undeniably held to be *'un-sanskari'* by the majoritarian social norms of religion, culture or ideology, today. Widely considered to be amongst the greatest of freedom fighters, Bhagat Singh was a communist and anti-religion, having written his seminal essay *'Why I Am an Atheist'* while incarcerated. At a stage in time where individuals, particularly those of the same age as Bhagat Singh himself, are mocked for being of a 'Leftist' bent, it is ironic how the values that the country's most famous youth revolutionary chose to adhere to would be considered *'un-sanskari'* by public accord, today.

BR Ambedkar once famously burnt the *Manusmriti* in a funeral pyre, comparing the burning of the ancient Hindu text that epitomised violence and exclusion of the Dalits to the foreign cloth that Mahatma Gandhi encouraged burning. Yet, hav-

ing burnt the very code of laws that governed ancient society, Ambedkar went on to frame the very body of principles governing the laws of newly independent India. An eminent jurist, economist, and social reformer, Ambedkar is justifiably hailed as the Father of the Indian Constitution. Another illustrious figure from the legal realm is Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, who has delivered progressive judgements and dissenting opinions, contrary to even popularly held beliefs, such as on free speech, privacy and gender justice. It was Chief Justice Chandrachud himself who brilliantly insisted that 'dissent is the safety valve of democracy' in response to public assertions of 'anti-national' or 'anti-democratic' strikes. Therefore, not adhering to popularly held beliefs do not necessarily make one un-Indian or un-sanskari.

When some of the nation's proudest legacies have dissented against majoritarian norms and ideological 'decen-

cies' while being upstanding citizens acting in the furtherance of societal good, it is perhaps time to re-examine what we simplistically understand as being a *'sanskari'* individual. Having assumed the presidency of the G20 summit, wherein state leaders work towards solving problems concerning matters of the global economy, it is time we take a step back to re-evaluate the values we ourselves are committed to as a society and the sort of morality and ethics we ought to subscribe to.

It is perhaps difficult to imagine a shared ethos among the diverse range of multi-ethnic/lingual/religious/cultural people that constitute this very nation. Therefore, it is time to reflect upon the legacies of the greatest and their commitment towards social good, and to not get swayed by the divisiveness of the multiplicity of differences that are, and will continue to be an inherent part of who we are as a people. The Constitution of India is sublimely instructive for this.

Before we can globally represent ourselves on an international platform such as the G20, publicly extolling virtues of *Atithi Devo Bhava* or *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (our chosen theme for the summit), it is time we reflect on the shameful notions of deeming women, tourists or otherwise, *'unsanskari'* for their soft-spokenness, attire, or apparent 'willingness to engage in conservation'. If it is the *'sanskar'* of the women in question (or the lack of it) that is deemed to be the problem, then we need to urgently re-evaluate what we think constitutes *'sanskar'*, or what it ought to be.

The writer is a Law student, OP Jindal University. Views expressed are personal

It is time we reflect on the shameful notions of deeming women *'unsanskari'* for their soft-spokenness, attire etc

Was Einstein wrong, or...

KAUSHIK BHOWMIK

I was very sad to see that my own experiment had proven Einstein wrong, said John Klauser, this year's physics Nobel laureate. Was Albert Einstein completely wrong?

Objects exist only if you look at them, else they cease to be? In the world of ultratiny particles, that's what happens, says the research, defying Einstein's belief, that ushered in this year's Nobel prize to physics.

Even when a pair of such particles is separated light-years apart, the strange 'correlation' observed in their activities, are, per the research, sans any hidden connections.

This phenomenon which Einstein attributed to 'local realism' meaning, objects are affected only by their local surroundings and possess real or inherent properties, we perceive them or not, that reality, the research says, is not real at all.

The physics Nobel team proved that the phenomenon, is inherently 'nonlocal'. That is, effect on distant objects is induced only upon observation-when one sees or measures a quantum activity.

Is reality then an 'illusion'? Does universe exists solely on our sense of perception?

Quantum mechanics, the science of subatomic particles, presents a highly probabilistic particle world.

Such quantum elements randomly reside at multiple locations at the same time, called 'quantum superposition'. They disclose their state or position the moment they are measured.

This happens when the particles are quantum entangled - a conundrum of quantum mechanics, research on which brought John Francis Klauser, Alain Aspect and Anton Zeilinger this year's Nobel recognition.

What is entanglement? Let's say a particle of light-photon- disintegrates into an electron and a positron. Having formed from a single system, they are entangled.

Now, consider any quantum property of the pair, say, spin. If the two particles are moved far apart, each will simultaneously be in the up and down spin states-superposition. Then, if one particle is measured and found to have its spin up, the other one, no matter how far away, in the corner of your room or at the other end of the universe, will have its spin instantaneously reversed.

As if the result of the measurement on the electron reached the unmeasured positron instantly-faster than light-that triggered the positron to immediately adopt an opposite state.

But, according to Einstein's relativity theory, nothing can travel faster than light. Is then the position or state of the particles predetermined? Or some 'local' hidden variable is manipulating from behind the veil? - theories that Einstein had reasoned in the EPR research paper?

None. The Nobel laureates, contrarily, showed evidence of plain corelation among the entangled particles placed far apart.

Historically, the first half of the 20th century had academic conflict raging over the wierdness of entanglement as theories like the EPR paradox, de Broglie-David Bohm pilot wave theory and Leggett Inequality theorem in favour of local realism and Copenhagen Interpretation, Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle, Kochen-Specker theorem for non-locality, clashed.

Later, physicist John Stewart Bell, lend clue to the conundrum through his experimentally developed Bell's Inequality theorem where he stated, if the experimental results throw up a correlation value greater than +2, the particles are plainly entangled. Lesser that value, hidden variables wield the magic.

Subsequent studies by different groups of scientists revealed values higher than the Bell's standard.

Clear though that entanglement works, question arises, how can a scientific phenomenon work without any unknown trigger lurking behind?

That there is no covert manipulation, as test on Bell's postulate conducted separately by Christer Shalm's team at the US research institute, NIST, confirmed, who when enquired what makes the particles behave so strangely said, "You can't prove Quantum Mechanics".

Science unproved loses its identity and divinity creeps in to usurp human logic and rationality. The Higgs boson or God particle; that gets annihilated no sooner than it is created, yet on which the entire universe rests, and which remained elusive for aeons, couldn't escape from ultimately being proved of its existence.

Although Einstein had accepted the ability of quantum mechanics to predict precise outcomes, and its science later discovered breakthrough technologies-MRIs to semiconductors-what he was averse to accepting was, entangled particles correlating upon observation-non-locality. To him the phenomenon was 'spooky action at a distance'.

He believed what functions in the space-time fabric of the universe has an 'objective reality' as God does not play dice with the universe'. Hence, in the entanglement of subatomic particles either their position or state is prefixed or their lies deeper physics that he had termed as hidden variable.

The uncertainty of the particle world has forever puzzled scientists. But Einstein understood the quantum physics to its core. Using quantum theory, he solved that light is a discreet packet of energy. Won the Nobel Prize for photoelectric effect. From his head emerged the need to create matter waves to better understand the universe. Had profound mastery over statistical mechanics. He discovered the theory of relativity and went on to create a 'Theory of Everything' by combining gravity with quantum physics - a single equation that would explain all the mysteries of the universe.

That formula is still elusive to science. Might that the secret of quantum entanglement's spooky action; is hidden within that equation!

The key to unlocking the mystery could also emerge from the views of prominent theoretical physicists like Roger Penrose, Mani Bhowmick, Sabina Hosseinfelder, Max Tegmark among others. Reviewing the process of measurement, discovering the theory of modular space-time, existence of 'external reality', mathematical presence of the Einstein-Rosen bridge or Wormhole, or, the quantum field spread throughout the universe wherein vibrating subatomic particles as lumps of energy facilitate instantaneous interaction among them, could help pin down the reason.

In this year's physics, the Nobel trio although have demonstrated entanglement to be real, however have failed to conclusively prove that there lies no science in particles correlating even across great distances.

As a result, their work despite groundbreaking, appears wierdly hollow from inside. As if the mathematics has been solved leaving the concept aside. Much like physicist Nathaniel David Mermin's understanding of quantum mechanics: shut up and calculate.

With newer research, quantum entanglement will have its mystery surely unravelled. Another Nobel Prize will honour Quantum Physics, anyone sees it or not. Only then will it be proven if Einstein was wrong.

The author works in an MNC as an IT expert.

मदरसा छाप विधि महाविद्यालय

इंदौर ला कालेज का मामला बताता है कि इसकी जांच-परख होनी ही चाहिए कि शिक्षा संस्थानों में क्या पढ़ाया जा रहा है?

राजीव सचान

विकृत सोच वाला पाठ्यक्रम पढ़ाता संस्थान ● फाइल

हमारे शिक्षा संस्थानों में क्या पढ़ाया जा रहा है, इसे लेकर रह-रह कर सवाल उठते रहते हैं। विशेषकर तब, जब किसी पाठ्यपुस्तक में लिखे गए आपत्तिजनक अंश सामने आते हैं। यह काम प्राथमिक विद्यालयों से लेकर उच्च शिक्षा संस्थानों में भी हो रहा है, इसका पता इंदौर के शासकीय नवीन विधि महाविद्यालय में पढ़ाई जाने वाली पुस्तक 'सामूहिक हिंसा एवं दांडिक न्याय पद्धति' से चलता है। इसी कालेज की प्रोफेसर फरहत खान की ओर से लिखी गई इस पुस्तक में यह लिखा है, 'हिंदुओं के जितने भी सामाजिक, राजनीतिक और धार्मिक संगठन हैं, उनका एकमात्र उद्देश्य देश के मुसलमानों का विनाश करना और शूद्रों को दास बनाना है।' इसी किताब के अनुसार, 'पंजाब का सच यह है कि मुख्य आतंकवादी हिंदु हैं और सिख प्रतिक्रिया में आतंकी बन रहा है।' फरहत खान ने अपनी इसी किताब में यह भी लिखा है, 'समान नागरिक संहिता स्त्रियों के विरुद्ध है। हिंदुओं से पूछा जाना चाहिए कि आप अपने व्यक्तिगत कानून और शास्त्रों के कानून क्यों लागू करना चाहते हैं, जो शूद्र, स्त्री और गैर हिंदुओं के विरुद्ध हैं।' उनकी यह भी नसीहत है कि पहले हिंदुओं को अपने सिविल कोड में सुधार की बात करनी चाहिए।

यदि कोई समान नागरिक संहिता के संदर्भ में कट्टर मुस्लिम मौलानाओं के विचारों से परिचित हो तो उसके लिए उनके और फरहत खान के विचारों में अंतर करना कठिन होगा। यह आश्चर्य की बात है कि फरहत खान की विष भरी किताब कानून के छात्रों को पढ़ाई जा रही थी और कोई देखने-सुनने वाला नहीं था। ध्यान रहे यह काम सरकारी ला कालेज में हो रहा था, किसी मदरसे में नहीं। फरहत खान की इस किताब को लेकर एक साल पहले भी विवाद उठा था, लेकिन तब यह कहकर मामला रफा-दफा कर दिया गया कि प्रकाशक की ओर से पुस्तक को वापस ले लिया गया है और उसके विवादित अंश हटाकर उसका नए सिरे से प्रकाशन किया गया है। पता नहीं कैसे इंदौर के सरकारी ला कालेज में पुरानी पुस्तक ही प्रचलन में थी? क्यों थी? इसका जवाब किसी के पास नहीं। यह भी किसी को पता नहीं कि उक्त पुस्तक देश के अन्य कितने ला कालेजों में पढ़ाई जा रही

होगी। इस प्रकरण से यह प्रश्न उठना स्वाभाविक है कि क्या कोई यह तय करने वाला नहीं कि किसी शिक्षा संस्थान में कैसी पुस्तकें पाठ्यक्रम का हिस्सा हैं? विधि महाविद्यालय मदरसे नहीं हैं और न वे हो सकते हैं। वहां कुछ भी नहीं पढ़ाया जा सकता। वैसा कुछ तो हर्गिज नहीं पढ़ाया जा सकता, जैसा फरहत खान की पुस्तक के जरिये पढ़ाया जा रहा था। कल्पना करें कि यदि किसी सरकारी ला कालेज में इतना आपत्तिजनक पाठ्यक्रम पठन-पाठन का हिस्सा हो सकता है तो उन शिक्षा संस्थानों और विशेष रूप से मदरसों में क्या पढ़ाया जाता होगा, जिन पर सरकारों का कोई नियंत्रण नहीं? ऐसे मदरसों के नियमन-संचालन में दखल और असर रखने वाले मुल्ला-मौलवी किस तरह फरहत खान जैसी मानसिकता से लैस हैं, इसका पता हाल में गुजरात चुनाव के दौरान तब चला जब अहमदाबाद की जामा मस्जिद के शाही इमाम शब्बीर अहमद सिद्दीकी यह कहते नजर आए, 'मुस्लिम महिलाओं को चुनाव में टिकट देना इस्लाम के खिलाफ है। इस्लाम में महिलाओं का इस तरह लोगों के सामने आना जायज नहीं है। अगर ऐसा होता तो उन्हें मस्जिद में आने से नहीं रोका जाता। जब अपनी महिलाओं को विधायक, पार्षद बनाओगे तो हिजाब को कैसे महफूज रखोगे।' साफ है कि शाही इमाम

न केवल मुस्लिम महिलाओं को पर्दे में रखना चाहते हैं, बल्कि वे महिलाओं को दोयम दर्जे का समझते हैं। हैरानी नहीं कि इसी कारण उन्हें बुर्के और हिजाब में रखने की जिद होती है। शब्बीर अहमद सिद्दीकी ने जिस मानसिकता का परिचय दिया, वह नई अनोखी नहीं। इन दिनों केरल सरकार की ओर से कुदुंबश्री अभियान चलाया जा रहा है। इसके तहत लोगों को यह शपथ दिलाई जाती है कि वे अपनी संपत्ति में बेटे-बेटियों को समान हिस्सा देंगे। जब इस अभियान में मुस्लिम समाज के लोगों ने भी भाग लिया तो कुछ मुल्ला मौलवी आगबबूला हो गए। केरल की एक प्रभावशाली मुस्लिम संस्था के नेता नसर फैजी कूडाथाई ने इस शपथ का खुलकर विरोध किया। उन्होंने कहा कि यह शपथ शरीयत सिद्धांतों के खिलाफ है। कुछ मुस्लिम संगठनों ने उक्त शपथ लेने वाली महिलाओं को काफिर तक करार दिया। इनमें वह संगठन भी है, जिसके प्रमुख नसर फैजी कूडाथाई हैं। यह वही नसर फैजी कूडाथाई हैं, जिन्होंने विश्व कप फुटबाल शुरू होते ही केरल के युवकों को चेताया था कि अल्लाह की इबादत करो, फुटबाल की नहीं। उनके मुताबिक फुटबाल एक लत बन रहा है और इससे इबादत प्रभावित हो रहा है। बीते दिनों एक अन्य मुस्लिम नेता और मौलाना की पदवी से लैस आल यूनियन यूनाइटेड डेमोक्रेटिक फ्रंट के अध्यक्ष मौलाना बदरुद्दीन अजमल का बयान भी चर्चा में रहा। उन्होंने जनसंख्या के मामले में अपनी बात रखते हुए कहा कि हिंदुओं को मुसलमानों के फार्मूले को अपनाकर अपने बच्चों की 18-20 साल की उम्र में शादी करा देनी चाहिए।

इससे संतुष्ट नहीं हुआ जा सकता कि कट्टर मुल्ला-मौलवियों जैसी मानसिकता रखने वाली फरहत खान के खिलाफ कार्रवाई की जा रही है और उनकी किताब को इंदौर के सरकारी ला कालेज से हटा लिया गया है, लेकिन अहमदाबाद के शाही इमाम और नसर फैजी कूडाथाई जैसे मुस्लिम नेताओं के सोच का मुकाबला करना आसान नहीं दिख रहा है। जो भी हो, यह आवश्यक है कि किसी को इसकी जांच परख करनी चाहिए कि शिक्षा संस्थानों में क्या पढ़ाया जा रहा है?

(लेखक दैनिक जागरण में एसोसिएट एडिटर हैं)

response@jagran.com

सरकार की पहल और प्रोत्साहन से हो रही तरक्की

केंद्र सरकार की पहल और प्रोत्साहन से आयुर्वेदिक और प्राकृतिक चिकित्सा को काफी बढ़ावा मिल रहा है। आने वाले समय में जब इस विधा और इसके उत्पादों की मांग देश के अलावा अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तर पर भी बढ़ेगी, तब यह सेक्टर और तेजी से विकास करेगा। वैसे, धीरे-धीरे अब देश और दुनिया में लोगों में आयुर्वेद, होम्योपैथ और यूनानी चिकित्सा पद्धति के प्रति भरोसा बढ़ रहा है। फिलहाल, अभी जिस तरह से आयुर्वेद जैसी विधाओं का मार्केट और फार्मेसी की संख्या बढ़ रही है, उसे देखते हुए युवा अगर इन विधाओं में से किसी में विशेषज्ञता हासिल कर लेते हैं, तो आगे उनका भविष्य बहुत उज्ज्वल रहने वाला है। साथ में यदि मैनेजमेंट की डिग्री भी प्राप्त कर लेते हैं, तो फार्मा कंपनियों में मैनेजमेंट जाब मिलने में भी आसानी होगी।

डा. राजीव पुंडीर
वरिष्ठ आयुर्वेदिक चिकित्सक,
एमडी, आयुर्वेद

1.50 लाख करोड़ रुपये का हो चुका है देश का आयुष उद्योग, जो आठ साल पहले मात्र 20 हजार करोड़ रुपये का था।

प्रमुख संस्थान

- अखिल भारतीय आयुर्वेद संस्थान, दिल्ली
  https://aiia.gov.in
- बीएचयू, वाराणसी
  www.bhu.ac.in

5.5 लाख नई नौकरियां पैदा होने की उम्मीद है देश के आयुष उद्योग में (जीएआइएस के आकलन के अनुसार)

- गुजरात आयुर्वेद यूनिवर्सिटी, जामनगर
  www.ayurveduniversity.edu.in
- एनआइयूएम, गाजियाबाद
  www.nium.in
- जामिया हमदर्द, नई दिल्ली
  http://jamiahamdard.edu

फोटो : इमेजेज बाजार

14-15 प्रतिशत सालाना की दर से भारतीय आयुष उद्योग के आगे बढ़ने का अनुमान है आने वाले वर्षों में।

आयुर्वेद, होम्योपैथी और यूनानी चिकित्सा का बाजार बढ़ने के साथ उनमें बड़ी संख्या में रोजगार के अवसर भी सामने आ रहे हैं। आइए जानते हैं, इस क्षेत्र में रुचि रखने वाले युवा कैसे अपने करियर को आगे बढ़ा सकते हैं...

आयुष में बढ़ते अवसर

हेल्थकेयर में करियर

हाल में गोवा में संपन्न नौवें विश्व आयुर्वेद सम्मेलन और आरोग्य एक्सपो में प्रधानमंत्री नरेन्द्र मोदी द्वारा अत्याधुनिक सुविधाओं से लैस तीन नये राष्ट्रीय आयुष संस्थानों (आयुर्वेद, होम्योपैथी और यूनानी चिकित्सा पद्धति वाले) का उद्घाटन किया गया। इस अवसर पर उन्होंने आयुष उद्योग के लगातार बढ़ते बाजार,

औषधीय पौधरोपण से लाभ उठाने की कोशिश करने और इससे अधिक रोजगार के अवसर उत्पन्न होने की भी बात की। खास बात यह है कि क्रमश: गोवा, दिल्ली और गाजियाबाद में खोले गए इन तीनों संस्थानों में तमाम अत्याधुनिक उपचार सुविधाएं होने के साथ-साथ आयुर्वेद, यूनानी और होम्योपैथी में पीएचडी और एमडी करने की भी सुविधा होगी। वैसे, अपने देश में आयुर्वेद, होम्योपैथ या यूनानी को मान्यता और इसके प्रति लोगों

का भरोसा प्राचीन काल से ही रहा है, लेकिन हाल के वर्षों में इन प्राकृतिक चिकित्सा विधाओं में लोगों का विश्वास और बढ़ा है। इसलिए आयुष उद्योग लगातार बढ़ रहा है। प्रधानमंत्री के वक्तव्य के अनुसार, आयुष उद्योग आठ साल पहले 20 हजार करोड़ रुपये का था, जो बढ़कर अब 1.50 लाख करोड़ रुपये तक पहुंच गया है। सबसे अच्छी बात यह है कि दुनिया भर में इसका बाजार बढ़ रहा है। इससे विभिन्न रूपों में इस

सेक्टर में रोजगार के अवसर भी तेजी से पैदा हो रहे हैं।

करियर के अवसर अगर आयुष से संबंधित विधाओं में करियर की बात करें, तो वर्तमान में अखिल भारतीय आयुर्वेद संस्थान, दिल्ली समेत देश के तमाम सरकारी अस्पतालों में आयुर्वेदिक और प्राकृतिक चिकित्सा पद्धति से उपचार हो रहा है, जहां पर इस विधा में विशेषज्ञों के अलावा पैरामेडिकल स्टाफ की हमेशा मांग रहती है। छोटे-बड़े शहरों में तेजी से तमाम ऐसे क्लीनिक/हेल्थकेयर सेंटर भी खुल रहे हैं, जहां पर इन विधाओं के जरिए उपचार होता है। इसके अलावा, देश में ऐसी अनगिनत स्थापित मैन्यूफैक्चरिंग कंपनियां हैं, जो आयुर्वेदिक और होम्योपैथी पर आधारित औषधियां बना रही हैं। इनमें भी विभिन्न स्तरों पर प्रशिक्षित लोगों की काफी मांग रहती है, जो आयुर्वेदिक दवाएं और अन्य उत्पाद बनाने या रिसर्च में सहयोग दे सकते हैं। कुल मिलाकर, आयुर्वेदिक, नेचुरोपैथी,

होम्योपैथी, यूनानी चिकित्सा में समुचित पढ़ाई के बाद युवाओं के पास अवसरों की कमी नहीं है।

कोर्स एवं योग्यता: एक क्वालिफाइड आयुर्वेदिक/होम्योपैथिक/यूनानी प्रैक्टिशनर बनने के लिए एमबीबीएस की तरह ही बीएएमएस, बीएसएमएस, बीयूएमएस या बीएचएमएस कोर्स किया जा सकता है। इसमें दाखिला नीट (नेशनल एलिजिबिलिटी कम एंट्रेंस टेस्ट) द्वारा होता है, जिसका आयोजन भारत सरकार की संस्था एनटीए (नेशनल टेस्टिंग एजेंसी) द्वारा किया जाता है। 50 प्रतिशत अंकों के साथ पीसीबी विषयों से 12वीं करने के बाद आप इस टेस्ट में शामिल हो सकते हैं। बैचलर डिग्री पूरी करने के बाद राष्ट्रीय आयुष संस्थानों से पीएचडी/एमडी भी कर सकते हैं। हालांकि दिल्ली के अखिल भारतीय आयुर्वेद संस्थान में आयुर्वेद में पीजी और पीएचडी कोर्स पहले से उपलब्ध है।

धीरेंद्र पाठक

Devi Kar

Schools need to teach the basics, not just prepare kids for careers

The other night, a student who had passed out of my school this year was killed in a nasty road accident. Her college classmate who was at the wheel has been arrested since. He had a proper driving licence and he had not consumed alcohol: the arrest was for "the offence of culpable homicide not amounting to murder", where the accused person has the knowledge of the consequences of his action — in this case, rash driving. If this is established in court, he can be jailed up to 10 years.

We were all shocked and deeply saddened by this horrible incident. The inevitable discussions around the young woman's tragic death led to some serious thought about the way we are educating, or rather, not educating our young. Parents and schools have become so career-obsessed that there is hardly any time to accommodate lessons about basic social behaviour. The school timetable is overcrowded and parents are far too preoccupied honing their children's talents in readiness for a sparkling future. Right from the junior classes they are busy learning foreign languages, musical instruments, martial arts and all kinds of sports. In addition, they soon get busy trying to improve on their academic scores and preparing for various competitive exams. There is simply no time to think about things which do not contribute directly to their pursuit of promising careers.

Come Independence Day and Republic Day, all schoolchildren are exposed to the lofty ideals and golden dreams of the leaders of our independence movement. They learn about the freedom fighters of yore and are made to understand why our youth should be proud of Mother India and dedicate their lives to her service. But teaching children to be patriotic in this manner does not help unless they grow up to be citizens of whom their country can be proud.

What does it mean to be responsible citizens of India and indeed of the world?

For this, we need to turn to "basics" and strengthen our children's civic sense. To begin with, they must mind their manners which is not about fine "etiquette" but about simple consideration for others. It is about following instructions and rules. Why did the hapless young man at the wheel drive at such high speed? Did he not know that there were three young people besides himself, whose lives were in his hands? Why did he think that it was all right to disregard the traffic rules just because it was very late at night? His driving licence signified that he was fit to drive — in other words, not only were his driving skills adequate but that his knowledge of traffic rules and road safety was sound. Why is it then that this boy behaved in such a reckless and irresponsible manner?

To answer these questions, we must first introspect. We will realise that as parents and teachers we are failing to nurture our young to grow up as responsible adults. We are devoting all our waking hours towards developing individuals who will make us proud by their dazzling feats of success. In any case, why is it not possible to attempt both? A colleague stated exasperatedly the other morning: "These children talk so impressively about saving the planet and the urgency to conserve but they nonchalantly litter the school garden and even the school hall!"

We feel proud of the competitive spirit in which our children are growing up. But if you pause to observe what is actually going on, you will be deeply disturbed if you value character formation. I am afraid that many will not agree with me as they themselves fuel the flames of competition and fight tooth and nail to gain the best possible "deals" for their offspring and students who with their brilliant examination results will bring glory to their school. Every year one hears of the replication of filthy mainstream politics being played out on school campuses. Important offices of the school student body, leadership positions in sports and designations such as house captains, presidents of different societies and teams are being vied for. Apart from the headiness of leadership positions, mention of these designations enhances the weight of CVs while applying to prestigious colleges.

Sport is supposed to grow character — the seven values that sport can teach are said to be: fairness, team-building, equality, discipline, inclusion, perseverance and respect. These certainly contribute towards the qualities needed to be responsible citizens. Instead, with the fiercest of competitions between "houses" within a school and rivalry between schools outside, sports have begun to fit the famous Orwellian description of "war minus the shooting." When did we last hear of acts of sacrifice or generosity during a tournament? In a game of cricket, a batsman has been known to "walk" even before the umpire gave his call and a fielder would declare that it was not a catch as the ball had touched the ground. No wonder that cricket used to be known as "a gentleman's game". But there is nothing gentlemanly about what we see in cricket these days and indeed in sport in general.

All human qualities are forgotten in the zeal and single-mindedness of what is to be attained — never mind the means. Earlier it was "stress" that one worried about, now in addition, it is the unscrupulousness and viciousness that are rampantly demonstrated by schoolchildren to outdo their peers. Thus, we recall Carl Jung's words of wisdom: "Sometimes, indeed there is such a discrepancy between the genius and his human qualities that one has to ask oneself whether a little less talent might not have been better."

The writer is a veteran school educator based in Kolkata

IN PERSPECTIVE

Keeping Adivasi children in school

The curriculum must include their culture and language to make education meaningful

NAYAKARA VEERESHA

The notion of "nation-state" assumes the culture of any nation as homogeneous by appropriating the society's heterogeneous elements. Adivasi societies are heterogeneous in nature with diversified features in terms of multi-lingualism, *jati* (caste) composition, kinship, the institution of marriage, political systems, and religious practices. Community life takes precedence over individual well-being in Adivasi communities. The cultural differences between mainstream society and Adivasi society are one of the main reasons for not acknowledging the role of tradition and informal learning thereby contributing to the educational and cultural alienation in the schools.

In addition to this, the British rulers and the theories of internal colonialism and development have propagated a few unjust notions towards Adivasi societies, such as "illiterate," "backward," "underdeveloped," "uncivilised," and "inferior." This has created a mindset among post-colonial policymakers to follow the policy of assimilation. Caste-based discrimination against Adivasis is prevalent yet unchecked by the institutions of governance in education.

The existing formal schooling system is culturally different for Adivasis when compared to that of their traditional learning centres. The importance of the Gotul system among the Muria community, particularly in the Bastar region, is well studied and documented by anthropologists. It is a social institution that trains the children and younger generation about their values, culture, and even democracy; largely, it is a citizenship-enabling institution (CEI). Article 350A of the Constitution states that "it shall be the endeavour of every state and of every local authority within the state to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups..." One of the primary reasons for the high rate of dropout among Adivasis in school is a language barrier. The medium of instruction is either Hindi or English, both of which are alien to Adivasis.

The education system, which is insensitive to the local people's mother tongue, language, and local dialect, becomes culturally insignificant. This does not mean that Adivasis need not learn Hindi or English; the argument is that the states should make attempts to provide primary education in the mother tongue of Adivasis. This will enable more Adivasi children to attend the formal schooling system and generate curiosity among youth so that the retention rate increases. It is very important to revitalise the local languages and dialects to improve education in tribal areas.

An effort has to be made to translate the textbooks into their own dialects to instil interest and confidence among the Adivasi communities. This was even recommended by the National Policy on Education 1986: "the need to develop the curricula and devise instructional materials in tribal languages at the initial stages, with arrangements for switching over to the regional language." Following this, there are a few attempts made by the states of Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra to prepare text books in Adivasi languages and local dialects. The National Education Policy (NEP) of 2020 finds that "Tribal communities and children from Scheduled Tribes also face disadvantages at multiple levels due to various historical and geographical factors. Children from tribal communities often find their school education irrelevant and foreign to their lives, both culturally and academically." It recommended the design of special mechanisms for the educational upliftment of Adivasis.

Revisit NEP

One of the critical issues is the non-recognition of the Adivasi languages in the eighth schedule. The non-recognition of Adivasi languages in the eighth schedule is due to the politics of domination by mainstream society over Adivasi society. It has prevented legal, institutional, and constitutional support for the Adivasi languages. By not including the tribal languages in the eighth schedule, mainstream society has precluded the Adivasi languages from attaining political salience and significance, thereby depriving them of their fundamental rights at primary education levels. Deprivation of education in the mother tongue is the fundamental root cause of all other forms of alienation, i.e., cultural, economic, ecological, and political, in a given society.

Unless efforts are made to mitigate the cultural and institutional factors hindering the educational attainment of Adivasis, it would be difficult to envisage an equal and just democratic society. The perpetuating social inequities in the education system and the perception of mainstream society towards Adivasis need to change to bring about attitudinal and societal transformation.

(The writer is a PhD Fellow in Political Science, Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bengaluru.)

A transformative movement

Oasis Movement, which started engaging with J&K government in 2016 to train resource persons for educating children, has now proliferated to multiple states

The Oasis Movement began on a small scale. The first engagement with the government was in Jammu & Kashmir in 2016-2018. It was result of an amazing synergy between some of the finest IAS officers like Shaleen Kabra (Principal Secretary, School Education, J&K), Shah Faesal (Director, School Education, Kashmir) and Saugat Biswas (SPD, SSA, J&K), who sincerely believed in helping students holistically. This unfurled Oasis Life Camps and Oasis Friendship Camps (Jyotirdhar workshops) in the schools of J&K.

In just one year, the transformative impact of Jyotirdhar workshops on around 150 heads of schools across Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh created a ripple effect. Many Oasis programmes were rolled out, not just for students, but also for parents and families of beneficiaries.

I had personally witnessed one of these camps while visiting Leh during my tenure as Secretary, School Education and Literacy, Government of India, and was amazed at the energy and the impact this camp had generated. However, there were challenges in the store. While programmes and modules could be replicated, facilitation of authentic transformation in people was voluntary, intangible, slow and a long-drawn process. Oasis needed to prepare a pool of local facilitators to reach out to maximum children. Without appropriate balance between quality and quantity, scaling would have been elusive.

Good words spread and, soon, in late 2019, the Gujarat government signed an MoU with Oasis to take Jyotirdhar programme to school heads, teachers and students. Unfortunately, the pandemic stalled the momentum.

In 2020, founder trustees of Oasis publicly announced the succession plan. This included two segments. One was the handing over of the management of Oasis Trust to a team of young trustee-elect while hand holding them through intensive leadership education. The other adventure was foraying into national expansion of

Oasis has been preparing a pool of local facilitators to reach out to maximum children COURTESY: OASIS MOVEMENT

the Oasis Movement through public-private partnerships. This partnership crystalized in the form of an arrangement between 'Jyotirdhar' (with Govt. Education Dept for school heads) and 'Pay it Forward' (with founders of NGOs/ social sector). The approach was largely non-commercial.

The objective was to gift the culture of character education — the education of the heart — to fellow organisations by sharing Oasis' processes and programme content with their senior leaders. In turn, it would lead to cascading a value-based culture of integrity and giving, not just across their own organisations but also to their beneficiaries in various segments of society.

In light of the Covid-19 restrictions, Oasis began the initial experiment in early 2021 in Gujarat through a new initiative, 'Pay-It-Forward'. Fifty-seven leaders from more than 20 credible non-profits, working in different sectors with a focus on rural, child and women development, joined. Amid the pandemic, they reached out to hundreds of children and women in their respective sectors.

Building on the earlier successes, in 2022, along with Gujarat, the model was replicated in Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Delhi-NCR with more than 60 partners. It is an ongoing process which is now being extended to Odisha, Karnataka and Rajasthan.

In January 2022, a team of Oasis founder members began

this journey from Hyderabad, Telangana. They met a genuine educator Navin Mittal, IAS, Commissioner, Collegiate Department. The project's vision was cleared on that day itself. A workshop series for selected 30 NSS college representatives — one from each district across Telangana — was finalized. The idea was to engage with the youth in social entrepreneurship and nation-building by sensitizing these participating NSS officers. Over the year, three residential workshops have been organized.

Eventually, this one PPP led to multiple MoUs and pilot projects across seven different states/UTs including Telangana, Kerala, Karnataka, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Rajasthan, and Tamil Nadu while such MoUs with three other states of Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Meghalaya are on the anvil.

Oasis has introduced need-based, diverse and customized pilot programmes as well as partnership MoUs in each state. In Kerala, it is a one-year project for 25 educators of Kerala State Civil Services Academy, who are taking the programme down to young student aspirants. Based on this success, a model of Telangana Misaal is now being formulated for college students in Kerala.

The education department of Karnataka displayed a very heart-warming response. A holistic model of two-year partnership begins with Oasis Jyotirdhar sensitization workshop for 35 DYPCs representing each district. They will be

instrumental in identifying a select batch of 35 potential leaders from principals across the state that will undergo Oasis programmes. This will facilitate programmes for more than 6,000 students through training of 100 teachers as key resource persons in the first phase.

The next significant MoU on a similar holistic model was recently signed with the J&K school education department, with a larger outreach, especially to girl students of KGBVs. It entails sensitizing workshops for all senior officials and core team members of SLA, SCERT and education departments to harmonize their engagement with the Oasis project. With the help of the pool of available trained resource persons, the entire programme is aimed to create a core team of 40 project facilitators and 150 KRPs across 20 districts, and influence 10,000 students over the next two years. It also includes leadership training of the core team and 100 youth leaders at Oasis Valleys, Gujarat.

Post the Covid-19 pandemic, Jyotirdhar's MoU with GCERT, Gujarat, has also now been reactivated to prepare 250 KRPs across the state, with a large number of teachers benefitting from the programme over the next two years. The first phase will reach 15,000 students directly.

This PPP venture was a win-win situation for Oasis. In states like Tamil Nadu, where Oasis conducted sensitizing workshops for a select batch of headmasters of government schools

across the state, it not only created an inroad but also became a huge learning experience for Oasis facilitators.

For government schools in larger states like Rajasthan, Oasis has customized a pilot programme with special focus on girl students in the Mewar region. With the support of officials of Samagra Shiksha and education department, in the first phase, a three-day Life Camp festival was organized in the rural/tribal parts of Chittorgarh and Udaipur districts. 557 students participated in 15 such camps engaging around 24 youths from Oasis team and 10 teachers from schools and NGOs as resource persons. A similar project MoU for programmes on character education for school students is in the process of being finalized with the Lok Shikshan Sanchanalaya, Madhya Pradesh government. The focus of this pilot programme will be on the Indore region, and will engage 150 school heads and teachers to be trained as KRPs to benefit 5,000 students through Oasis programmes.

In early 2023, Oasis plans to engage with the governments in eastern regions of Odisha and Meghalaya.

A path-breaking development that emerged recently was an MoU of Oasis with Centre for Good Governance, Government of Telangana, with the inspiration of a retired IAS officer K Skandan. 'Self-Governance for Good Governance — Education of Heart for Authentic Leadership' envisions influencing the bureaucrats and government officials, especially the young, to lead a change in the systemic interventions with a value-basis of integrity and accountability.

Oasis has accomplished what it did on account of the support it managed to get from outstanding officers like V Vigneshwari and APM Mohammed Hanish in Kerala; Ritesh Singh and BB Cauvery in Karnataka; Navin Mittal in Telangana; Usha Kakrla in Tamil Nadu and Alok Kumar in J&K. They present a wonderful example of public-private partnership in the true spirit of Nexus of Good.

Views expressed are personal

Ragging: Once a harmless witty banter

■ Deba Prasad Misra

Nowadays, everywhere in the media, ragging has become a serious topic of discussion. Recent incidents of bullying, disorderly conduct, physical and mental torture by senior students upon their juniors in different institutions have affected the academic sanctity of those places.

Though 'ragging' means making fun boisterously, teasing and playing tricks by the seniors on their juniors, the word has earned notoriety, evoking a feeling of terror in the minds of the freshers. In the name of ragging, the newcomers are subjected to torture by the seniors. Instead of extending a hearty welcome, the newcomers are teased, tormented, and beaten up mercilessly just for fun. They are made to crawl on the floor, stand on one leg and forced to go without food for the whole night. The first few days in a hostel become a nightmare for the freshers. Some victims of ragging even give up hostel life. Under the cover of darkness at night in hostels, the problem of ragging becomes more acute, but a large number of cases go unreported because of fear.

The justification in support of ragging, according to many senior boarders of hostels, is that it helps the freshers shake off their initial shyness and adapt themselves to the new atmosphere. It also helps them face any odd situation boldly in future. But these arguments are unacceptable.

The practice of ragging probably originated in England. It is one of the many evil practices of the British to teach social hierarchy and compel students to be more disciplined. Every year, as new students get admitted after the declaration of results and new classes start, there is a lot of hustle and bustle, with many new people on the college campuses exuding a lot of energy and high spirits. The faces of the new students often betray their anxiety, eagerness, expectations, and mixed feelings of pleasure, sorrow, awe and fear. They are the freshers on the threshold of college life. They look forward to the bonhomie, mirth and merriment of being happy go-lucky students in college or university. Meanwhile, batches of senior students are also seen loitering around in the college compound, canteens, hostels and corridors. Behind the facade of welcoming new students, many senior students get an excuse to harass their juniors and more often than not, make them easy targets to satiate their own perverse sadistic pleasure.

Ragging has become a menace, cause of fear and shock, not only for a fresher, but to his or her parents too, who send their sons and daughters to pursue higher education by investing a lot of their hard-earned money. The Supreme Court of India, as well as the Government have termed ragging as a heinous practice, but the practice still exists in spite of the presence of rules and regulations. Now, pertinent questions in front of us is 'why do some of our seniors resort to such socially unacceptable behaviour?' and 'Why do the seniors don't understand the problems of their juniors and subject them to such unbearable inhuman acts?'

If we remember what Marcellus said to Horatio in William Shakespeare's great tragedy, referring to the appearance of the ghost, "Something is rotten in the State of Denmark". It seems as if something, somewhere has gone wrong in our system. There are many cases where the freshers in hostels gather up enough courage to approach the higher authorities and report misdeeds of ragging against them, but fear retaliation in the form of physical and mental torture by the seniors who find out about the complainant. Rather than the ego clash between the seniors and juniors, the onus is on the seniors to change their roles to become benefactors and guides instead. To stop the menace of ragging is necessary, but it is more necessary to imbibe the spirit of love and affection towards the juniors. Outgoing boarders should not be allowed to enter their old hostels in the name of welcoming the freshers. More and more zones should be set up that feature banners and posters with slogans like 'Stop ragging', 'Ragging-free zone', 'Ragging is a punishable offence', etc. A compulsory orientation meeting should be held among the seniors and the freshers along with the hostel wardens. Many student leaders linger on for many years in the hostels just providing their leadership. In many institutions, outgoing students are seen getting involved in activities. If nothing works out, separate hostels should be allotted to the newcomers.

In olden times, ragging was treated as a harmless, witty banter. We were asked by our seniors witty questions like pronunciation of words like 'Called', and whether it is pronounced 'Keled' or 'Celled'. We were called by nicknames depending upon our gestures and postures, etc. In the freshers' social meet, we were asked to give our introductions and speak about our hobbies. It was friendly and harmless. But in course of time, it has taken an insidious and malignant form that cannot be termed 'banter', leave alone harmless.

So, anti-ragging procedures should be initiated by the institutions right from the time of advertisements for admissions. The prospectus, the admission form and any other literature issued to aspirants must clearly mention that ragging is banned in the institution and any one indulging in ragging is likely to be punished severely.

The admission form must have a printed undertaking to be filled up and signed by the applicant and parents, saying that he or she is aware of the institution's approach towards ragging and the punishment to which he or she shall be liable if found guilty of ragging. The vulnerable locations should be properly watched. Let us create an atmosphere where seniors become friends, philosophers and guides to the juniors. The onus is both on the seniors and the freshers who will one day become seniors to knock on the doors of freshers with a smile inviting him to go to the library to study together, or for an evening walk, or for a cup of tea or coffee, or for participation in activities of the institute. Then success will surely smile upon everyone's life in every institution.

> Anti-ragging procedures should be initiated by the institutions right from the time of advertisements for admissions. The prospectus, the admission form and any other literature issued to aspirants must clearly mention that ragging is banned in the institution.

IN PERSPECTIVE

The way forward for NAAC

While binary accreditation is a step forward, a nationwide impact analysis is necessary

B S MADHUKAR

The recent announcement by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) to express the outcome of the assessment exercise in a binary form is a welcome step but needs abundant caution in its implementation. As per newspaper reports, two terms will be used for binary accreditation: accreditation or yet to acquire the same. The term 'yet to acquire' possibly needs a clear definition.

At this juncture, it is important to understand the evolution of the NAAC's assessment process over the last two decades, particularly the aspects of "grading." In a nutshell, NAAC's vision is to make quality assurance an integral part of the operation of higher education institutions and to mandate that they be graded.

Keeping in view the vision and mandate of NAAC, the initial phase of the assessment process was envisaged as a binary process: accredited or non-accredited. A couple of institutions were graded accordingly, but this did not find favour as binary accreditation did not allow for finer distinction between institutions; the efforts of well-performing institutions would not be acknowledged, giving them little incentive to better themselves. Therefore, a more nuanced system of grading at various levels was developed.

As more institutions got accredited, dissatisfaction again increased. This time, because of disparities: institutions rated higher in a geographical area were not perceived to be better by the public than those rated lower. The allegation of malpractice also surfaced. These issues were addressed by bringing in changes to the manual and the scoring and grading structure of the assessment process in April 2007.

Furthermore, the accreditation process gained importance as a result of the expanded scope of accreditation obtained by former MHRD, UGC, and state education departments, and because the grade of the institutions was linked to regulatory issues (for example, prerequisite for seat enhancement, permanent affiliation to colleges, operational flexibility to universities and so on). Therefore, what was originally a reflective exercise for institutions moved towards one of precise quality measurement, which, however, remained elusive and distorted the very purpose of the process. The same issues also caused enough dissatisfaction among institutions to mandate a revision in the structure of the manual, the scoring pattern, digitisation of the process, limiting the role of the peer team, etc. in July 2017. Possibly, binary accreditation is also a continuum in the process of addressing the issues mentioned above and bringing further credibility to the process. The National Education Policy 2020 also calls for moving to a binary accreditation mechanism within a decade.

The outcome of the accreditation process, apart from the issues stated above, involves other factors like the structure and relevance of the content of the manual/instrument used to prepare the self-study report, the sensitivity of the instrument, the peer team training and expertise, the institution's processes, the institutions' preparedness and stage of maturity, the leadership competency, management views and finances, the internal dynamics of process deployment, and the usage of the results of the process, etc.

So, before the switchover to the binary accreditation process is undertaken, a 360-degree analysis of all the aspects involved in the assessment process should be undertaken. A nation-wide impact analysis at the ground level must be conducted by a third party to understand and identify the qualitative changes that the assessment process has brought about in the institutions so far. The data will help with better decision-making. Past experiences have shown that experts with a good profile are available in plenty, but acquiring expertise in a particular domain is a long and difficult journey, even though the process may appear simple.

Above all, care should be taken to ensure that the primary stakeholder in the process, the student, is not disadvantaged by the exercise, i.e., a bright student from a poorly graded college loses opportunities against an average student from a better graded college due to policy interventions, employment opportunity norms, the location of the institution, and other factors over which s/he has no control.

(The writer is former adviser, NAAC, Bengaluru)

DH/16/8

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Learning With Machines Learning

**Suresh Prabhu &
Shobhit Mathur**

Last week, dialogue-based artificial-intelligence (AI) chatbot ChatGPT took the internet by storm. The bot has the ability to understand natural language and respond in natural language with impressive precision and creativity. Despite its limitations, it is exciting and scary at the same time. So far, it is the closest demonstration of machines mimicking humans, even getting better than us. That is also the scary part.

While ChatGPT has its limitations, it will learn fast. That is the nature of machine learning (ML) — it gets exponentially better with time as its interactions with humans increase. Many industries are going to be disrupted with this technology. But the first and most obvious one will be education.

Homework essays and coding assessments are now irrelevant. ChatGPT and its successors will churn out personalised essays on any topic. This essay will pass any plagiarism checker because it is, indeed, 'original'. Given the structured nature of computer languages, chatbots are excellent code generators, code explainers and debuggers. A lot of basic coding can now be easily done by AI.

As for education, teachers have to reinvent themselves. They are no longer the experts in the classroom. Till now, it was a search engine like Google that challenged them. But a search engine can, at best, reply to factual questions giving references. Teachers beat search engines by flipping the classroom, using plagiarism checkers and giving open-ended assessments that need original thinking.

AI-based natural language chatbots are much advanced. They will become our very own personalised all-knowing teachers available to us all the time. The chatbot can crunch tremendous amounts of information available to it, draw inferences from them and create persuasive arguments in a personalised manner based on human inputs.

When a student can learn better by interacting with the chatbot, what does the teacher do? He or she will have to teach the *purpose* of learning, what is

Teaching teachers to teach

worth learning and *how* to learn. This means transforming our teachers into 'meta-teachers' for which they will need to be trained.

The nature of jobs will also change — to training machines and helping them get better. That is where the competitive advantage of companies will lie. This implies creating new datasets as inputs to machines and giving feedback to the machine on the output to help it improve. This will change the nature of employment and add a different type of job category — humans who assist machines to learn and get better than competitive machines.

Just as in every disruptive technolo-gy before, there will be denial, scepticism and, finally, acceptance. The ones who adapt early will lead. It is difficult to predict the quantum of jobs that will be generated or destroyed. But every job will definitely integrate machine assistance to get better. The extreme case would be a role reversal — humans assisting machines.

Our education system should factor in this reality. AI and ML can no longer be a course for students of computer science and engineering alone. Every student needs to learn this field of science, because every profession will integrate it and society will be shaped by it.

Any new application, including Chat-GPT, may seem exciting for a period and then fade. But we cannot deny the underlying technology behind the application — AI. ChatGPT has just given us a glimpse of what is coming. We need to go back to the fundamentals: what makes us human, why do we learn, what is worth learning and how do we learn. With this shift in mindset, we will assimilate technological changes and use it for our collective good, rather than get overpowered by it.

Prabhu is former Cabinet minister, GoI, and Mathur is vice-chancellor, Rishihood University, Sonipat, Haryana

At Kota, a collective failure

As teachers, parents, citizens, we are all responsible for the coaching centre-driven anxiety of students

AVIJIT PATHAK

YES, ONCE AGAIN, we — I mean a sick society obsessed with a mythical notion of "success"— allowed three young minds to end their lives in Kota: The town in Rajasthan known for all that is ugly about our education system. Yet, despite the recurrence of suicides and mental disorders amongst these cogs in the coaching factory, we will forget this tragedy quite soon. In fact, the lavish business of coaching centres will continue to flourish; middle-class parents from all over the country will not hesitate to send their children to this ugly chamber that robs young, adolescent students of their joy, laughter, music and poetry, and makes them recklessly one-dimensional for cracking engineering/medical entrance tests. We will continue to equate intelligence and creativity with the ability to crack these terribly problematic standardised tests, confuse the treasure of physics and mathematics with what these coaching factories vomit every day, and entertain a false belief that life is really "settled" when one walks through the corridors of IITs or select medical colleges.

A hyper-competitive and over-populated society with a complete mismatch between the overflow of aspirants for job-oriented techno-managerial/ medical education and real opportunities; the chronic restlessness of the aspiring class for whom this sort of education seems to be the only capital for upward social mobility; the scarcity of jobs for those who seek to pursue liberal arts and social sciences; and the nexus of the education mafia and the political class that taps this anxiety and existential insecurity for spreading the chains of coaching centres and Ed-Tech companies — the sociological reasons for this sickness are well-known and much talked about. But then, if we are really sincere and feel genuinely about the fate of adolescents and young students, we ought to strive and initiate a social movement to rescue education from the psychic/peda-

If we are really sincere and feel genuinely about the fate of adolescents and young students, we ought to strive for and initiate a social movement to rescue education from the psychic/pedagogic/ethical decadence that Kota symbolises.

gogic/ethical decadence that Kota symbolises. In this context, as a teacher, I will make three observations.

First, as teachers (and I do not equate teachers with heavily paid coaching centre strategists, even if they are ex-IITians) in schools, colleges and universities, we ought to introspect. We must regain our agency, articulate our critical and life-affirming voice through our innovative pedagogic practices, and open the windows of consciousness of young students. Only then is it possible for them to realise that each of them is unique, there is no uniform and standardised notion of "success", and creativity manifests itself in multiple forms — in music and film-making, in physics and history, or in football and agriculture.

At a time when coaching centres have colonised the imagination of young students, schools must assert their confidence through a vibrant culture of engaged pedagogy. Likewise, I wonder why IIT professors do not assert that the ability of a young aspirant to celebrate the joy of learning physics, mathematics and engineering can never be equated with the "skill" youngsters master through the mechanised process of endless drilling that coaching centres with their "disciplinary" time-table normalise. Are these tests only serving the purpose of eliminating people rather than finding those who are genuinely inclined to science and engineering? It is high time we began to question the supremacy of this sort of life-killing standardised tests.

Second, as parents, we ought to ask ourselves some uncomfortable questions. Are we willing to realise that love is not interference or the imposition of our authority on children? Are we ready to realise that our children are not "investments" — a raw material to be sent to the Kota factory, and transformed into a polished "product" with placement offers and an attractive salary package?

Are we bold and transparent enough to realise that our children's real happiness lies in experimenting, looking at themselves, and eventually pursuing what they are inclined to? Is it possible for us to accept that diversity is natural, and hence, it is unnatural if every child becomes a parrot, and is compelled to believe that she/he wants to become either a computer engineer or an IAS officer?

And third, we must make the political class accountable. Our children are suffering, government schools, colleges and universities are in steady decline, with the "management quota" and "capitation fee", private medical/engineering colleges are further exploiting the anxiety-ridden and ambitious parents, and there is no sincere effort to create job opportunities in diverse fields.

Yet, these real issues seldom matter during elections in our country. We seem to be happy with our caste and religious identities and seem to be more interested in temples and mosques than education and livelihood. And we are ready to humiliate and kill one another in the name of "identities". Sadly, it doesn't shock us that elections are hardly ever fought on the issue of meaningful and inclusive education, and the fate of children and youngsters. Are we ready to redefine people's politics?

If we refuse to introspect, be ready to accept it: We will continue to hear the stories of suicide in Kota and in other small towns in the country filled with the billboards showcasing the "toppers" these coaching centres love to sell; motivational speakers and select counsellors will fail to combat the epidemic of anxiety and mental disorder among the competitors in the rat race; and yes, even the "success stories" will be filled with a sense of fatigue, inner emptiness and meaninglessness.

The writer taught sociology at JNU for three decades

Success engineered ~ I

Keeping in mind that the quality of technical education imparted is linked with the quality of students coming out of our rigid school system and that the demand for engineering courses depends, among others, on fluctuating job-market requirements, the engineering institutions must have adequate freedom and autonomy so as to be in a position to constantly update the curricula and enhance teaching standards, thus enabling the pass-outs to be appropriately equipped to face the emerging challenges
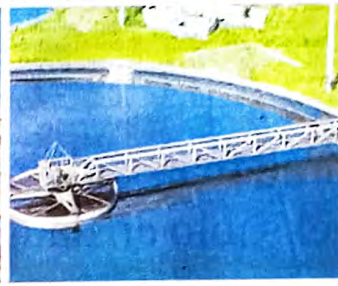
Economic development of a country largely depends on its engineering and technological prowess. In India, the secondary (manufacturing etc.) and tertiary (services) sectors combinedly contribute to about 80 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP), where the technical manpower plays a crucial role. Since national initiatives like Make in India, Startup India, Skill India and Self-reliant India (Atmanirbhar Bharat) are gaining ground, our dependence on quality technical manpower is likely to increase in the years ahead.

The National Education Policy, 2020 (NEP), if implemented in right earnest, has a transformatory potential. Though very ambitious in scope, it can make India a powerhouse, prepared for the fourth industrial revolution. Besides, the fourth goal among Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations, to be achieved by 2030, is to 'ensure inclusive and quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'.

Any discussion about the future of engineering/technical education in this country, more so over the next three decades or so, has to be cognizant of both the NEP and this SDG.

The key features of the NEP, directly relevant to the expansion and qualitative improvement of higher technical education, include increasing Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education to 50 per cent by 2035 (from 26.3 per cent in 2018), laying emphasis on promoting multi-lingualism and Indian languages, stand alone technical universities or institutions to become multi-disciplinary institutions, internationalisation of education, combating and stopping of commercialisation of higher education, Centre and states working together to increase public investment in education sector to reach 6 per cent of GDP at the earliest, from about 4.43 per cent in 2017-18. [Excerpted from the Annual Report of the Ministry of Education, 2020-21].

Consequent to the huge expansion of Higher Educational Institutions in the last few decades, the number of AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education)-approved engineering/technology institutions, in 2020-21, offering undergraduate courses stands at 2,972 and those offering post-graduate programmes at 1,862 (excluding Architecture and Planning), mostly in the private domain. There are 23 IITs, 31 NITs and IIEST, Shibpur – all funded by the central government.

Keeping in mind that the quality of technical education imparted is linked with the quality of students coming out of our rigid school system and that the demand for engineering courses depends, among others, on fluctuating job-market requirements, the engineering institutions must have adequate freedom and autonomy so as to be in a position to constantly update the curricula and enhance teaching standards, thus enabling the pass-outs to be appropriately equipped to face the emerging challenges.

Leading experts in the field of education have written extensively about what requires to be done in reforming/moulding the curricula, teaching-learning methods, examination and assessment systems, research priorities and the like. I would briefly touch upon a few issues like public and private funding, language of instruction and learning, research and innovation.

AMITABHA BHATTACHARYA

The writer, a former IAS officer, from as Principal Adviser (Education and Culture) from the Planning Commission, New Delhi

While the central and state governments will continue to play a decisive role in running higher engineering institutions, especially in standard-setting through enhancement of quality, it is evident that the goal of reaching 6 per cent of GDP is unlikely to happen very soon.

Besides, the targets set under the Right to Education Act, Rashtriya Uchchatar Siksha Abhiyan, vocational education and adult literacy programmes would demand higher proportion of public funding than provided for hitherto.

The NEP clearly states, "Highest priority of the education system will be to achieve a universal foundational literacy and numeracy in primary schools by 2025." Also, the general quality of our school education system being what it is, democratic pressure to improve it is likely to channelise greater proportion of public funding towards this sector.

As a consequence, higher technical institutions will have to increasingly depend on other sources and be ready to tap financial and manpower resources from the non-governmental sector.

Demanding administrative, academic and financial autonomy is legitimate, but the institutions have also to prepare themselves to be worthy of such autonomy. The role of alumni and their association becomes particularly relevant in this context.

Language is a very emotive issue, especially in our country with such linguistic diversity. Democratisation of education and expanding affirmative actions for the socially and economically deprived sections are creating new challenges and opportunities.

The number of first-generation learners is steadily increasing. Besides, most of our engineering students are found to be deficient in higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills.

Memorising and reproducing being the dominant practice, the critical thinking skills of such students are often of a low order. It is believed that much of this problem arises on account of the language of instruction being different from their mother tongue.

In most developed nations, the scenario is different. Scientists like Satyendranath Bose had been advocating about the need for instructions and text books being made available in mother tongue/local languages.

The NEP lays emphasis on this aspect and the AICTE has already prepared text books for engineering students in certain languages.

This is a progressive step, but it has been criticised on various grounds. Admittedly, introducing multi-lingualism in higher technical institutions is an issue of enormous complexity.

As such, it should be implemented with caution, stage by stage, with students having the freedom to make an informed choice.

The importance of English language for professional courses, especially in national level institutions, should not be undermined.

Obviously, any targeted direction from the top can cause more harm than good. Nevertheless, this issue is going to gain increasing importance in the years to come and the institutions should be prepared to embrace it, in some form or the other.
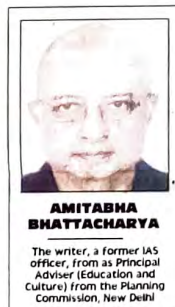
औपनिवेशिकता से उबरने की चुनौती

गिरीश्वर मिश्र

सद्गुणों के विकास की जगह येन-केन-प्रकारेण डिग्री बटोरने की प्रक्रिया बनती जा रही शिक्षा मुक्ति की जगह भार होती गई है

भारत में ज्ञान और शिक्षा की परंपरा की जड़ें न केवल गहरी और अत्यंत प्राचीन हैं, बल्कि यहां विद्या को अर्जित करना एक पवित्र और मुक्तिदायी कार्य माना गया है। इसके विपरीत पश्चिम में ज्ञान का रिश्ता अधिकार और नियंत्रण के उपकरण विकसित करना माना जाता रहा है, ताकि दूसरों पर वर्चस्व और एकाधिकार स्थापित किया जा सके। उसी रास्ते पर चलते हुए पश्चिमी दुनिया में मूल्य-निरपेक्ष विज्ञान के क्षेत्र का अकूत विस्तार होता गया और उसके परिणाम सबके सामने हैं। ऐतिहासिक परिवर्तनों के बीच विज्ञान की परंपरा यूरोप और अमेरिका से चलकर दुनिया के अन्य क्षेत्रों में फैली। इतिहास गवाह है कि औपनिवेशिक दौर में पश्चिम से लिए गए विचार, विधियां और विमर्श अकेले विकल्प की तरह दुनिया के अनेक देशों में पहुंचे और हावी होते गए। ऐसा करने का प्रयोजन 'अन्य' के ऊपर आधिपत्य था। इस प्रक्रिया में अंतर्निहित एक साम्राज्यवादी ढांचे के जोर

से अध्ययन और अनुसंधान की एक पराई ज्ञान और पंथ आदि की परंपराएं थोपी जाती रहीं। यूरो-अमेरिकी मूल की शाखा के रूप में रोपे जाने का परिणाम यह हुआ कि उपनिवेशों में ज्ञान की संस्थाएं स्वभाव से परोपजीवी हो गईं और उन देशों की स्थानीय या देशज ज्ञान परंपराएं अपदस्थ कर दी गईं। बाद में स्वतंत्रता मिलने के बाद कदाचित जरूरी आत्मविश्वास के अभाव और इस भ्रम के बीच कि वे औपनिवेशिक परंपराएं ही एकमात्र सत्य हैं, स्थानीय परंपराएं निर्जीव सी ही बनी रहीं। जबकि पराई ज्ञान-प्रणाली में अनुकरण की प्रवृत्ति और परनिर्भरता एक बाध्यता बनी रहीं, क्योंकि पश्चिम ही प्रामाणिक बन रहा यहां तक कि देशज ज्ञान का संदर्भ भी वही बन गया। भारत का शिक्षा-तंत्र और उसकी प्रक्रियाएं प्रमाण हैं कि इस विशाल देश में स्वायत्त और अपनी संस्कृति एवं पारिस्थितिकी के अनुकूल शिक्षा की जरूरत की पहचान करने में हम विफल रहे और शिक्षा में जरूरी गुणात्मक वृद्धि नहीं हो सकी।

देश की शिक्षा की दुरवस्था को लेकर बुद्धिजीवी वर्ग गाहे-बगाहे आलोचना करता रहा और सरकारों के बिठाए आयोग अपनी रपट भी बनाते रहे, परंतु जमीनी हकीकत यही थी कि सब कुछ ठंडे बस्ते में पड़ा धूल खाता रहा। सतत उपेक्षा के चलते शिक्षा में ज्यादातर सब कुछ यथावत चलता रहा। स्वाधीनता मिलने के बाद भी भारत के शिक्षा-क्षेत्र में स्वतंत्रता पूर्व की औपनिवेशिक अकादमिक संरचनाएं और प्रक्रियाएं कमोबेश पहले जैसी ही प्रभावशाली बनी रहीं और उन्हीं का पोषण होता रहा। बौद्धिक आत्मनिर्भरता और वैचारिक स्वराज के सवाल आधारभूत

औपनिवेशिक दायरों को तोड़कर और अपनी संस्कृति से जुड़कर ही होगा समग्र विकास ॰ फाइल

होने के बावजूद भी सक्रिय कार्रवाई के एजेंडे से बाहर ही बने रहे। यह जरूर हुआ कि कुछ चुनिंदा संस्थान खड़े हुए और वे पश्चिमी माडल को अक्षत बनाए रखने में लगे रहे और वह प्रक्रिया अभी भी जारी है। उनके उत्पाद विदेशों में भी प्रतिष्ठित हैं और ज्ञान की एक धारा में वे योगदान कर रहे हैं। दूसरी ओर पूरे भारत में पसरा शिक्षा का व्यापक धूल-धूसरित परिसर विचित्र किस्म के अवसाद का शिकार होता गया। उपेक्षा के कारण सकारात्मक परिवर्तन तो दूर, जो व्यवस्थाएं चल रही थीं, वे टूटती गईं। सद्गुणों के विकास की जगह येन-केन-प्रकारेण डिग्री बटोरने की प्रक्रिया बनती जा रही शिक्षा मुक्ति की जगह भार होती गई। यह शिक्षा बंधन को बढ़ाने वाली होती गई और मूल्यहीन होने के चलते लोगों के क्लेश बढ़ते रहे। ऐसे में दिशा की तलाश में व्यग्र युवा वर्ग, विफलता, कुंठा और क्षोभ का शिकार होता रहा।

आम जनों के लिए उपलब्ध भारतीय शिक्षा के खोखलेपन को देखें तो यही लगता है कि औपनिवेशिकता की मानसिकता अचेतन में इतने गहरे स्तर पर इस तरह

छाई हुई है कि वह औपनिवेशिकता ही नहीं लगती। इसके परिणामस्वरूप उसी के खांचे में शैक्षिक जीवन जीना एक विवशता बन चुका है। कहा जा सकता है कि औपनिवेशिकता (और अब नव औपनिवेशिकता) शिक्षाविदों के लिए 'ब्लाइंड स्पाट' सरीखे हो चुके हैं और इसके लिए जरूरी आत्मालोचन के लिए अपेक्षित अवकाश और अवसर ही नहीं है। इस बीच औपनिवेशिकता के भौतिक अवशेष मिटाने की कोशिशें तो होती रहती हैं, परंतु मन में पैठे और आचार-व्यवहार का हिस्सा बन चुके अदृश्य पर व्यापक रूप से प्रभावी औपनिवेशिकता का जाल इतना जबरदस्त है कि उससे निकलना संभव नहीं हो रहा है। पुराने अनुभव से पुष्ट हुए लोग ऐसे निश्चिंत और आश्वस्त हैं कि प्रतिरोध करना तो दूर उसकी विसंगति से अवगत भी नहीं होना चाहते और यह भी नहीं मान रहे कि किस तरह ठगा जा रहा है। पुराना जाल ऐसा और इतना घना है कि उसमें उलझ कर बहुत कुछ पुनरुत्पादन जैसा ही चल रहा है और शोध के नाम पर अनावश्यक कवायद हो रही है, जिसकी व्यर्थता का अहसास भी

नहीं हो पा रहा है।

दुनिया में जहां-जहां पर उपनिवेश के प्रति आलोचक-बुद्धि और चेतना जगी है, वहां के सोच-विचार में उसके परिणाम दिख रहे हैं। उसके फलस्वरूप वहां अपनी संस्कृति के प्रति संवेदना बढ़ी है और औपनिवेशिकता से मुक्ति की इच्छा वाली शैक्षिक व्यवस्था और अनुसंधान की संभावना बनी है। वहां देशज नजरिये से अध्ययन की दिशा में आगे बढ़ रहे हैं। कई देशों में राजनीतिक मनोविज्ञान, सामुदायिक मनोविज्ञान, स्त्रीवादी दृष्टिकोण आदि की ओर रुझान बढ़ रहा है। इन सब प्रयासों में आत्मालोचन और विकल्पों की तलाश की छटपटाहट आसानी से देखी जा सकती है। वहां औपनिवेशिक दायरों को तोड़ने और उनसे बाहर आने की कोशिशों को उजागर करते हुए नए विचार भी सामने आ रहे हैं। भारत में विउपनिवेशीकरण की योजना के तहत विचार और कार्य अभी भी आरंभिक चरण में है। अधिकांश लोग वैकल्पिक शास्त्रीय आत्मबोध और उपनिवेशविरोधी चिंतन की जरूरत से अभी भी अनभिज्ञ हैं और अध्ययन विषयों की यूरो-अमेरिकी संस्कृति से बाहर निकल पाना मुश्किल हो रहा है।

पश्चिम की सभ्यता ही सार्वभौम तार्किकता की जन्मदात्री नहीं है। इस सच्चाई को ध्यान में रखना होगा कि आधुनिक ज्ञानदृष्टि पश्चिमी पूंजीवादी आधुनिकता से घनिष्ठ रूप से आबद्ध है। इसलिए आत्मबोध का व्यापक स्वदेशी विकल्प निर्मित करना जरूरी है। उत्तर-उपनिवेशी मानसिक तैयारी के साथ उपनिवेशविरोधी बदलाव लाने होंगे।

चिंताजनक घटना

जिस शिक्षक पर बच्चों का जीवन संवारने जैसा महत्वपूर्ण दायित्व होता है, वह जीवन बिगाड़ने की सीमा तक गलती कर बैठे, यह चिंताजनक है। दिल्ली के एक स्कूल में क्लास टीचर द्वारा पांचवीं की छात्रा को क्राफ्ट में इस्तेमाल होने वाली कैंची से घायल कर पहली मंजिल से फेंक देने की घटना से बच्चों में भय पैदा होना व अभिभावकों का चिंतित होना स्वाभाविक है। ऐसा नहीं है कि स्कूल प्रबंधन ऐसी अवांछित घटनाओं से बचे रहने का प्रयास नहीं करते, लेकिन यह घटना इन प्रयासों पर संदेह पैदा कर देती है और नए सिरे से सोचने को विवश करती है। घरेलू कलह व पारिवारिक तनाव से किसी शिक्षिका के मानसिक रूप से बीमार हो जाने की बात को हल्के में नहीं लिया जा सकता, लेकिन स्कूल में बच्चों की सुरक्षा सर्वोपरि है, इसलिए ताजा घटना से शिक्षक और स्कूल प्रबंधन दोनों पर कई तरह के प्रश्न खड़े होते हैं।

गलत व्यवहार दिखने पर बच्चे की काउंसलिंग होनी चाहिए, पर सख्ती हल नहीं है, ऐसी घटनाओं को रोकने के लिए ठोस प्रयास की जरूरत है

पहला प्रश्न तो यह कि कोई शिक्षक कक्षा में अपनी मर्जी के मुताबिक बच्चों को ढालना क्यों चाहता है? और सबसे बड़ा प्रश्न यह कि जब बच्चों को सुधारने के लिए उन्हें मारने-पीटने पर रोक है तो कुछ शिक्षक हिंसक तरीका क्यों अपनाते हैं? क्या शिक्षक नामक संस्था पर स्कूल प्रबंधन का नैतिक नियंत्रण इतना कमजोर होता जा रहा है कि वह अब तक उनको यह समझा नहीं पाया कि बच्चों से कैसा बर्ताव किया जाए। गलत व्यवहार दिखने पर बच्चे की काउंसलिंग होनी चाहिए। पर, सख्ती हल नहीं है। इन घटनाओं को रोकने के लिए ठोस प्रयास की जरूरत है।

A New Timetable

The dust kicked up on the football field, the ceaseless chatter in the corridor during recess, new friendships over shared notes and tiffin — children are back in Kashmir's schools, which have clocked over 200 working days, rare for a region wracked by over three decades of public protests and shutdowns. BASHAARAT MASOOD & NAVEED IQBAL on what's becoming a new normal

AYESHA AHMAD has Severus Snape to thank in some measure. Shy and awkward in her new school, the 17-year-old Class 11 student of Srinagar's Delhi Public School dressed up as the anti-hero from her favourite Harry Potter series for 'Character Day' on October 28 this year. She chose a "simple, DIY look" — an overcoat to go with a long, black dress. "It was a socialising event. We had no classes and we discussed books and characters all day, so it did help break the ice somewhat," she says.

After three years of online classes, Ayesha joined the school in March this year. "I was in a girls' convent until Class 10 and moved this year to a co-ed school. I am an introvert and I had a lot of anxiety also because I hadn't walked into a school building in such a long time, hadn't met and interacted with so many people," she says, sitting on a small bench under the winter sun at her school.

For the first time in several years, Kashmir's children have clocked a happy record, doing what they should be doing anyway — going to school. So far this 2022-23 academic session, most schools in the Valley have registered over 200 working days. Ayesha's school, for instance, recorded 210.

It's a dramatic start for a region wracked by over three decades of massive public protests, separatist shutdown calls and government curfews. With schools often the first casualties of any such disruption, Kashmir's children have spent long stints away from the company of friends, books and teachers.

Officials in the Education Department say that while on paper, there have been other years that have recorded around 200 working days, including in 2014, these were simply because teachers and other school staff would keep the school open and mark their attendance even if children stayed away.

But this time, it's different — the children are in school.

■ ■ ■

In the summer of 2010, as Kashmir plunged into turmoil amid a cycle of deaths and calls for shutdown, the Srinagar DPS faced a conundrum. The school's 180 Class 12 students had lost more than five months of classes and the Board exams were worryingly close. "That year, the school had less than 100 working days. Five months were wiped off the academic calendar," says Vijay Dhar, entrepreneur and chairman of the school.

Dhar arranged for the Class 12 students as well as teachers and support staff to be taken to DPS Society's Human Resource Development Centre at Dwarka in Delhi. "At first, we secured less than 60 consent letters from the parents of the students. Then a politician made some noise about us taking the children out of Kashmir. Despite that, the parents trusted us with their children and we left the city with 130 of them

and the teachers. We threw everything on a bus — blackboards, books and ourselves and left for Delhi," he says.

That year, the school scored a 100 per cent pass percentage.

While the Valley's schools have witnessed frequent disruptions since the 1990s, when militancy first erupted in the region, 2010 was one of the worst years as schools shut for more than five months after massive street protests broke out in June over the Machil fake encounter case. This was followed by a tense standoff with the Omar Abdullah-led National Conference government that resulted in the death of over 110 civilians.

By 2013, militancy had started to ebb and there were few takers for shutdown calls by separatists. Schools stayed open for the first part of 2014, but on September 7 that year, massive floods hit the Valley, throwing Srinagar and large parts of the region out of gear. The schools shut again — in some parts of Srinagar, for over three months.

The following year, 2015, witnessed the rise of a curious phenomenon. Burhan Wani, the young militant commander of Hizbul Mujahideen, openly took to social media to rally for support and, in a shot span of time, ended up giving a renewed thrust to militancy in Kashmir. Gunfights between militants and the armed forces were back and so were shutdown calls by separatists. Schools, as always, witnessed intermittent shutdowns.

When Wani was killed in July 2016, Kashmir erupted once again. This time, several young school going boys descended on the streets, clashing with the police, paramilitary forces and the Army. In less than a month, several youths were killed and many more injured, among them school children. Schools were shut again, this time for over five months.

Over the next two years, there were more shutdowns and disruptions. Then came August 5, 2019, when the Centre abrogated Jammu and Kashmir's special status.

That was the last time the Valley's children attended school until the start of the current session in March this year. A security and communication clampdown following the Centre's move meant that children had to stay at home. The shutdown was extended for many months as the Valley observed a spontaneous lockdown in protest against the Centre's move.

Just as the Valley's schools hoped to reopen in March, following the three-month-long winter vacations, came more disruptions in the form of two successive waves of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Schools shrunk into smartphones and classrooms moved into virtual spaces.

In the face of every such adversity — in 2010, 2014, 2016 and 2019 — Kashmir's schools have found their own ways to cope. Community schools sprung up in

Across Kashmir, children are back in schools; (right) DPS, Srinagar, says the school ensured students took part in all activities. *Shuaib Masoodi/Express*

SCHOOL SHUTDOWNS

2008: Schools remained shut for almost three months as the Valley witnessed violent street protests over land allotment to the Amarnath Shrine Board.

2010: Schools remained shut for over five months as the Machil fake encounter triggered street protests and clashes in which over 110 civilians were killed

2014: Schools remained shut for up to three months as floods submerged Kashmir, especially Srinagar city

2016: Schools remained shut for five months as the killing of militant

commander Burhan Wani triggered massive protests across Kashmir. Eighty nine civilians were killed and over 11,000 were injured, many of them school children

2019: Schools remained shut for over five months as the Centre abrogated Jammu and Kashmir's special status and imposed curfew across the Valley. The curfew was followed by a spontaneous shutdown for several months

2020, 2021: Schools stayed open for only two weeks as the Covid-19 pandemic forced closure of schools across India

Around 200 No. of working days that most schools have recorded so far this session

several neighbourhoods, where volunteers and older students taught younger children and ensured they were up to speed with the syllabus.

■ ■ ■

Now, despite another severe winter spell, with minimum temperatures dropping to nearly minus four degrees Celsius, the children are back in school — sitting through lectures, some fun, others mind-numbingly boring, kicking the football around during recess, sharing notes, sticking to old friends and making new ones, dealing with breakups and breakdowns.

While the junior classes closed for the winter break on December 1, the senior classes stayed open until December 17.

Acknowledging the gains made this session, especially with the 200-plus working

days, Secretary Education Alok Kumar told *The Sunday Express*, "Yes, it (longer academic session) has helped us to complete the syllabus and we have encouraged students to take part in curricular and co-curricular activities, which are part of the NEP (National Education Policy). We are also giving them vocational training to increase their employability."

On the department's plan to bridge the learning gaps that would have arisen from the prolonged disruption, Kumar said, "We have had regular remedial classes. Teachers have been asked to remain available to students on the phone so that they can connect if they have any questions or doubts. As far as how successful we have been in bridging the gap, we can assess that only after the exams in March."

In October, the J&K administration also changed the November-November academic calendar of the Valley to March

March to align it with Jammu's schedule.

"This is new for me — going to school without a break," smiles Midhat Amin, 15, a student of a government school in Sopore, north Kashmir. "I think this is the first time, at least in my life, that schools have remained open for so long. It's just so special."

Her father Mohammad Amin, a teacher himself, joins in. "Over the last two years, we noticed changes in Midhat's behaviour. She seemed withdrawn, would snap and get worked up over small issues. But all that has changed now that she is back to school," he says, as the father and daughter exchange smiles.

"We have never left anything to chance when it comes to her education. Even when schools were closed, we ensured she got the best education at home. But you can't replace school with anything else. There are some things that can only be learnt in school," he says.

Minutes after his school's dispersal time, Ahtisham Gulzar, 16, and his friends are at the Regal Chowk bus stop in Srinagar. As they wait for a bus to take them home, the Class 10 student says, "We were away from school for three years and I was dying to be among friends. I had lost contact with many of my classmates and teachers. All I wanted was to return to school and play and crack jokes with friends... like we always did. It was during the last three years that I realised what I was missing out by not being in a classroom," says Ahtisham.

At the Srinagar DPS, sitting on colourful plastic chairs in the junior wing of the school, by a large window that's streaming in the winter sun, Class 11 students Anusha Iram Javed, Zaira Bashir and a few others say they are glad to be back on campus.

"The 2019 lockdown was the worst because we had no way to communicate. We were completely isolated. There was nothing to do," says Anusha. With their Class 10 results delayed due to the Covid lockdown, their teachers are in a rush to meet syllabus deadlines.

Describing her first day in school at the start of the new session, Zaira says, "There was a certain anxiety about seeing everyone again. Our sections had been shuffled when we were in Class 9 so we didn't know each other. We had only seen each other in online classes so when we met at the start of the session, we spent a lot of time trying to put names to faces. So a lot of the first day was about 'Are you this person?'"

The girls speak of how they had all returned do awkward, self-conscious teens. "There were some in our class who would not take their masks off and were unsure

about approaching others. I still wear a mask. But gradually, as people started helping each other, we became comfortable with each other," says Zaira, turning around to look at her classmates. "They would come up to me and speak... that helped me regain my confidence," she says.

"Formal schooling is always a different experience," says Inayat Bashir, 18, a Class 12 student from Srinagar's Shalteng neighbourhood. "School is not just about education; it is about exposure, it is about meeting friends every day, taking part in sports and other co-curricular activities. We don't get to do these things in community or informal schooling. When you wear the uniform in the morning, it's special."

Mudasir Ahmad, a lecturer at the Government Higher Secondary School at Sheeri in the border town of Uri in Baramulla, says the uninterrupted schooling session has been a great help to the teachers as well. "After a long time, we managed to complete our syllabus. The longer academic session this year has helped, too. In the past, teachers would be short of their syllabus by at least 30 per cent. This time, we have completed around 90 per cent of our syllabus," he says.

Back-to-school has come with its own set of challenges as teachers realised they had to deal with years of pent-up stress and aggression among children.

"They have been home for over three years, during which they have rarely interacted with people their age. Even the adults at home have had their issues to tackle. So the first thing we had to do was recognise their individual needs and find methodologies to address them. The school has four counsellors and with their help, the first few classes were conducted as group discussions. Once we recognised aggression as a major factor, we also involved the parents," says principal Sharig Alshan.

Another issue that drew the school's attention were instances of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) among students. Apart from the professionals on campus, the school decided that they had to find a way to channel the energies of students in a "constructive manner". The school ensured 100 per cent enrolment for all co-curricular activities — Sports Day, Annual Day and Character Day, where the students were encouraged to dress up as a character from one of their favourite books.

For Character Day, Zaira dressed up as Sophie Foster from *The Keeper of the Lost Cities*. "I am no longer anxious about meeting new people now. Being with friends helped me regain my confidence. I now feel like Sophie Foster — fierce and brave," she says.

Success Engineered ~ II

West Bengal has a strong tradition of creativity in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) streams as also in the humanities and social sciences. Other national institutions like the IIT at Kharagpur, the Indian Statistical Institute and the Indian Institute of Management at Kolkata have maintained their reputation for excellence. If the IIEST authorities work with determination, if the leaderships at the Central and state governments work concertedly, and if the distinguished alumni and their global association add their might to this cause, there is no reason why the IIEST cannot be transformed into an Indian Institute of Technology, Shibpur, in the years to come

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY KHARAGPUR

In an interesting article on the challenges and future of technical education in India (Medicon, 2 November 2021), former AICTE Chairman and Director of IIT Madras, Prof. R. Natarajan writes: "The nature and scope of the engineering profession is undergoing dramatic changes, especially in the high-tech areas.

Obsolescence has taken a heavy toll on earlier tools, techniques, technologies and work skills... The drawing board and T-square have given way to computer aided drafting, data acquisition has been automated, and digitised, laboratory instruction has changed to model industrial practice..."

According to him, 21st century engineering "is a multi-disciplinary, multi-mode, multi-media, multiple-partner enterprise." This means that engineering institutions have not only to adjust with the changing realities, but also to act with a futuristic vision, in anticipation of the changes likely to occur.

The public funded institutions have to continue with the core engineering disciplines. A committee headed by BVR Mohan Reddy has recommended "not to start any new programmes in civil, mechanical and electrical courses but also to not allow them to close down completely."

In an interview to the Indian Express (4 July 2022), the former chairman of AICTE, Prof. Anil Sahasrabudhe, has commented: "So we've been allowing only a 50 per cent reduction in seats in them. But along with these branches of engineering, we are advocating that students should be allowed to take elective courses or minor degree programmes in emerging areas of technology like Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, Machine Learning, Robotics, 3D printing, blockchain, augmented reality and virtual reality, so that their employability grows..." This is going to be the new trend, with added focus on research and innovation.

The Institutions of National Importance will have to lead the way for research and innovation, enhancing their research capabilities (with funding from the newly established National Research Foundation and other sources) and collaborating with the foremost international institutions and creative individuals.

The draft National Science, Technology and Innovation Policy has flagged certain pathways for institutions to become hubs of innovation. Teaching and research have to supplement each other with greater synergy between Industry and Academia. As it looks now, the epicentre of research and innovation is likely to shift to the academic institutions and universities. The evolution and future of IIEST, Shibpur is important in this context. The second oldest institution of India (after the one at Roorkee) in terms of producing engineering graduates has a distinguished history, having contributed enormously to national development.

Starting as the Government College of Civil Engineering in 1856, later expanding as Civil Engineering College, Shibpur (1887-1921), thereafter as Bengal Engineering College (1921-2004), and Bengal Engineering and Science University (2004-14), it metamorphosed into an institution of national importance with certain unique features, as the first Indian Institute of Engineering Science and Technology, Shibpur, in 2014.

The decade of the 1960s was perhaps the most turbulent in the history of Independent India, marked by the Chinese invasion, wars with Pakistan and a series of natural calamities leading to a major food crisis.

For West Bengal, the Naxalite violence and the influx of refugees from the neighbouring country added further to the gloom. The political atmosphere in the state changed radically. BE College, for a variety of reasons, started losing its stature at the national level. Even then, the Anandakrishnan Committee (as a follow up of the S.K. Joshi Committee report) identified this institution together with the Institute of Technology, BHU and a few others, for upgradation to IIEST,

AMITABHA BHATTACHARYA

The writer, a former IAS officer, from as Principal Adviser (Education and Culture) from the Planning Commission, New Delhi.

comparable in standards with the IITs (2006).

The establishment of new IITs and the insistence by successive governments in West Bengal to admit 50 per cent of the intake from students domiciled in the state, influenced the evolution of this institution. Finally, through an amendment to the National Institutes of Technology, Science Education and Research Act (NITSER Act), IIEST (Shibpur) came into being in 2014. There were enormous teething problems in the beginning, and now the basic idea behind the IIEST's establishment (to offer programmes leading to 5-year integrated dual degrees (B. Tech-M. Tech), and not offer any terminal Bachelor's degree in engineering etc.) has also been diluted.

However, what has been rather disconcerting is the gradual decline of its position under the National Institutional Ranking Framework.

Any ranking methodology can be questioned, but the decline is indeed worrisome. Whether it is owing to management problems, infrastructure or funding constraints, or a combination of various factors should be dispassionately examined so that corrective steps could be initiated immediately.

In so far as its future is concerned, one can plead for a medium-term goal of converting IIEST to a full-fledged IIT.

However, before striving for that goal, the authorities here have to work harder, reverse the declining trend and seek to bring this stand-alone institution within the top ten or so in the country.

Once that is achieved, say within the next five years, its further upgradation can be thought of, necessitating amendment to both the NITSER Act and the Institutes of Technology Act.

From the central perspective, it may mean some additional expenditure (as per IIT norms). Now that Uttar Pradesh has two IITs (at Kanpur, and the upgraded one from IT-BHU at Varanasi), a precedence has already been established. However, this conversion would demand greater foresight from the state leadership too. While converting IIEST into an IIT, the 50 per cent quota for the state will have to be dispensed with. Unlike some states, West Bengal (especially Kolkata) has a strong tradition of creativity in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) streams as also in the humanities and social sciences.

Other national institutions in West Bengal like the IIT at Kharagpur, the Indian Statistical Institute and the Indian Institute of Management at Kolkata have maintained their reputation for excellence.

If the IIEST authorities work with determination, if the leaderships at the central and state governments work concertedly for this purpose, and if the distinguished alumni and their global association add their might to this cause, there is no reason why the IIEST cannot be transformed into an Indian Institute of Technology, Shibpur, in the years to come.

(Concluded)

Unemployment & fallout

THE INWARD EYE
GURBACHAN JAGAT

Jobs are scarce, the future looks bleak. Earlier it was mainly the children of farmers who were leaving as landholdings and earnings shrunk. Today, business families, traders and even children of service families are headed west. Good employment is the key. The question to ask is, what is being done for it? How is the environment being made conducive for micro, small, medium and large businesses to flourish?

I WAS amazed, not surprised, to read the comments of the Italian Ambassador to India that a large number of work permits issued to Punjabis was due to requests from the Italian business fraternity who see them as a hardworking community. The envoy goes on to say that Italy is home to the highest number of Indians in the European Union and that 80 per cent of them are Punjabis and their number is growing. He adds that the Indian and Punjabi communities are one of the most integrated ones in the economic system, especially in agriculture and dairy. The number of immigrants to the country has grown over 10 times, from a mere 20,000 in 1991 to 2.1 lakh this year. Add to this the growing exodus to Canada, Australia, UK, USA, etc. The queue of applicants for the Canadian visa snakes on and on and is an everyday affair. So is the case for other countries. Canada has strengthened its Deputy High Commissioner's office in Chandigarh to facilitate visas. It would be relevant to question the Punjab government here as to what has been done to provide opportunities for the youth of the state. By now, one should have seen the sprouting of fresh ideas in this direction. The party in power had promised not only to stop immigration but also to reverse it — what happened?

Not only is immigration a huge financial loss, but it is our youth, our future, that sees no hope here. Jobs are scarce. Earlier it was mainly the children of farmers who were leaving as landholdings and earnings shrunk. Today, business families, traders and even children of service families are headed west. Good employment is the key to stall this ever-widening deficit. Employment that can either be generated through government jobs or by the private sector. The key here is the private sector. So the question to ask is, what is being done for it? Rather, how is the environment being made conducive for micro, small, medium and large businesses to flourish? It is not about the government giving funds, it is more about the government playing the role of a facilitator. How welcoming and encouraging is it? There are countless stories of foreign cities laying out the red carpet for investors. It is because they know the jobs that will follow and the life it will breed into their community. We are very good at tabulating data for freebies, has anyone bothered to tabulate jobs and investment district and sector-wise? Or does that not matter? NRI Sammelans have been held by past governments at the state and Central level with little or no results. Touchy-feely events with no concrete policy spelled out serve little more than optics for the media. Today, instead of making fresh investments in Punjab, NRIs are mostly disposing of whatever assets they have here. The problem is not the creation of this government, but they came to power with a massive majority due to the promises of employment and development.

The Italian Ambassador also saw tremendous potential for collaboration with Punjab in food processing, dairy farming, agricultural machines and cold chain packaging. Is anyone in the Punjab government listening? Is any follow-up planned? There are reported to be 600 Italian companies in India, mainly in Maharashtra, Gujarat, TN, Delhi and Karnataka. The Chandigarh airport continues to be a dismal story (a name change seems to be the major claim to fame so far). What happened to the many international flights which were going to start come August? Many Augusts have come and gone in the past decade since it was declared an international airport and yet one of the largest diasporas in the country has to trudge all the way to Delhi to catch a flight. What trade and business are we hoping to achieve if we have to tell businessmen, traders and officials that we are not only landlocked but also with next to zero air connectivity? Compare this with Kochi airport, which in the April-June quarter handled nearly 21 lakh international passengers (*The Hindu*). We need to convert our diaspora into an asset by giving them a conducive environment for business and entrepreneurship.

I have written at length on the Italian Ambassador's views only to emphasise the scale Italy alone accounts for. Now add the vast spaces of Australia and Canada and their equally welcoming governments. Why talk about Punjab alone? The Centre, too, had promised crores of jobs. Where have all the jobs gone? Not to Punjab, Haryana, Himachal and Uttarakhand where even the traditional jobs in the armed forces are not enough. The youth from these states have also started looking toward foreign shores. Mahua Mitra, MP, quoting figures put out by the national statistical office, stated in Parliament that industrial output shrunk by 4 per cent in October to a six-month low, and the manufacturing sector, which is still the biggest generator of jobs, has contracted 5.6 per cent (*NDTV*). She brought out figures from another important segment of our social fabric. Almost two lakh people renounced the Indian citizenship in the first 10 months of 2022, the total number for the last nine years is reported to be about 12.5 lakh. These figures, one can assume, pertain to mid-level businessmen who are seeking residence abroad. This only reinforces the problem of unemployment and a stagnant economy.

On December 13, the Finance Minister made a statement in Parliament that banks have written off loans worth Rs 10 lakh crore during the last five fiscals. *The Tribune* report goes on to say that the RBI informed the Centre that under some provisions, the names of the top 25 defaulters and others with loans of Rs 10 crore and above could not be disclosed. If you have ever taken a scooter, car, house loan, you would know that the banks have special teams to use strong-arm tactics to seize these assets if a default occurs. I do not claim to be an economist and leave it to wiser heads to explain the conundrum to us in layman terms.

The point of all this is that if the government is unable to generate enough jobs for the youth and major and medium business magnates fail in their ventures and get their loans written off, what can we expect? What will happen to the economy and employment? Lakhs of youth are roaming around and have become easy pickings for drug peddlers and criminal gangs. Going by media reports, Punjab is being flooded with drugs by the neighbouring country. The recoveries are only suggestive of the larger amounts that are going through. The largest consignments are coming through the Gujarat and Maharashtra coast; some have been intercepted. In fact, the entire coastline is vulnerable and will require a major joint effort by the state and Central authorities to control it. Arms are being smuggled in from across the border and being manufactured within the country. Crime and criminals are proliferating, locals are being targeted. Cases of mind-numbing rapes, assaults, robberies, etc, are reported daily from all major cities and even small towns.

The word 'gang' has entered our lexicon. Today, there is a nexus of gangsters, singers, drug smugglers, arm syndicates and their patrons in politics and the criminal justice system. Policing as it operates today under the overarching diktats of politicians will not be able to answer the call of the time. Rule of law has to come back in place of rule of political agendas and exigencies. Added to this crime situation are the extremist organisations operating in the country. There is an uneasy peace in J&K, Punjab, the North-East and the tribal belt. States and the Centre have to pool in resources to meet this situation, as also the ticking time bombs we are sitting out at the LAC and LoC.

The answer to all such problems begins with good governance. The time has come for governments to protect the institutions and instruments of governance and use them for the common good. Party agendas and priorities should not come in the way of the rule of law, governance and protection of national interests. In Punjab, we have to be extra cautious as we have already been through a trial by fire. We, the common citizens, have the right to ask the government to anticipate problems and take preventive measures lest events again overtake us. Pointers are there on the horizon and it is for us to read the signals that are emanating from covert and overt quarters.

— The writer is ex-chairman of UPSC, former Manipur Governor and served as J&K DGP

POLITICS OF PEDAGOGY

To know or not to know

Higher education institutions must provide a physical and intellectual space for freethinking and circulation of thoughts

NAVNEET SHARMA AND
FURQAN QAMAR

In our arduous contemporaneity, what is worth knowing is no longer a philosophical question but has become a political one. Being 'politically correct' is also no longer a virtue but has become a compulsion, and what is "politically correct" is being defined with a hegemonic stance of majoritarianism.

The recent Indore Law College squabble by the student wing of a cultural organisation about a book in the library of their college that is neither prescribed as a text in their curriculum nor a reference to their syllabus has ruffled the feathers of people at the helm.

The silver lining in the above incident is that those who created the ruckus had apparently 'read' the book. Apparently they have reading as a habit or hobby, but one of the complainants about the book has reportedly flunked his exams continuously for two semesters.

The question of which book should be in the library or on the reference list of any prescribed syllabus or what is worth knowing gains poignancy because it is political. As in this case, the principal asserted that the said book was purchased five years before he joined the institute. This begs the question of whether a book critical of an institution, person, or ideology can make it to the library at all. Conversely, whether a book eulogising dictators or despots should make it to the shelf of a library or not. What should be the criteria for selecting books for the library or as prescribed texts in the syllabus?

The incident could have simply been dismissed and quelled as another manifestation of growing rowdyism in society, including on campuses. But when both the principal of the college and the author of the book in question are Muslims, it is quite easy for those with vested interests to craft and propagate it as 'Shiksha Jihad' in the most misused and perverted sense of the word.

Such slogans serve a particular constituency well when the purpose is to divert and divulge the core issues of education in general and higher education in particular. It becomes a catchy phrase to convince the gullible that the minds of innocent college-going Hindus are being indoctrinated by anti-Hindu literature that shows Hindutva and its champions in a poor light.

At their worst, they could accuse their teachers and institutions of instigating Muslim students for rebellion and revolt against the State or attempt to demean and insult the Hindu religion or hurt the sentiments of religious Hindus. How else could one explain the principal of the college being booked despite his assertion that the book was acquired many years before he took over as principal?

Louis Pierre Althusser, the famous

French philosopher, offers a more profound understanding of what is happening in the institutions of higher education in India. He writes that the State always exercises hegemony over its subjects, not only through repressive State apparatuses but also through ideological State apparatuses like schools and universities. But then this meant using these institutions to indoctrinate impressionable young minds to perpetuate a specific ideology or approach to life.

What is happening here is the use of a political party's student wings to manoeuvre and micromanage institutions in order to perpetuate pseudo-nationalism and religionism. They are used to censor the academic autonomy of their institutions and control the contents and curriculum of their courses. They might thus end up excluding what could otherwise be worth knowing for them and their friends.

Martha Nussbaum warns about the catastrophic consequences of producing technically competent people with little ability to think critically, examine themselves, and respect the humanity and diversity of others. The least that the institutions of higher education could do for the good of the nation is to facilitate unhindered and unrestricted access to as many diverse sources of knowledge as they can afford.

Universities are already seriously constrained in their decisions to design their curricula, pedagogy, and syllabi, as these fundamental duties are now being increasingly discharged by state-level committees and the central regulatory authorities. Even if they are only referred to as a model, most higher education institutions find it easier and safer to adopt them in their entirety and thus avoid any liability.

No less are they restrained in their ability to acquire books and learning resources for their central and departmental libraries. For most public higher education institutions, buying books and subscribing to journals have become a luxury. Hard-pressed for funds, they are hardly able to meet the committed expenditure on salaries and establishment.

Even when they can save some funds for the books, they are so constrained in their capacity that they simply give up the idea of acquiring any more or restrict their purchases to the bare minimum number of books in the professional and technical areas they specialise in.

Cardinal Newman argues that higher education institutions must be schools of universal learning. They must provide a physical and intellectual space for communication and the circulation of thoughts through social interaction and personal intercourse.

Students are indeed one of the major stakeholders in higher education, and their views and voices could make or mar their alma maters. What happened in the law college in central India and the way the passions were fanned and the issues handled might serve certain vested interests.

Even in a pure managerial sense, which presently guides the governance and administration of universities, colleges, and institutes, oxymorons like *Shiksha Jihad* and its proponents may end up patronising indiscipline, rowdyism, and unrest on the campuses and thus vitiating whatever little is left of what is verily called academic environment.

(Sharma teaches in the Dept of Education, Central University of Himachal Pradesh, Dharamshala; Qamar is a professor at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi and a former advisor for education in the Planning Commission.)

The rote way: Absence of critical thinking in classrooms hurting India

KAL KRISHNAN AND ROGER MARSHALL

In the aftermath of the horrific destruction resulting from WWII, both Germany and Japan have rebounded magnificently – the sun never did set in Japan and the soaring German eagle has grown back its wings. Granted, India has made substantial progress in reducing poverty, increasing literacy rates and setting up successful nuclear energy and space programmes. Yet, post-independence and post-partition, India is still foundering. Why?

The authors would like to suggest that adopting silo models of education across India and not teaching critical thinking skills in classrooms have much to do with why the country has barely progressed in the last 75 years. The last truly seminal contribution from India was the number 'zero'. There is a saying in Hollywood, "You are only as successful as your last movie".

If you look at the professional and educational credentials of the last 10 prime ministers of Japan you will notice that almost every one of them has been a lawyer, engineer, economist or political scientist, and that they were all educated at some of the world's leading universities such as the University of Tokyo, London School of Economics and Stanford University.

Also, many of Germany's chancellors hold earned doctoral degrees, specialising in areas such as quantum chemistry, history and political science. By way of contrast, in India, aside from Manmohan Singh who holds a doctorate in economics from Oxford University, the educational credentials of all other prime ministers in the past 30 years are mediocre at best.

Even if they had graduated from one of the top ranked schools in India (such as the IITs or the IISc), it really wouldn't matter since none of these institutions is considered top notch from a global perspective.

The IIT curricula were designed to produce competent engineers, not critical thinkers. It is appalling that India's technical institutes' singular focus on IT training is resulting in students serving as coolies for Boston (Silicon Valley?) Brahmins.

Notions of 'excellence' and 'critical thinking', which underpin much of western and Japanese educational systems, simply do not exist in the Indian model. Imitating western lifestyles is easy but understanding western thought processes is far more difficult. Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi were successful leaders precisely because they understood the western mindset.

In mathematics, where no resources other than pencil and paper are needed, no Indian has ever won a Fields Medal. In computer science, no Indian has received the Turing Award despite the chest thumping about India's prowess in information technology. In the field of literature, no Indian has been a Nobel Prize winner over the last 100 years. The last architecture marvel was the Taj Mahal, and the last notable artworks were Mughal paintings.

In the arena of sports, especially the Olympics, there have been fewer than a dozen gold and silver medallists. Given India's population, surely there are a handful of individuals capable of winning more awards?

The sole exception seems to be in chess where even Indian teenagers have done well in an international setting. Chess does require critical thinking skills, doesn't it?

A cursory examination of the educational system in India reveals that the rigid norms, expectations and the day-to-day practices operating at the societal level are also very much reflected in the way education is approached by parents, students, teachers and administrators alike.

There is little difference between rote recitations of Hindu mantras or Koranic verses at home and that of mathematical equations, chemical formulas or poems. Neither scenario requires any understanding of meaning. This pattern, once established at the kindergarten level, repeats itself through graduate school. Students are taught early in life not to challenge teachers even when blatant nonsense is spouted in classrooms.

The siloed nature of the Indian educational system is focused on preparing students for taking tests. Since there is no core general education curriculum with courses drawn from the arts, sciences and humanities in any of the universities in India, students are forced to pick their fields of study well before knowing where their academic interests really lie.

Moreover, because of arbitrary restrictions imposed by agencies governing education, there are no viable pathways for a student to migrate from one major to another.

This is akin to trying to change from one caste to another or from one sub-caste to another. Also, in most institutions, there is no provision for elective courses. The net result is that neither interdisciplinary education nor interdisciplinary research is envisaged or can be promoted.

Consider a YouTube class on Sanskrit grammar where, even today, the instructor asks and encourages students to memorise the *Amarakosa* lexicon or the 4,000 aphorisms of Panini when all of that is available at the click of a button. Using the tools of technology to promote rote memorisation doesn't make sense. It is precisely in such situations that critical thinking skills come into play. They teach one how to compare, contrast, evaluate, analyse and synthesise policies, procedures, techniques and sources of information for decision-making purposes instead of blindly accepting dogma. These skills, once taught, can be employed throughout life in any setting, be it in academia, government, or industry.

Critical thinking skills, which have long been part of western pedagogy, have resulted in numerous innovations to better our lives. However, these skills have been unidimensional, honed to obtain instant solutions to pressing problems but leaving behind collateral damage for future generations to recognise and resolve.

Today's unicorns could well turn out to be tomorrow's Hydras. History offers many such examples – nuclear science applications, fossil fuels and environmental degradation, social media and misinformation, deforestation to build cloud computing storage centres and supporting vested interests in mining, paper and lumber industries.

Is it really a good idea to allow IKEA to set up shop in India, the 'Make in India' slogan notwithstanding? A critical thinking approach to the question just raised would have been a resounding 'no'.

A multidimensional holistic approach to critical thinking could have foreseen and forestalled many of the problems cited above. To improve the economic, scientific and social wellbeing of the country, imparting holistic critical thinking in the classroom, starting at an early age, is a must. While it may take two or three generations to see tangible results, it is surely worth the wait.

The *chalta hai* mindset, along with nepotism, cronyism and corruption, which seem to plague Indian society, are simply not acceptable. AI can solve many problems. A well-educated populace possessing real intelligence can solve even more.

(Kal Krishnan is an entrepreneur and registered Professional Engineer in California; Roger Marshall is a US-based professor of Computer Science.)

FIRST COLUMN

FROM ONLINE GAMING TO EDUCATION GAMING

## It is time to ensure regulation of online gaming industry

DR AMAR PATNAIK

One of the founding fathers of the United States of America, Benjamin Franklin, famously remarked, "Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn." While the history of learning in India can be traced back to Vedic times when Shruti (which may be translated as 'what is spoken') was the medium for knowledge transfer, the usage of games has always been viewed as an important alternative mode of learning.

With the IT revolution in full swing, the online gaming sector (particularly in India) has seen remarkable expansion in recent years. According to estimates, there are currently over 300 million gamers in India. According to a Boston Consulting Group (BCG) research issued in 2021, India's mobile gaming market would increase from $1.5 billion in revenue in 2020 to $5 billion by 2025.

Further, there are currently around 900 gaming firms in India, including Infosys Limited, Hyperlink InfoSystem, Fgfactory, and Zensar Technologies. The online gaming environment is appealing to individuals, particularly youngsters, since it immerses them in a parallel universe in which they may exercise control and enjoy themselves without leaving their homes. The gaming industry has seen another uptick with the emergence of metaverse and augmented reality.

However, it is important to remember that this expanded digital accessibility will provide its own set of challenges to the population. With the increased access and limited parental supervision, there is always a high chance of children falling prey to addiction in the online gaming space which may impact the mental health of children, especially when it crosses the mark of moderation. The World Health Organisation (WHO), had, in this regard, announced a plan to include "gaming disorder" as a mental health condition.
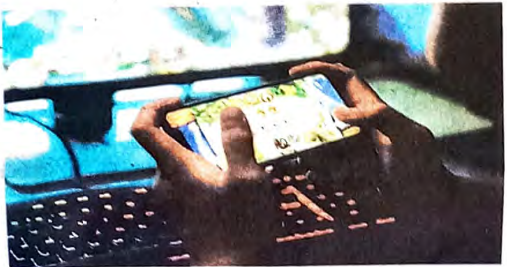
The access to tablets/laptops/smartphones as a part of online education, invariably increases the screen time which may lead to poor social skills and academics. Lack of a uniform regulatory framework, that distinguishes games of skill from games of chance, has allowed domestic and offshore betting and gambling platforms to operate with complete impunity.

Proliferation of such betting and gambling platforms has resulted in financial losses for users who have no recourse available to seek action due to absence of a national regulatory framework. The online presence exposes users' identity, whereabouts and even financial details which raises serious concerns over privacy and data protection.

At the individual level creating separate emails for gaming, using VPN, having a strong alphanumeric password, using an alias name and using firewall protection or HTTPS protocols are ways to ensure privacy.

However, the online gaming industry within India lacks regulatory oversight. Well-regulated online gaming, in this respect, has its own advantages, such as economic growth and additional benefits. Further pertaining to the National Education Policy, its set of recommendations encourages online education in which the teaching experience could be made more enriching and interesting for students by adding quizzes, competitions, games, online trivia, and assessments to keep the motivation levels high amongst the students and ensuring their higher participation.

A task force set up by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has prepared a draft report of its recommendations to regulate the online gaming industry in India. Among others, it has also recommended creating a regulatory body for the online gaming industry.

Therefore, it is time for India to take lead in ensuring effective regulation of the online gaming industry while remembering the famous words of Sheryl Sandberg, as per which 'Done is better than Perfect'.

(The author is BJD Rajya Sabha MP)

ग्रैजुएशन के लिए बेस्ट क्यों है 4 साल का कोर्स

अमेरिका, कनाडा, ऑस्ट्रेलिया, ब्रिटेन जैसे देश चार साल के ग्रैजुएशन कोर्सेज को अहमियत देते हैं और इंडियन स्टूडेंट्स भी बड़ी संख्या में इन्हीं देशों में जाते हैं

भूपेन्द्र

देश में हायर एजुकेशन की फील्ड में एक बड़ा बदलाव होने जा रहा है। यूजीसी ने ग्रैजुएशन के लिए चार साल के कोर्स की रूपरेखा जारी की है, जिसे देश की कई यूनिवर्सिटियों में लागू किया जाएगा। राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति-2020 के अनुरूप एजुकेशन मिनिस्ट्री पिछले दो साल से इसकी तैयारी कर रही है। वैसे 2013 में दिल्ली यूनिवर्सिटी में भी चार साल का कोर्स लागू किया गया था, लेकिन अगले साल ही वापस ले लिया गया। अब यूजीसी ने गाइडलाइन जारी की है और नए सेशन से डीयू, जेएनयू समेत बड़ी यूनिवर्सिटियों में चार साल का कोर्स शुरू होने की पूरी उम्मीद है।

पूरी होगी पढ़ाई : हायर एजुकेशन में पढ़ाई छोड़ने के हजारों उदाहरण देखने को मिलते हैं, लेकिन चार साल का यह कोर्स ऐसे स्टूडेंट्स की वापसी सुनिश्चित करता है क्योंकि इस कोर्स में मल्टीपल एंट्री और एग्जिट पॉइंट हैं।

इसके और भी कई फायदे हैं।

● एक साल (दो सेमेस्टर) की पढ़ाई करने के बाद स्टूडेंट यूजी सर्टिफिकेट लेकर जा सकता है और तीन साल के अंदर फिर से डिग्री पूरी करने के लिए वापस भी आ सकता है।

● इसी तरह स्टूडेंट दो साल के बाद यूजी डिप्लोमा, तीन साल के बाद यूजी डिग्री पा सकता है। चौथे साल की पढ़ाई पूरी करने के बाद यूजी डिग्री (ऑनर्स) दी जाएगी।

● तीन साल, यानी छह सेमेस्टर में 75 पर्सेंट स्कोर करने वाले छात्र फोर्थ ईयर में रिसर्च प्रॉजेक्ट भी कर सकेंगे। जो छात्र रिसर्च प्रॉजेक्ट करेंगे, उन्हें चार साल के बाद यूजी डिग्री (ऑनर्स विद रिसर्च) मिलेगी।

● चार साल के बाद स्टूडेंट्स सीधे पीएचडी में भी दाखिला ले सकते हैं, जबकि अभी तक पीएचडी करने के लिए ग्रैजुएशन के बाद दो साल की पोस्ट ग्रैजुएशन करनी जरूरी होती है। अब एमफिल का विकल्प खत्म हो गया है और चार साल के कोर्स में रिसर्च का भी काफी इनपुट जोड़ा गया है।

● अब ग्रैजुएशन में रिसर्च के साथ-साथ रोजगारपरक कोर्सेज भी होंगे, जिन्हें माइनर सब्जेक्ट का नाम दिया गया है। मेजर और माइनर दो सब्जेक्ट की कैटिगरी है।

● अमेरिका, कनाडा, ऑस्ट्रेलिया, ब्रिटेन जैसे

Dall E 2 image generator

कॉमन रूम

देश चार साल के ग्रैजुएशन कोर्सेज को अहमियत देते हैं और इंडियन स्टूडेंट्स भी बड़ी संख्या में इन्हीं देशों में जाते हैं। चार साल के कोर्स के बाद स्टूडेंट्स के पास विदेशों में पढ़ाई के भी बेहतर अवसर होंगे।

● स्टूडेंट्स को एक से ज्यादा स्पेशल सब्जेक्ट्स में पढ़ाई करने का मौका मिलेगा। साइंस के स्टूडेंट कॉमर्स या आर्ट्स भी चुन सकते हैं। कॉमर्स के छात्र सोशल साइंस, आर्ट्स, ह्यूमैनिटीज, लैंग्वेज की पढ़ाई भी कर सकते हैं।

● स्टूडेंट जिस मेजर (कोर) कोर्स में डिग्री लेना चाहता है, उसके साथ वह माइनर स्ट्रीम के सब्जेक्ट भी चुन सकता है।

चार साल के कोर्स में स्किल कोर्सेज, वोकेशनल कोर्सेज, योग शिक्षा, स्पोर्ट्स, फिटनेस से जुड़े कोर्सेज करने की भी आजादी होगी।

● वहीं अगर किसी छात्र ने केमिस्ट्री को मेजर सब्जेक्ट चुना और एक साल के बाद उसे लगा कि उसको किसी दूसरे मेजर सब्जेक्ट, जैसे फिजिक्स या मैथ्स में डिग्री पूरी करनी है तो वह मेजर सब्जेक्ट बदल भी सकता है।

● इन सबके चलते उम्मीद की जा रही है कि ग्रैजुएशन के बाद स्टूडेंट्स के पास जॉब के ज्यादा से ज्यादा ऑप्शन होंगे।

चार बनाम तीन साल : यूजीसी ने चार साल का कोर्स लागू किया है तो इसका मतलब यह नहीं है कि अब तीन साल का कोर्स खत्म हो जाएगा। चार साल का कोर्स एक लंबी प्रक्रिया है और एकदम से पूरा सिस्टम इसके लिए तैयार नहीं हो सकता। यूजीसी के भी यह संज्ञान में है और यही वजह है कि यूनिवर्सिटियों को कहा गया है कि अपने यहां इंफ्रास्ट्रक्चर, फैकल्टी की स्थिति, रिसर्च सुविधाओं समेत सभी चीजों का वैल्यूएशन करने के बाद ही तय करें कि चार साल का कोर्स कब से लागू होगा? यानी सत्र 2023 से पूरे देश की सभी यूनिवर्सिटी में एक साथ यह नया प्रयोग नहीं होगा, और चार साल के साथ तीन साल का कोर्स भी चलता रहेगा।

NBT/1/8

Make university management system user-friendly

**CHETAN SINGAI &
T R KUMARASWAMY**

Over the last decade, India has transformed into an information-intensive and information-sensitive society. The pandemic has given a further push to technology in most sectors, including education, especially for teaching and learning. However, tech-enabled governance and management in higher education are relatively novel, requiring an in-depth and comprehensive analysis.

The Unified University and College Management System (UUCMS) is a flagship project of the Department of Higher Education, Government of Karnataka. It aims to bring greater transparency, efficiency, and accountability among universities and colleges in Karnataka. The structure of the UUCMS is similar to the SAMARTH university e-governance portal offered to public universities and select higher education institutions in New Delhi.

While UUCMS helps, the overall user experience across HEIs in Karnataka is fraught with challenges that need to be addressed.

State-run public universities and colleges account for 70% of students in the state. The UUCMS has reduced the unnecessary use of human, physical, and fiscal resources. Further, it provides a 'unified' system to link students' Aadhaar data.

However, the challenges is in the validation of Aadhaar, and variations in names of the students between Aadhaar and the SSLC transcript; as an immediate solution, UUCMS has enabled editing student names by the registrar of the university, which is not a sustainable solution. Despite this, name variation issue remains unresolved, creating commotion among faculty members, administrators, and students. There are more challenges.

The academic council of univeristies approve a list of eligible pre-university or school board(s) in the UUCMS. However, a non-eligible board cannot be deleted from the meta-list, inconveniencing students and administrators.

The UUCMS's academic module is intended to have a robust course and credit management system.

The module, however, is not resilient to changes: it does not allow universities to correct errors after validating the curriculum. UUCMS alone can rectify errors, exposing universities to unwarranted hierarchies, dependencies and delays.

The current examination module of UUCMS is partially digitised. The answer scripts are manually corrected, and the evaluated marks are entered into the portal. Lack of skilled human resources to handle this process is a challenge that university examination sections face. Even before the implementation of UUCMS, many state public universities had a fully digital evaluation process, including features such as online delivery of question papers, online evaluation of answer scripts, and digital photocopies of the answer scripts, which were efficient. To make the UUCMS a transparent, efficient, and accountable information system, the following must be accommodated:

■ a provision to auto-populate the data once a fortnight from the UIDAI, enabling uniformity among prospective students.

■ giving universities the option to make a tailored list of PU/school boards for admission as approved by the university's statutory bodies

■ provide full autonomy to universities to make changes after the validation of the curriculum

■ provide a user-friendly interface so that the existing public state universities/ college staff can seamlessly engage with the system.

■ recruit dedicated staff for the UUCMS since faculty members cannot dedicate time and effort to the UUCMS.

■ introduce more modules such as HR, affiliation, student support, and asset and library management.

■ knowledge transfer between the UUCMS core team and the stakeholders in HEI.

The government must make sure that the UUCMS is not just a portal with an agency. It should be an essential and integrated component of the university, a system seamlessly integrated into the institution.

(Singai works at Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences, Bengaluru, and Kumaraswamy is an independent researcher.)

An imperative realignment

Emerging vulnerabilities and planetary challenges have created an urge to redefine the boundaries of educational research and harmonise it with humanity's goal

G PALANITHURAI

With the emergence of big data analytics and evidence-based policymaking, education and research in social sciences in 21st century require renewed discussion, fresh understanding, and a new approach that redefines conventional boundaries

Our scientific and technological pursuits have advanced so much that we are told that 'death is a technical problem, and that it can be fixed'. The new wealth of nations is 'education'. Understanding social issues in the globalised scenario, where a slight shift in one corner of the world impacts many things at local levels, has become critical. Decoding and fixing Covid-19 was one such struggle. In the same vein, understanding and explaining the environmental catastrophes still remain a mystery. While our scientific thinking and technological advancement have spread prosperity and ease-of-living, there is nothing to deny the fact that they have also spread risks and vulnerabilities.

We innovate. But we cannot predict accurately the consequences of such innovations, given the rapidity of changes taking place around them. One self-constraint we have created is the narrow disciplinary boundaries in our academics, and our tendency to view the world through a single lens, as if all the problems of the world belong to one discipline – the discipline I have specialised in, or you have specialised in. This is like 'searching for the key where the light is'.

The change in the world is so unprecedented that nobody can predict what 2050 is going to look like; nor can we accurately predict what academic education and research will be like in 2047 when India will celebrate 100th year of its independence. The very idea of nationalism is under review because many of the problems such as environmental catastrophe, global warming and climate change cannot be addressed within the boundary of any single discipline.

With the emergence of big data analytics and evidence-based policymaking, educa-

The boundaries of research between economics, sociology, political science, governance etc. have become blurred

tion and research in social sciences in the 21st century require renewed discussion, fresh understanding, and a new approach that redefines conventional boundaries. The medical research that was talking about longevity in terms of age, is now talking about immortality. Educational thinkers are talking about universities with no buildings. But the questions around inequality, insanitary conditions in villages, water safety and poverty still remain. Importantly, the boundaries between economics, sociology, political science, governance etc. have become blurred.

Science and technology have to help humanity evolve so that harmony and peace could prevail. Another dimension to this issue is humans dominating the planet — creating sufferings not just for themselves but for all creatures living on the planet.

Today's problems are more complex, as the relationship between humans and nature has been disturbed because of excessive human interference in nature for economic growth. It is only the greed of the people and the penchant for sensory pleasures that have led to exploitation of nature through the market. To unleash the potential of humans, the market has been liberated from the state, allowing it to establish its sovereignty over society and the state.

The knowledge system

which worked for human advancement under the regulation of the state moved over to the fold of the market. It is unleashing its potential to exploit nature to make profit unfathomably. As a result, the knowledge industry also gained the profit of the market. Amassing wealth and seeking life comforts and convenience for sensory pleasures have become the prime engines of human activities. Against this background, one has to look at the pursuit of science today. If it is science, it has to work for the well-being and harmony of humanity and the planet. When we look at the growing humanitarian crisis, the whole human civilization is headed towards peril. We need to answer if this is the purpose of science or we can construe that elements of consciousness are missing in our claims of scientific understanding. Perhaps, this is what Mahatma called 'science without humanity'.

The Earth is not for humans alone. It is meant for all creatures. In this context, the whole of humanity has to be oriented and conscientized towards changing its attitude, behaviour and activities for achieving harmony between man and nature. Now, people have started listening to the cry of nature, as they face a plethora of problems for their existence. Lack of safe water to drink, air pollution, and toxins in our food have put us

in a tight corner. We need to decide the direction we must take from now on.

Humans' well-being is at stake, as there is no meaningful sanitation. Livelihood scenario has become critical for the poor millions due to the changing climate. Climate change and resultant disasters have created panic among the people, both rich and poor. Unless we change our attitude, behavior and activities, we cannot save our planet and ourselves. Hence, we have to pursue a new path for which the knowledge community's support is inevitable.

In this context, it is to be noted that an academy has been relentlessly working for creating a new consciousness among scientists (natural, biological, and social) for about four decades to address the problems of human society by pursuing research in analyzing the nature-human relationship. That academy is known as the 'Indian Social Science Academy'.

The majority of the academics who enrolled themselves as members of the academy seek to understand the deepest goals and values nurtured by the founding members. This academy should not be viewed as an association of the scholars of humanities and social sciences. In reality, it is purely a science-based academy consisting of scholars, practitioners, and activists from different disciplines pursuing research on all problems relating to human-nature relationships.

It is headed by nationally recognized top-ranking scientists, economists, sociologists, and social workers. Annually, it selects a focal theme for deliberations. No academic discipline is left out of its ambit. It holds an annual convention for five days in any of the recognized higher learning institutions in India.

In the five days of delib-

erations on the focal theme, leading scientists, social scientists, social workers, and policy planners are invited to speak in the plenaries to sensitize and orient the academics on the current issues in society, politics, governance etc. Bringing about social consciousness among academics is the ultimate purpose of this congress.

Presently, the Indian Social Science Academy has fixed its focal theme as '75 years of Swaraj India', and the convention will be hosted at Bharathidasan University, Tamil Nadu, from January 27 to 31, 2023. Nearly 30 scientists, social scientists, and policy planners have been invited to deliver plenary and public lectures. More than 700 abstracts have been received for 28 thematic panels and 18 subject committees. The abstracts are screened by the subject experts and invitations are being sent to the scholars to write their research papers for the congress.

The significance of the congress lies in aligning with the government in creating a social consciousness among the academics working in higher learning institutions. It gains significance in the context of the UGC mandating the higher learning institutions to work with the rural communities through the scheme 'Unnath Bharat Abhiyan'. In the same way, steps have been taken to strengthen the social science faculties not only in universities, but also in the premier institutions like IITs, to foster the social consciousness of students pursuing their studies in technology. UBA is going to be a gamechanger in creating new social consciousness among academics to work with society by pursuing socially relevant research.

The writer is a former Professor and Rajiv Gandhi Chair for Panchayati Raj Studies, Gandhigram Rural Institute. Views expressed are personal

How Not To Teach

Too many schools are still tolerating corporal punishment. This must end

In conversations about the challenges of ensuring discipline in schools it is commonly heard that, 'You cannot even say anything to students these days.' The logic of this plaint is that corporal punishment (CP) has ended and this has left teachers powerless to do their jobs properly. We need look no further than at two painful news reports over the past week to see that reality continues to be quite different. A Delhi teacher attacked a Class 5 child with scissors and threw her out of the first-floor classroom window. A Karnataka teacher attacked a Class 4 child with a shovel and also shoved him from the first floor; the child died afterwards.

The way in which the two teachers' preceding aggressions were tolerated underlines how CP continues to enjoy significant social sanction. This is not to deny the clear legal injunctions against use of force, including through RTE 2009 and the Juvenile Justice Act 2015. Only, the law by itself cannot eliminate the cultural rationalisation of CP as 'caring'. That needs more concerted work by civil society and school administrations.

As noted in the guidelines against CP in schools by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, schools need clear protocols to help teachers deal with various possible student behaviours through positive disciplining, even parental engagement. Because the evidence is clear that CP cannot help students educationally or psychologically, only damage them. Additionally, what the Delhi and Karnataka incidents suggest is that schools need systems for monitoring teachers' mental health too. Punishing them after an unhinged attack on hapless students is small consolation if they should perhaps not have been permitted near the students in the first place.

Cocking a snook

A day after UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for the need to ensure human rights in Afghanistan, the right of women to work, and the right of girls to education, the ruling Taliban has ordered an indefinite ban on university education for Afghan girls. If Mr Guterres was explicit in articulating his demands at a Press conference on Monday, "we believe the Taliban must deliver from the point of view of the interests of the international community and from the point of view of the interests of Afghanistan itself", the letter ordering the denial of girls an education issued on Tuesday by the Taliban was even more so. "The Ministry of Higher Education has ordered the suspension of higher education for female students in Afghanistan until the next announcement," an Afghan news agency tweeted. Only the naïve would not have expected something along these lines from the fundamentalist Islamist group which, ever since it took power in August 2021, has imposed policies severely restricting basic rights, particularly those of women and girls. The Taliban has already dismissed all women from leadership posts in the civil service and prohibited girls in most provinces from attending secondary school, while decrees that prohibit women from travelling unless accompanied by a male relative and require women's faces be covered in public are in force. That the latest misogynist diktat from the so-called Ministry of Higher Education comes barely three months after thousands of girls sat university entrance examinations rubs salt in the gaping wounds of Afghanistan's female populace.

So, what gives the Taliban the confidence to cock a snook at the international community? For one, it knows that after the inglorious pull-out of US-led Western forces from Afghanistan, there is not much the world can or will do in terms of punitive military action, which is all they really understand. Secondly, the war in Ukraine has consumed all conflict resolution efforts in Western capitals. Thirdly, the pivot of US strategic attention from West/South Asia to the Indo-Pacific means the Taliban can do as it pleases despite condemnations of the international community. Lastly, Islamabad, which has nurtured some of the most powerful factions of the Taliban and can exert influence in that country, is interested in Afghanistan almost exclusively for the strategic depth it can provide and will let all other issues slide.

It is a terrible reality but not acknowledging it will only give false hope to millions of Afghan girls and women ~ there is no help coming from outside. The only way out for them, unless they can get out of the country somehow, is if the cracks within the Taliban between hard-line followers of Supreme Leader Hibatullah Akhundzada who favour denying girls an education, and the, albeit conservative, Taliban officials in Kabul who have had more exposure to the world and are in favour of some measure of freedom, widen.

संस्कृत की महत्ता बढ़ाने वाला शोध

ऋषि राजपोपट के इस शोध ने संस्कृत को एक वैज्ञानिक भाषा के रूप में चर्चा के केंद्र में पुनः ला खड़ा किया है

प्रणय कुमार

राजपोपट की उपलब्धि ने खींचा विद्वानों का ध्यान • फाइल

यह सुखद आश्चर्य का विषय है कि जिस वर्ग ने संस्कृत को मृत, कालबाह्य एवं अनुपयोगी भाषा मानकर शैक्षिक एवं सार्वजनिक विमर्श से लगभग बहिष्कृत-सा कर रखा था, कैंब्रिज विश्वविद्यालय के शोधार्थी ऋषि राजपोपट के पाणिनि पर किए शोध के पश्चात उनके सुर भी बदलने लगे हैं। राजपोपट के निष्कर्षों को अंग्रेजी मीडिया ने भी पर्याप्त स्थान दिया, जिसे आम तौर पर हिंदी-संस्कृत के नाम से परहेज रहा है। उल्लेखनीय है कि संस्कृत की ढाई हजार वर्ष से अनसुलझी एक गुत्थी को ऋषि राजपोपट ने सुलझाने का दावा किया है। यह ईसा से 700 वर्ष पूर्व भाषाओं के जनक कहे जाने वाले भारतीय मनीषी, महान भाषाविद पाणिनि के नियम से संबंधित है। राजपोपट ने अपने शोध पत्र 'इन पाणिनि, वी ट्रस्ट डिस्कवरिंग द एल्गोरिदम फार रूल कान्फ्लिक्ट रिजोल्यूशन इन द अष्टाध्यायी' में इस गुत्थी को सुलझाया है। आचार्य पाणिनि ने ही सर्वप्रथम भाषा को व्याकरणबद्ध किया। उनकी महान कृति 'अष्टाध्यायी' में आठ अध्याय और लगभग 4,000 सूत्र हैं। कहा जाता है कि इसमें लिखे गए नियम बिल्कुल एक मशीन की भांति काम करने के लिए बनाए गए हैं। इस ग्रंथ में मूल शब्दों से नए शब्दों को प्राप्त करने या बनाने के लिए नियमों का एक समूह सम्मिलित है। कई बार नए शब्द को बनाने के लिए परस्पर विरोधी नियम होते हैं, जिससे विद्वान भ्रमित हो जाते हैं कि कौनसा नियम अधिक उपयुक्त एवं परिणामदायी है। इसके समाधान के लिए पाणिनि ने स्वयं एक मेटा-नियम लिखा था, जिसकी परंपरागत व्याख्या इस प्रकार की गई कि नियमों के मध्य संघर्ष या विसंगति की स्थिति में व्याकरण-क्रम में बाद में आने वाले नियम प्रभावी माने जाएं। मेटा रूल की इस पारंपरिक व्याख्या को राजपोपट ने इस तर्क के साथ खारिज किया है कि पाणिनि का मतलब था कि क्रमशः एक शब्द के बाएं और दाएं पक्षों पर लागू होने वाले नियमों के बीच, दाएं पक्ष पर लागू होने वाले नियमों का चयन किया जाना चाहिए।

राजपोपट का दावा है कि उनके अन्वेषण से बिना किसी अपवाद के व्याकरणिक रूप से सही शब्दों के निर्माण का मार्ग प्रशस्त होगा और अष्टाध्यायी द्वारा प्रदान किए गए नियमों का अधिक सटीक उपयोग करने में सुविधा होगी। यह खोज संस्कृत के अध्ययन में क्रांतिकारी बदलाव लाएगी तथा कंप्यूटर एवं आर्टिफिशियल इंटेलीजेंस के लिए भी उपयोगी सिद्ध होगी। इससे दुनिया भर में संस्कृत के प्रति रुचि भी बढ़ेगी। अपनी इस गौरवपूर्ण उपलब्धि पर राजपोपट ने कहा है, 'पाणिनि के पास अद्भुत मस्तिष्क था। मानव इतिहास में उनके जैसे मस्तिष्क वाला व्यक्ति होने का दूसरा उदाहरण नहीं मिलता।' अष्टाध्यायी की उत्कृष्टता का अनुमान इसी से लगाया जा सकता है कि जर्मन विद्वान मैक्समूलर तक को कहना पड़ा कि इस ग्रंथ के समक्ष अंग्रेजी, ग्रीक या लैटिन की संकल्पनाएं नगण्य हैं। स्मरण रहे कि 'अष्टाध्यायी' मात्र सूत्र व्याकरण-ग्रंथ नहीं है। इसमें प्रकारांतर से तत्कालीन भारतीय समाज का पूरा चित्र मिलता है। उस समय के भूगोल, सामाजिक, आर्थिक, शैक्षिक और राजनीतिक जीवन, दार्शनिक चिंतन, खान-पान, रहन-सहन आदि के प्रसंग वहां स्थान-स्थान पर चित्रित हैं।

वैसे अभी राजपोपट के निष्कर्षों को संस्कृत विद्वानों की मानक कसौटी पर कसा जाना शेष है। वस्तुत:, सनातन संस्कृति एवं शास्त्रोक्त परंपरा में कोई ज्ञान एवं तत्व चिंतन चर्चा, शास्त्रार्थ, प्रयोग एवं व्यवहार की लोकतांत्रिक प्रक्रिया से गुजरकर ही पूर्णता को प्राप्त होता है, परंतु इतना तो तय है कि राजपोपट की उपलब्धि ने विद्वत वर्ग का ध्यान आकर्षित किया है और संस्कृत को एक असीम संभावनाशील, रोजगारपरक, आधुनिक एवं वैज्ञानिक भाषा के रूप में चर्चा के केंद्र में पुनः ला खड़ा किया है, पर हमें पहले से इससे अवगत होना चाहिए कि संस्कृत साहित्य में समस्त मानव-जाति की मौलिक एवं उदात्त अनुभूतियों को स्वर मिला है। संसार की सबसे प्राचीन, उदार एवं सर्वसमावेशी सभ्यता की स्मृतियां, ज्ञान और अनुभव की थाती संस्कृत में ही संचित हैं।

यह दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण है कि अनेकानेक दुर्लभ एवं अनूठी विशेषताओं से सुसज्जित तथा विज्ञान एवं तकनीक की दृष्टि से सर्वथा उपयुक्त होने के बावजूद संस्कृत की घनघोर उपेक्षा की गई और स्वतंत्रता-प्राप्ति के पश्चात भी उसे यथोचित स्थान और सम्मान नहीं मिल पाया। कम से कम अब तो यह काम होना चाहिए। इसलिए और होना चाहिए, क्योंकि भारत का कथित बुद्धिजीवी वर्ग अपनी ही भाषा, कला, संस्कृति, ज्ञान-परंपरा एवं युगों से चली आ रही मान्यताओं के प्रति संशय एवं मतिभ्रम का शिकार रहा है। इस वर्ग के भीतर भारत की सनातन परंपराओं, जीवन-मूल्यों और गौरवशाली उपलब्धियों के प्रति हीनता का भाव है। वह भारत की श्रेष्ठतम उपलब्धियों या महानतम अवदान को तब तक स्वीकार नहीं करता, जब तक पश्चिम उसे मान्यता नहीं दे देता। पश्चिम की मान्यता-स्वीकृति के पश्चात भी वह किंतु-परंतु के साथ उसकी यथासंभव उपेक्षा करने की कुचेष्टा करता रहता है। भाषा, कला, शिक्षा, संस्कृति, साहित्य, स्थापत्य, इतिहास या ज्ञान-विज्ञान के सभी क्षेत्रों का आकलन-मूल्यांकन वह पश्चिमी-परकीय दृष्टिकोण से ही करता आया है। इसीलिए समय, परिस्थिति एवं उपयोगिता की कसौटी पर खरा उतरने के बावजूद योग, आयुर्वेद, खगोल, भारतीय काल-गणना से लेकर संस्कृत एवं सनातन ज्ञान-परंपरा की प्राचीनता, श्रेष्ठता, सार्वभौमिकता एवं वैज्ञानिकता आदि के प्रति यह वर्ग हीनता एवं नकारात्मकता से भरा रहा है।

(लेखक शिक्षाविद एवं सामाजिक संस्था 'शिक्षा-सोपान' के संस्थापक है)
response@jagran.com

नई राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति से आने वाले समय में देश में तैयार होंगी सैकड़ों द्रौपदी मुर्मू

■ नई राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति के अनुरूप स्कूली शिक्षा का पाठ्यक्रम तैयार किया जा रहा है। क्या इसमें पूर्वजों के शौर्य की कहानियां पढ़ने को मिलेंगी?

–निश्चित रूप से नए पाठ्यक्रम में वीरगाथा को उचित स्थान दिया जा रहा है। अब तक हमें जो पढ़ाया गया, उसमें इतिहास को एक खास नजरिये से इतिहास लिखा गया। हमारे कई नायकों को भुला दिया गया। आदिवासी समाज को तो नजरअंदाज ही कर दिया गया था। मैं आपको बताना चाहता हूं कि आदिवासी समाज के शौर्य की हम सामने लाएंगे। उनका जो हिस्सा है, उन्हें देना ही पड़ेगा।

■ केंद्र सरकार ने पिछले कुछ वर्षों में आदिवासी हित को लेकर मुखरता बढ़ी है। क्या इसका कोई राजनीतिक पहलू भी है?

–कुछ वर्षों में मुखरता नहीं बढ़ी है रही है। मोदी सरकार हमेशा से हर वर्ग के हित में काम कर रही है। 2014 के पहले आठ वर्षों में आदिवासियों से जुड़ी योजनाओं पर 19 हजार करोड़ रुपये केंद्र सरकार की ओर से खर्च किया जाता था, लेकिन वर्ष 2014 से 2022 तक मोदी सरकार में यह राशि बढ़कर 91 हजार करोड़ रुपये

केंद्र सरकार ने एक नया प्रयोग शुरू किया है– केंद्रीय मंत्री किसी दूसरे विभाग को समझें, जानकारी लें और फिर चर्चा करें। कैबिनेट में दायित्व सामूहिक है तो हर मंत्री अपने विभाग तक सीमित न रहकर पूरी सरकार के कामकाज को समझे। यह प्रयोग किस स्तर तक जाएगा, यह कहना मुश्किल है। लेकिन सरकार उस दिशा में बढ़ गई है, जहां हर मंत्री पूरी सरकार के लिए जिम्मेदारी का

साक्षात्कार

हो गई। इसमें लगातार बढ़ोतरी हो रही है। पीएम आवास योजना हो, शौचालय बनाने या बिजली की योजना हो, उज्ज्वला योजना हो, इन योजनाओं का सबसे ज्यादा लाभ इसी वर्ग को मिला। आदिवासी समाज शुरू से हमारी प्राथमिकता में था। यह जरूर है कि अमृतकाल में राष्ट्रपति के पद पर द्रौपदी मुर्मू के चयन के बाद यह प्रसंग बड़ा हो गया है।

■ क्या आपको इसका राजनीतिक लाभ मिलता दिख रहा है?

–आदिवासी वर्ग का उत्थान हमारी

राजनीति नहीं है। हर वर्ग को बढ़ाना तो मोदी सरकार की प्राथमिकता में है। उसका लाभ या नुकसान हम नहीं देखते हैं। 1999 में अटल जी ने आदिवासी और जनजातीय विभाग बनाया, तब भी लाभ या नुकसान की बात नहीं थी। गुजरात के मुख्यमंत्री रहते हुए नरेन्द्र मोदी ने वन बंधु विकास योजना बनाई, तभी भी राजनीति नहीं थी। बल्कि जिम्मेदारी थी। आज भी जनजातीय समाज के बारे में जब हमने बजट बढ़ाने से लेकर देश के शीर्ष पद पर द्रौपदी मुर्मू को बैठाया है, तब

भी राजनीति नहीं है। जिम्मेदारी है। संवेदनशीलता है। पिछली गलतियों को चुपचाप ठीक करने का दायित्व है। नक्सलियों ने इस समाज को काफी गुमराह करने की कोशिश की, लेकिन आज समाज में नक्सलवाद घट रहा है। क्योंकि इस समाज को विकास पर भरोसा है। आगे बढ़ने में भरोसा है। खेल में भरोसा है। प्रजातंत्र में भरोसा है।

■ गुजरात हो या ओडिशा, या फिर झारखंड जैसे आदिवासी बहुल राज्य, आप भले ही वोट की राजनीति न करने बात कर रहे हैं, लेकिन आपके

आदिवासियों के वोट तो मिल रहे हैं।

–लाभ तो हमें पहले से ही मिलता रहा है। मध्य प्रदेश में हमने पिछली सदी के सातवें दशक में जिम्मेदारी संभाली थी। वहां के आदिवासी भाजपा के साथ खड़े रहे। गुजरात ने हमें 32 साल सेवा का मौका दिया है। बंगाल में यह हमें जो सफलता मिली है, तो वहां एससी, एसटी और ओबीसी के सबसे ज्यादा वोट मिली। ओडिशा की आठ लोकसभा सीटों में सात पर जीत का कारण आदिवासी हैं। भाजपा और आदिवासी समाज के बीच राजनीति और वोट का

● आदिवासी समाज के शौर्य को पाठ्यक्रम में शामिल करेगी सरकार

● अंग्रेजी के बिना विकास नहीं हो सकता है, यह मानना गलत है

● आदिवासी की शिक्षा के लिए 650 एकलव्य विद्यालय खोलेगा केंद्र

● क्षमता बढ़ाने और शिक्षा से ही दूर होगी आदिवासियों की दरिद्रता

रिश्ता नहीं है। हमने उनकी सेवा की है। उनका हम पर अटूट विश्वास है।

■ नई राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति में आदिवासियों और जनजातियों की भूमिका क्या रहेगी?

–देश में केंद्रीय और नवोदय विद्यालय स्कूली शिक्षा की गुणवत्ता का चैंपमार्क हैं। अब हम आदिवासियों के बीच ऐसी ही गुणवत्ता वाली शिक्षा लेकर जा रहे हैं। हम उनके लिए देश में 650 एकलव्य विद्यालय खोल रहे हैं, जो आवासीय विद्यालय होंगे। इन पर 29 हजार करोड़ खर्च होंगे। यानी एक स्कूल को यदि हम करीब 40 करोड़ रुपये खर्च होंगे। इन स्कूलों में पढ़ाई के साथ खेलों की सारी सुविधा होगी। एक स्कूल में चार खेलों के अलग-अलग मैदान होंगे। आगे चलकर इन स्कूलों को चलाने के लिए हर साल पांच करोड़ रुपये भी दिए जाएंगे। ये स्कूल सभी आदिवासी बहुल ब्लाकों में खुलेंगे। प्रत्येक ब्लाक में एक एकलव्य स्कूल रहेगा। जिन ब्लाकों में आदिवासियों की आबादी ज्यादा होगी, वहां दो स्कूल खोले जाएंगे। आदिवासियों की गुणवत्तापूर्ण शिक्षा टेने में एकलव्य विद्यालय एक अहम पहल है। नई राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति की भाषा नीति

का सबसे ज्यादा लाभ आदिवासी बच्चों को मिलेगा, जिससे देश में सैकड़ों द्रौपदी मुर्मू तैयार होंगी।

■ मातृभाषा में पढ़ाई एक स्तर तक तो ठीक है, लेकिन यह आगे चलकर बच्चों के विकास में बाधा नहीं बनेगी?

–देखिए यह भ्रम है। जर्मनी और जापान तकनीक के क्षेत्र में अव्वल देश हैं। दोनों की अंग्रेजी नहीं जानते। इसी तरह चीन में भी अंग्रेजी नहीं है। ऐसे में हमारे यहां यह भ्रम है कि अंग्रेजी से प्रगति है। यह अत्यंत साम्राज्यवादी और सामंतवादी मानसिकता का परिचायक है। मेरा अंग्रेजी से कोई परहेज नहीं है। जिसे आगे चलकर वैश्विक भाषा सीखनी है, उन्हें सिखाएंगे। लेकिन अंग्रेजी के बिना शिक्षा और विकास नहीं हो सकता है, यह मानना गलत है।

■ आपके पास कौशल विकास मंत्रालय भी जिम्मेदारी है। कौशल विकास की भी जिम्मेदारी है। कौशल विकास को जरिये आदिवासियों को किस तरह जोड़ रहे हैं?

–आदिवासी बच्चों के बीच हम बड़े स्तर पर कौशल विकास कार्यक्रम चला रहे हैं। उनके कौशल विकास के लिए छात्रवृत्ति भी दी जा रही है। पहले यह नहीं मिलती थी। केंद्र का इसके लिए जो पैसा जाता था, उसमें

राज्य खुद का हिस्सा न मिलाकर केंद्र का ही पैसा बांट देता था। अब हमने छात्रवृत्ति की पूरी व्यवस्था को आनलाइन कर दिया है। इसके लिए नेशनल स्कालरशिप पोर्टल बनाया है, जिससे 30 लाख लाभार्थी जुड़े हैं। इसके लिए ढाई हजार करोड़ रुपये अकेले केंद्र सरकार देती है। संप्रग सरकार के समय मंत्रालय का इतना बजट होता था। हम डीबीटी (प्रत्यक्ष लाभ हस्तांतरण) के जरिये सीधे उनके खाते में पैसा भेज रहे हैं। मेरी और मेरी सरकार की मान्यता है कि क्षमता बढ़ाने और शिक्षा से ही उनकी दरिद्रता दूर होगी। हम दोनों क्षेत्रों पर ध्यान दिए हुए हैं। इसके बाद तो इस समाज का आदमी द्रौपदी मुर्मू बन सकता है, गिरीश मुर्मू बन सकता है। किरण रिजिजू बन सकता है।

■ एक विभाग के मंत्री दूसरे विभाग के काम-काज पर बोल रहे हैं। इसके पीछे सोच क्या है?

–हम पिछले एक विभाग के मंत्री नहीं हैं। हमारा दायित्व मोदी सरकार के सभी कामकाजों को लेकर है। यह एक प्रशिक्षण है। भारत के विश्वगुरु बनाना है, तो हमें सभी विषयों की जानकारी होनी चाहिए।

■ नई राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति के अनुरूप ... अहसास करे और हर व्यक्ति की जरूरतों को समझे। केंद्रीय शिक्षा मंत्री धर्मेन्द्र प्रधान का मानना है कि देश में अब वह समय आने वाला है, जब सबसे पिछड़ा आदिवासी समुदाय अपनी प्रतिभा के बल पर सबसे आगे की पंक्ति में खड़ा होगा। दैनिक जागरण के राष्ट्रीय ब्यूरो प्रमुख आशुतोष झा और विशेष संवाददाता अरविंद पांडेय के साथ बातचीत का अंश–

Unshackling varsities

University campuses have been highly politicized. All the constituent elements of the university system — teachers, employees and students are associated with various political parties through their organisations — generally not on the basis of ideological commitments but on the basis of personal convenience, especially from the standpoint of their self-aggrandizement. Such politically active teachers and employees are seldom able to attend their respective workplaces, let alone perform their duties relating to teaching, research and extension effectively

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, in his address to the nation in 1985, referred to education as an area which required urgent attention. This led to the New Education Policy (NEP) which was finalized in August 1986.

Prime Minister Modi, in 2022, held that NEP (2020) is essential to create the New India of the 21st century. We hope these are not voices in the wilderness, though there is always a surrounding cacophony that endeavors to drown the voices. They come from experts who seemingly believe it is necessary to go on reiterating a few indisputable propositions as parts of education policy.

Well, truism may not be disputed. What may be disputable, however, lies around the question of their relevance for finalizing what needs to be done. It is time to decide whether a large number of richly endowed world class universities will serve our needs in the higher education sector better than the small number of meagerly endowed universities that we have now.

Higher education today is confronted with a number of challenges in regard to its management in an effective manner owing to a number of factors including growing interference of government leading to a sharp erosion in autonomy, snowballing financial resource crunch chiefly caused by spiraling prices of goods and services, and fixation of grants by some state governments at previous levels, hike in different fees by the universities making it difficult for the poor to pursue it, privatization and even internationalization of education at a cost beyond the reach of commoners, and sharp deterioration in work culture.

Universities are so badly managed that quite often there are agitations on the part of students, teachers and employees leading to widespread indiscipline and chaos. Work culture among all sections related to management is seen at a low ebb.

Classes are not properly taken, and extension programmes are not properly taken care of in our educational institutions. Use of unfair means cannot be ruled out; question papers are leaked; evaluation is ever questioned; favoritism is distinctly visible.

The atmosphere is politically surcharged mainly because of the patronage enjoyed by the leaders of various political parties on the campuses. Even cases of forged degrees made available through employment of corrupt practices come to light.

In such a scenario, the universities today are found to be performing merely two functions – admission and examinations. The real functions of teaching, research and extension have been generally relegated to the background. This sordid state of affairs puts a big question mark on their very existence as institutions of higher learning, particularly from the standpoint of their role in promotion of human and social development.

Universities no longer remain autonomous institutions either academically or financially or administratively as they once used to be. State governments have acquired powers to frame even their courses as per their ideological commitments. Financially, decisions regarding annual grants-in-aid which might be a small portion of the expenditure are taken by respective state governments. As a populist measure, the state governments sometimes fix the fees to be realised from students pursuing regular as well as self-financed courses. Moreover, again in order to gain popularity, governments sometimes sanction class III and class IV posts in bulk and even teaching positions without any obligation to meet the financial burden.

University campuses have been highly politicized. All the constituent elements of the university system – teachers, employees and students are associated with various political parties through their organisations – generally not on the basis of ideological commitments but on the basis of personal convenience, especially from the standpoint of their self-aggrandizement. Such politically active teachers and employees are seldom able to attend their respective workplaces, let alone perform their duties relating to teaching, research and extension effectively.

Most students are not interested in acquiring knowledge; they continue their studentship for students' union elections or to occupy seats in hostels or to gain a certificate as a passport to a job.

University administrations being bound by legal provisions and precedents and being subjected to pressure of varied kinds are forced to adopt an apathetic attitude and as a consequence, either refrain from taking any initiative and doing innovative work or do only enough to sustain the system.

Use of the latest information and communication technology requires sound financial bases as also competent manpower. Unfortunately, in most universities either required financial resources are lacking or the teachers and staff who, in many cases, have been selected on the basis of considerations other than merit, are incompetent.

In the present era of globalization of education, there are distinctly visible two types of insidious opportunities for education at all levels - the first provided by renowned private organizations that charge exorbitant fees and provide quality education by hiring competent teachers and employees and making use of latest ICT; and the second offered directly by the government as part of fulfillment of its obligation to provide education to all who get enrolled. Since in pursuance of its policy of liberalization and privatization the state is gradually withdrawing itself from education to its citizens, and also since a major part of the budget is spent on payments of salary to staff and other infrastructural expenses, a nominal part is actually spent on education. Corruption in the entire machinery has further worsened the situation.

Moreover, the government-aided universities are subjected to varied kinds of unwarranted restrictions which compel them to toe the line of government policy. The result is that they are not able to maintain the desired standards of education.

University autonomy may be restored by making necessary changes in the University Act and Statutes in order that universities as institutions of highest level of teaching, research and extension may be able to operate independently.

They should have full freedom to frame their academic programmers, conduct research and chalk out extension activities in accordance with their mission of national development.

They should be given a free hand in preparing their budget and identifying and mobilizing resources without contravention of the general laws of the land.

Educationists will agree that the university bodies should be supreme in academic matters. The university is not the tool of the government, still less it is the instrument of the political powers of the day. Sometimes, it is vulnerable to government blackmail because it has to receive financial support from the government.

We are reminded of an old proposal to make universities accountable to legislators regarding utilization of public funds placed at their disposal.

Though their accounts today are looked into by government auditors, they are not placed before the legislatures except in one or two cases. From time to time this arrangement has been criticized by the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament.

But as the Education Commission has rightly held, a debate in a legislature on the financial affairs of a university will only make it an issue in party politics which is far from desirable.

All this is not to suggest that there should be not a check on how universities manage their financial affairs but to emphasize that any such control is best exercised by the UGC, which may devise a suitable system of internal audit.

It is time for a national debate on who should be a Chancellor or Visitor. Are Governors/ President of India capable of providing academic leadership to the university community?

The vital question is about the role of the UGC or the Association of Indian Universities on issues like autonomy, credibility of head of the institution, inquiry into functioning of the administration, academic freedom, and intellectual dissent. Has our intelligentsia given any serious thought to dealing with allegations regarding irregularities in our universities?

Many of our academics often willingly play into the hands of vested interests when they become vice-chancellors. Irregularities in faculty selection, violations of university acts, statutes and ordinances, and manipulations in regard to the functioning of academic and executive committees vitiate the academic atmosphere.

The real problem is that top jobs in universities are largely allocated on the basis of social background, political ideology, or personal bias.

When Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee became the VC of Calcutta University in the early 20th century, S Radhakrishnan was appointed the VC of Andhra University in the 1930s and Hansa Mehta took over as VC of Maharaja Sayajirao University in Baroda in the 1940s, no one asked where their affiliation lay. Only their scholarly accomplishments and institutional visions were taken into consideration.

A K GHOSH

The writer, a former Associate Professor, Department of English, Gurudas College, Kolkata, is presently with Rabindra Bharati University

शुद्धता के पैरोकार नहीं जानते हैं कि भाषाएं कैसे समृद्ध होती हैं

हिंदी भी पकड़े अंग्रेजी वाली राह

संतोष ओझा

इडली और समोसा देश के कोने-कोने में लोकप्रिय हैं। क्या आपको पता है कि ये विदेशियों की देन हैं? समोसा हमारे यहां मध्य एशिया से आया और इडली इंडोनेशिया से। ऐसे उदाहरण कई हैं: भारत में आलू और मिर्च आए दक्षिण अमेरिका से. चाय और लीची चीन से। सामान्य भारतीयों ने इन 'विदेशी' व्यंजनों को सहर्ष अपनाया। क्या आप इनके बिना भारतीय भोजन की कल्पना कर सकते हैं?

अब भोजन से परे. भाषा की बात करते हैं। भारत जैसे देश में जहां सैकड़ों भाषाएं बोली जाती हैं. भाषा बेहद भावनात्मक विषय है। पिछले सौ-दो सौ सालों में भारत में भाषा को लेकर कई आंदोलन हुए हैं। अधिकांश आंदोलनों की यह मांग रही है कि कोई. विशेषकर केंद्र सरकार, हम पर भाषा ना थोपे। भाषाई साम्राज्यवाद का डर हर भाषा समूह को सताता है।

अंग्रेजों ने हम पर शासन तो किया ही. हमारी संपत्ति भी लूट कर ले गए। यहां तक कि 'लूट' शब्द भी अपनी भाषा में समाहित कर लिया। इसके अलावा भी बहुत से शब्द अपनाए। चंपी से आया शैंपू, बंगला बन गया बंगलो और बरामदा से आया वेरांडाह। बिरयानी जरूर बिरयानी ही रही, जंगल भी जंगल ही रहा। लेकिन खाट बन गया काट और जगन्नाथ बना जग्गरनॉट। ऑक्सफर्ड इंग्लिश डिक्शनरी में सैकड़ों भारतीय मूल के शब्द हैं और हर वर्ष दर्जनों इसमें शामिल होते हैं। अंग्रेजी भाषा तो कभी संकट में आई नहीं, वह तो और भी समृद्ध हो रही है। हर साल पूरी दुनिया में करोड़ों लोग अंग्रेजी सीखने के लिए मेहनत करते हैं।

हिंदी ने भी अंग्रेजी के भरपूर शब्द अपनाए हैं। हम में से अधिकांश लोग पेन से लिखते हैं, कलम से नहीं। ट्रेन से चलते हैं। कप से चाय पीते हैं। सुबह टूथपेस्ट से ब्रश कर हम ऑफिस जाते हैं। साथ में खाने के लिए सैंडविच ले जाते हैं अपने टिफिन बॉक्स में। बॉस कभी-कभी हमें अपने साथ कॉफी या जूस पिलाता है और ज्यादा खुश हुआ तो अपनी कार में बैठा कर सिनेमा ले जाता है। आपको इस दिनचर्या के विवरण में कुछ अटपटा तो नहीं लगा न? आम दिनचर्या है। पर जरा ध्यान से दोबारा पढ़ें। इन वाक्यों में कई शब्द अंग्रेजी के हैं। लगभग सारी महत्वपूर्ण संज्ञाएं।

अटपटा इसलिए नहीं लगता कि हम लोगों ने, जो औसत हिंदीभाषी हैं, इन शब्दों को सहर्ष अपना लिया है। सिर्फ अंग्रेजी से ही नहीं, भारत की अन्य भाषाओं से भी हिंदी में शब्द आए हैं। 'वांग्मय', 'प्रगति', 'दलित' शब्द मराठी से आए। बांग्ला से 'गल्प', 'संभ्रांत', 'आपत्ति' और 'अभिभावक'। द्रविड़ भाषाओं से भी कई शब्द आए। तमिल में सब्जी को कारी कहते हैं, और पुराने कन्नड़ में करी। इसी से हमारी तरकारी आई। इलायची, शिकाकाई, काला, मोर शब्द भी दक्षिण से ही आए हैं हिंदी में। एक विद्वान हुए थे, आचार्य रघुवीर. भाषाविद, भारतीय

Dall-E image generator से बनी मशहूर पेंटर विन्सेंट वैन गो की स्टाइल में एक पेंटिंग

> ऑक्सफर्ड इंग्लिश डिक्शनरी में सैकड़ों भारतीय मूल के शब्द हैं और हर वर्ष दर्जनों इसमें शामिल होते हैं। अंग्रेजी तो कभी संकट में आई नहीं

संविधान सभा के सदस्य और कोशकार। उन्होंने डेढ़ लाख, जी हां डेढ़ लाख शब्दों का वैज्ञानिक और अन्य तकनीकी शब्दों का ईजाद किया। इसे ईजाद ही कहेंगे। उनका मानना था कि संस्कृत से हर चीज के लिए शब्द बन सकते हैं, पर उन्हें आंशिक सफलता ही मिली। सरकारी तंत्र ने तो उनके शब्द अपना लिए, पर आम हिंदीभाषी जनता ने इन्हें पूरी तरह नकार दिया। आचार्य ने सीमेंट को नाम दिया था वज्रचूर्ण, ब्रश को कूर्च, ट्रेन को संयान और सिगरेट को धूम्रवर्तिका। अब समझ गए न कि लोगों ने इन शब्दों को क्यों नकारा! पर शायद इन्हीं महानुभाव के कारण मुझे BHU से धातुकीय अभियांत्रिकी की डिग्री मिली। मैकेनिकल वालों को यांत्रिकी अभियांत्रिकी की डिग्री मिली।

प्रख्यात विद्वान भगवान सिंह लिखते हैं, 'कई बार कवियों और विद्वानों को यह भ्रम रहता है कि वे नए शब्द गढ़ सकते हैं। अच्छा कवि या रचनाकार शब्द नहीं गढ़ता, वह उपलब्ध शब्दों के अर्थ और संयोजन से खेलता हुआ एक नया चमत्कार करता है। तो शब्द आखिर गढ़ता कौन है? भगवान सिंह के अनुसार, 'किसी भाषा-भाषी समाज की पूंजी उसकी शब्दसंपदा के भीतर समाहित होती है। परंतु ज्ञान का विस्तार नई वस्तु, तकनीक, खोज और आविष्कार से जुड़ा होता है। शब्द वे गढ़ते हैं जो इनका उत्पादन, विकास या आविष्कार करते हैं।'

भाषा विज्ञान के जानकार अभिषेक अवतंस नीदरलैंड की लेडेन यूनिवर्सिटी में पढ़ाते हैं। उनका मानना है कि हिंदी के 'सरकारीकरण' से भाषा में कृत्रिमता आई है। हिंदी की जो अपनी पहचान थी, उसको सरकारीकरण ने नष्ट कर दिया। कई आम लोग जो हिंदी में ही बात करते हैं, वे भी सरकारी हिंदी समझ नहीं पाते और कई सारी चीजों से वंचित रह जाते हैं।' मिसाल के तौर पर वे आवेदन प्रपत्र (एप्लिकेशन फॉर्म) की चर्चा करते हैं। इसमें आपको कई ऐसे शब्द मिल जाएंगे: अभिप्रमाणित (attested), अभ्यर्थी (candidate), अनुक्रमणिका (sequence), सत्यापित (verified), संलग्न (attached)। एक सामान्य हिंदीभाषी के लिए भी इन्हें शब्द समझना मुश्किल है। आप भाग्यशाली हैं तो शायद उसी फॉर्म में आपको अंग्रेजी में भी यह दिख जाएगा। अक्सर लोग अंग्रेजी पढ़कर हिंदी शब्द का मतलब समझते हैं।

अभिषेक अवतंस का कहना है कि राजनेता, जिनका जनमानस से जुड़े रहना अति आवश्यक है, भाषा की नब्ज पहचानते हैं। मसलन, बीजेपी का कामयाब चुनावी नाराः 'मोदी हैं तो मुमकिन है'। मुमकिन तो अरबी का शब्द है, इसकी जगह वे 'संभव' भी कह सकते थे।

कोई भी भाषा एक जीती-जागती चीज है। इसे आप बांध कर रख दें तो कुछ समय के बाद यह मृतप्राय हो जाएगी। हिंदी खुद को संवारने में सक्षम है, अन्य भाषाओं से शब्द सहर्ष स्वीकार करती है और अपना बना लेती है।

हम आम हिंदी भाषियों को 'पेट्रोल' वाली 'बस' में 'टिकट' लेकर घूमने में ही मजा आता है! हम तो ऐसे ही हैं भइया!

(लेखक ट्रैवल, हिस्ट्री, भाषा-बोली में दिलचस्पी रखते और नियमित लेखन करते हैं)

India's data deficiency and the need for quality unemployment figures

KRISHNA RAJ & KAIBALYAPATI MISHRA

The unemployment rate in India for people aged 15 years and above in urban India reduced to 7.2% during the second quarter ending on September 30 from 9.8%.

Data from the National Statistical Office's 16th Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) showed that the unemployment rate among females (aged 15 years and above) in urban areas slowed to 9.4% in July-September from 11.6% a year ago, while it was 9.5% in April-June.

This positive yet obvious sign of recovery in unemployment is attributed to just the opening up of the markets. However, questions about the quality of this information remain.

The data story in the growth and development of any nation is crucial, especially for countries like India, where growth potential is ample along with everlasting development issues of poverty, inequality and unemployment.

To answer the question - of how far have we reached after 75 years of independence in terms of development as a nation - requires estimates on the same issues.

However, the major issues faced by social scientists and researchers in answering such questions are three-fold, i.e. (i) discontinued existing sources of data on unemployment, (ii) questionable quality of the recently published records and (iii) the need for publishing new estimates on innovative perspectives of employment. In this piece, we deal with these three issues.

The clueless nature of India's unemployment data is worrisome. Since 2016, the Ministry of Labour and Employment has discontinued several of its surveys.

Data sources such as Annual Employment-Unemployment Surveys (EUS), published from 2010 to 2016, got discontinued.

In 2016, only the Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) of industries employing workers with more than 10 numbers came into force. The survey was inherently restrictive in its nature in presenting employment data and maintained an absolute silence about the unemployment figure.

In an interview in 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "More than a lack of jobs, the issue is a lack of data on jobs." However, the government doesn't seem to be acting on this front.

Moreover, the questionable quality of the published data sources of employment adds to the problem of the data deficit.

The recently published EPFO payroll data has suffered from several criticisms that cannot be ignored.

These criticisms of the data – on not being actual payroll data; that it represents only the registered organised sector which is less than 10% of the total employment, and that it ignored the self-employed – raise questions on the quality of the information as an indicator of employment and also in terms of usability in research.

Highlighting this issue on the credibility of the payroll data published by EPFO, India, a study by Ghosh and Ghosh in 2018 suggests taking the findings with a pinch of salt. It also bemoans the loss of data from the NSSO that discontinued publishing unemployment figures.

Instituted in the early 1950s by professor Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis, who is widely regarded as the father of Indian statistics, the NSSO EUS data could encompass such quality deficits in the employment data in the country.

Similar is the case with PLFS figures. With joblessness found to have fallen for every group of rural/urban, male or female, this data also highlights that the non-farm sector has increased steadily from 68.2% in 2017-18 to 71.4% in 2020-21, having suffered from precarious working conditions, about which the data is silent.

On several fronts of compatibility of datasets and indicators, there are questions galore about the reliability of PLFS data. From the perspective of adequacy, the PLFS data has been suggested to have a greater sample space to come up with more meaningful estimates of unemployment; meaning that the scope for improvisation in PLFS data is huge if it has to be policy-relevant.

In addition to the unavailability of data, existing figures of employment are unworthy of international comparisons. Most emerging and developed countries possess a strong and quality unemployment database as they endow the unemployed with several social security benefits.

The major sources of unemployment data published across the globe, like the Bureau of Labour Statistics (BLS), which has adjusted unemployment rates for the US, conceptualised unemployment since the early 1960s.

Three other organisations that conceptualise annual unemployment data on a standardised basis are the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the International Labour Office (ILO), and the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) for their specific regions. However, in the case of India, we suffer significantly from international standardisation and, thus, comparability.

Such paucity of data is not restricted to employment and unemployment situation in India. India, which has a huge diversity and heterogeneity of living, has not realised the need for accounting for important socio-economic aspects of development through standardised and updated databases.

The Census 2021 that got delayed owing to the severity of the pandemic has vanished from public discussion forums, with the government delaying it further. This data crunch and unavailability of credible information do seem to have become institutionalised.

Moreover, the government has come up with new surveys like the Mother Tongue Survey of India involving 576 languages. While such surveys are welcomed, the priority should shift towards the timely release of quality unemployment figures that can fuel research, dialogue and, thus, policy-making in India.

(Krishna Raj is Professor of Economics at ISEC, Bengaluru; Kaibalyapati Mishra is a research student at ISEC, Bengaluru)

Educate to awaken the soul

JS RAJPUT

All wars before they begin, start in the minds of the people. The negativity that sows the seeds of discord can only be eliminated by the right education

Democracies promise equality, equity, and human dignity to all. The promise to move towards a world of peace and tranquility is a compulsory clause in most of the Constitutions and other allied documentations. Human nature, however, invariably tilts towards creating hierarchical order in every human endeavor and activity. After WWII, it was the common global aspiration to banish the horrors of war and violence from the face of the planet earth. It was considered necessary to launch pragmatic initiatives at various levels that would save the planet earth and humanity from further destruction and devastation of human lives and precious life-sustaining resources.

How to move ahead was so thoughtfully subsumed in the Preamble of UNESCO's Constitution: Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights Charter – UNDHR - of the UN which stands endorsed by all member countries, asserts in its Article 26: "Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms." The primacy accorded to education, science, and culture in achieving an attitudinal transformation became evident in the very nomenclature of UNESCO.

The emphasis on all three areas included education, science, and culture – has now assumed contemporary dimensions; the focus in education is on good quality and skill acquisition, and science extends its horizons from coding in the initial stages to information and communication technology and artificial intelligence; ICT, and AI! The cultural context now deserves far more intense attention as achieving cultural cohesion and harmony is now getting more and more complex by the day, consequent upon demographic changes that have taken place at a much higher pace due to various reasons, violence being a prominent factor responsible for it.

The relevance of UNESCO's doctrine built on the need of constructing the defense of peace by impacting the human mind has; over the last seven decades; achieved universal endorsement. Alert and dynamic systems of learning are now transforming their curricula and pedagogy to prominently focus on nurturing the values of truth, peace, nonviolence, right conduct, love, and brotherhood. The effort is to erase the negativity that clouds his mind, resulting in a lack of in-depth comprehension of the social and emotional consequences of ignoring the necessity of human connection with other human beings and nature. Children have to be made familiar with the basics of social, cultural, moral, ethical, and humanistic values.

Parents need to remain ever conscious that if the near and dear ones are short on compassion and empathy in their general behavior, it would not make a positive impact on the growing up of a child in the household. All three -parents, school, and the child need to develop a sensitive bond that permits the free exchange of ideas, emotions, and aspirations. Interests of the child deserve full respect but at the same time, no laxity need be permitted in his growing up as a social and cultural person, as a human being who connects himself with others; extending from near and dear ones to the adage of the universal unity of all human beings.

Even isolated-looking cases of aberrations in teacher conduct just could not be ignored. Recently, a report appeared in the media indicating that Delhi Municipal Corporation teachers do not receive their salary regularly; the delay often being a couple of months! Another shocking incident was reported just the next day; a primary school child was attacked by the lady teacher and thrown out of the first-floor room. To me, the link between the two must be examined very carefully. If the teachers are being put under avoidable stress by the system, they would never be at peace with themselves. And if the teacher is not at peace with himself, it would be futile to expect him to sow the seeds of human values and a keen desire to contribute to efforts intended to create a world of peace!

On a broader horizon, the global literacy rate has crossed the 84% mark, but it would be perfect to infer that the internalization of basic essential human values has not grown in the right proportion to the growth and coverage of education. It now stands confirmed that education that neglects social and emotional growth considerations would remain largely bereft of its potential to transform humanity into a force capable of creating a world of human cooperation, collaboration, and peace, without which the vision of vanishing wars and violence forever would never be achieved.

The way-out was delineated by the great Indian thinker, historian, and political philosopher Dharampal in the context of a discussion on the third five-year plan: in Parliament: "....Soul has to awaken before we proceed for dams and steel plants to the flowering of the human being, of Indian we deemed to be ignorant, of the people of India whom we describe as 'teeming millions'!" Now we need soul-awakening education. When properly and adequately comprehended and contextualized, it would pave the way for the survival of humanity and the planet earth.

(Professor Rajput works in education, social cohesion, and religious amity. The views expressed are personal)

> **PARENTS NEED TO REMAIN EVER CONSCIOUS THAT IF THE NEAR AND DEAR ONES ARE SHORT ON COMPASSION AND EMPATHY IN THEIR GENERAL BEHAVIOR, IT WOULD NOT MAKE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE GROWING UP OF A CHILD IN THE HOUSEHOLD**

Who are Professors of Practice?

They open avenues for leveraged learning and practice-informed teaching in colleges and universities, writes Salil Sahadevan

When an online course tells you how to make money from crypto, remember they are making money by selling online courses! Learn from what people do as much as what they say. Teaching is considered a calling. However, it says that if one teaches more than one practice, one has a different calling. So it makes sense to include adequate practice components to the academics in our institutions.

By introducing a new teaching title, 'Professor of Practice', the University Grants Commission has formalised the possibility for universities and colleges to hire experts from the industry. Professors of Practice are already present at a few national institutions in India and most abroad. They are also known as practice professors or professors of professional practice.

Universities are knowledge organisations. Professors of Practice can boost their knowledge capital. Practice professors will be engaged in curriculum creation, course design, evaluation, student mentoring and teaching. They are expected to make a more significant difference in skill development, industry interface and experiential learning. Among these are arranging internships, guiding entrepreneurship, mentoring industrial projects, establishing incubation centres, setting up tinkering labs, exploring industry opportunities, educating on the career path, networking with professional communities and increasing the talent pool on the campus.

Fear and facts

The major concern about the Professor of Practice proposal is its potential misuse by distorting eligibility conditions. It is less likely that any good institution will falsify the conditions of expertise of at least 15 years at a senior level in a professional field. No one prohibits any institutions from adding additional filters for such recruitments.

The real issue behind this criticism is the trust deficit in the current institutional structures and not the scheme of Professors of Practice. Withholding reforms fearing misuse is a case of functional fixedness, a cognitive bias. It is a tendency to limit something to the way it is traditionally familiar. Academics value logic and reasoning, whereas practitioners prefer utility over rigour. Will the values contradict? The fear is, at best, a professional stereotype. Most experts from professional fields go well with academic requirements though some may need tweaking in their pedagogical understanding.

Another criticism is that the 'Professors of Practice' will create power asymmetries. In other words, the academics' intellectual superiority contradicts the practitioner's experiential dominance. This thinking is another default effect. Exposure to other professional cultures benefits everyone. A few institutions apart, whether the long-protected nature of academia has effectively delivered the claimed rigour is debatable.

Yet another concern is that people outside the field will give undue weightage to Professors of Practice which may harm the profession of academics. This is another case of status-quo bias, where the reference point is kept as public attention, not on the opportunity that the proposal offers. The Professor of Practice appointment is exclusive of the sanctioned strength of faculty in the institution and is meant for a short period of one to three years. It will not adversely affect the career prospects of teachers. Instead, it opens ways for complementary learning.

The above criticisms are unrelated to the enrichment of students. Instead, they focus on the power dynamics of professional groups. Perhaps the only genuine concern is the institutional readiness to implement such practices. No one wants to end up Professors of Practice as 'accidental academics' or another set of classroom routines devoid of rigour. Most of the fears of misuse can be addressed by creating a centralised web application for screening and allocation of Professors of Practice.

Student's future, teacher's past

Universities have existed for a very long time with similar structures and systems. The idea here is not to over-champion the industries or Professors of Practice but to suggest that academics and pracademics can complement each other and benefit from their shared skills and experience.

We live in times with a social need for experimentation at all levels. Moving across and beyond the traditional classification of careers is a necessity. Therefore, addressing the new challenges in education requires boundary-spanning roles. Whether it is an academic or a Professor of Practice, the guiding principle remains the same. Mathematician Richard Hamming says it well: 'the teachers should prepare the student for the student's future, not for the teacher's past'.

(The author is Deputy Secretary, University Grants Commission. Views expressed are personal)

Why parents are adopting Homeschooling over traditional learning methods

NIRVAAN BIRLA

We are living in an era where everything around us is tech-focused and evolving at rapid speed. Modern education has also increased tremendously, developing as a hybrid of both conventional and new-age education. In this scenario, homeschooling learning techniques are increasingly gaining popularity in contemporary education. Homeschooling is an alternate educational system in which the child completes their education and learning at home rather than in a typical classroom setting. While certain countries have always been supportive of homeschooling, the notion still has a long way to go in India. Furthermore, our curriculum is designed for traditional learning methods. However, when it comes to homeschooling, myriads of factors are assisting parents in adopting homeschooling over the conventional model.

In fact, beyond everything, homeschooling allows parents to prioritise their child's mental, emotional, behavioural, and physical well-being, which is currently in high demand. Here are some reasons why parents should choose homeschooling over traditional schooling in the present era.

Personalised Curriculum: Personalised curriculum is one of the most significant factors of homeschooling over traditional learning techniques.

Consequently, parents can tailor the curriculum according to their child's interests, needs, speed, and personality and help them strive toward better growth. Parents can also choose what their child learns and when he or she should study. In a nutshell, a personalised schedule provides numerous possibilities to grow and learn.

Modern Education: As the conventional education system becomes increasingly restrictive, modern education, such as homeschooling, providing the room and scope for children to grow and cultivate their potential. Homeschooling is more than simply an educational trend. Parents can make the decision for their child to go on a path of new-age learning based on the ability to be self-aware. The modern concept is not established on any educational curriculum. Students now have a range of learning options that allow them to study in their area of interest, at their own speed, and at any time. Thus, modern education is providing students with extra knowledge and special attention, that's why parents are adopting homeschooling over the traditional method.

Cost-Effective and Time-Saving: There is no denying the fact that homeschooling is a cost-effective and time-saving method of teaching children. Traditional schooling has high yearly or term fees, as well as supplementary charges for uniforms, books, and stationery. Furthermore, many conventional schools charge additional fees to engage in extracurricular activities or special events. However, homeschooling requires no additional fees, thus making education cost-effective. As a result, parents in today's scenario no longer need to be financially constrained in order to provide their children with the finest education.

Safer Environment to Learn and Grow: Another factor that is getting the attention of parents towards homeschooling is it protects a kid from external threats, like physical violence, assault, behavioural change, and psychological abuse, among others. With the increasing number of such issues in conventional schools, it is critical for parents to make their child a better human being while still providing a decent education. Thus, to safeguard their children from the outside world, Indian parents are choosing homeschooling over others.

In recent times, the concept of homeschooling is getting popularity, notably in India. Modern-day education methods provide exceptional learning and prepares children to stay ahead of the curve in this competitive society. In a nutshell, according to the advantages homeschooling offers, parents are adopting homeschooling over traditional learning methods.

(The author is founder, Birla Brainiacs)

Rise in adoption of cloud computing by enterprises in India

JOZEF DE VRIES

The Indian government aims to become a digitally empowered nation and knowledge economy. In support of this, several initiatives have been implemented to scale the digital infrastructure. In tandem, enterprises have been undergoing a digital transformation journey to cater to changing customer needs. According to a report by NASSCOM, India is projected to become a $1 Trillion digital economy by 2026, and cloud computing will be an imperative tool in its digital transformation journey. According to the report, cloud computing has the potential to account for 8 per cent of India's GDP while experiencing quadruple growth until 2026. As a result, 53 per cent of all enterprises have increased cloud adoption, and 84% of large enterprises have adopted Software as a Service (SaaS) for their operations.

Factors that led to cloud adoption

Data is the new commodity for businesses. Previously, physical on-premises data centres were a major requirement for enterprises, but this has since shifted due to resource restraints. Various factors, including scalability problems, excessive power consumption, connectivity, and latency, fuel the need for cloud infrastructure.

With the trove of data pouring in, maintaining servers, hardware, and operating systems became more of a burden on organisations. And maintaining their database came at a high cost, with challenging and intricate tasks required for regular upkeep. As a result, businesses began to adopt a database-as-a-service (DBaaS) strategy, with access to services for managing the entire database environment, including networking, physical and virtual hardware, operating systems and replication configuration.

Organisations are also incorporating services such as SaaS, IaaS, and PaaS into their business processes to address their dynamic and complex business needs. With this growth, the Indian public cloud market is expected to generate US$4.53 Billion in revenue in 2022, growing at a 22.59 per cent Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) from 2022 to 2027, as reported by Statista. In addition to private and public cloud solutions, hybrid and multi-cloud models are also readily adopted as part of an organisation's future growth strategy. With the integration of other technologies, such as artificial intelligence, machine learning and big data, cloud computing has become an integral part of the enterprise business.

What cloud computing is delivering to Indian enterprises

The cloud is providing Indian enterprises the ability to scale up or down physical servers and data centre infrastructure, develop and run applications, and license and deliver business applications. With its myriad of benefits, cloud computing in India can assist in offering standard and scalable delivery of services by enabling digital inclusion for everyone. Additionally, cloud computing backed by policy can make digital infrastructure accessible to everyone, thereby reducing economic inequality. Let's consider some additional benefits of cloud computing for Indian organisations.

Data safety and security: In cloud environments, managing data throughout its lifecycle per business, privacy, and security regulatory requirements is a top priority. Securing data at rest is largely a solved problem, with various options that provide coverage at the disk or within databases at the transaction level. Additionally, open-source databases such as Postgres (also known as PostgreSQL) have strong community support, with quarterly security and bug fixes and hundreds of community members publicly vetting the code to help mitigate potential security risks. Cloud providers usually have the highest level of security certifications for the cloud's security, enabling enterprises to focus on other value-added tasks.

Scalability, flexibility, and reliability: Cloud-based storage can be used as a file-sharing platform for collaboration in a remote manner and store backups of business data or documents with the ability to scale. Businesses benefit from paying for only the capacity used rather than overprovisioning for future needs. Furthermore, data is typically replicated across multiple data centres, improving availability even in the event of a crisis.

Low operational cost: Cloud computing services can be consumed in a pay-as-you-go (PAYG) model, so businesses only pay for the storage and tools they use, reducing unnecessary capital expenditure. Organisations can select from various cloud storage tiers based on their use cases, such as frequency of usage, file type, and hot, warm, and cold storage options. These numerous options, when combined, result in lower costs and a higher return on investment.

Streamlined operations: Organisations using DBaaS benefit from automated provisioning, which frees time to focus on strategic business initiatives such as application development and operations. Having accessibility from any device, anywhere, with various platforms and enjoying multi-tenant software and hardware usage makes this an attractive solution. The DBaaS provider will also track, manage and report resource usage, ensuring transparency and optimal efficiency for the organisation. Additionally, businesses are only charged for the resources used.

Cloud and beyond

To achieve economic growth targets, India needs to fast-track its cloud maturity and cloud-enabled technologies journey. Compared to developed countries such as the United States or Singapore, cloud computing in India is still in its nascent stage. While India's technology adoption and digital transformation are improving, cloud computing still has a ways to go. However, BlueWeave Consulting predicts that by 2027, the Indian cloud computing market will expand at a growth rate of 28.1% annually. Given India's favourable business environment, adopting cloud computing can provide a competitive advantage as well as significant economic and social value.

Enterprises are recalibrating their business strategies by following a "digital first" approach, while cloud providers are tailoring solutions to the organisation's complexities by placing data centres in India and offering off-premises services. Indian enterprises are on the path to hyper-accelerated growth, with tremendous support from both the government and cloud service providers, as well as top-tier tech talent.

Teachers should play role of friend, parent

DR **BIJU DHARMAPALAN**

A teacher's job is to equip the students to overcome the travails they face in their later life

There was a time when a teacher was looked upon as a role model by students. Apart from imbibing knowledge, students also copied their teacher's attitude and character in their private life. A teacher is considered at par with God; whatever they deliver is considered divine by the students and the parents. They were the sole provider of knowledge for students. Before the implementation of the Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009, corporal punishment by teachers was never considered a punishable act.

There are instances where parents supported the action of the teachers, for they knew that teachers punish students only for their betterment. Situations have changed recently, and parents consider even compelling a student to learn as a grave crime! If a student commits suicide, authorities make the teacher a culprit, and the media also goes against the teachers. A true teacher should act as a guiding light in the life of students, correcting them when they make mistakes and acting as a philosopher to provide tips to manage the travails in life.

But in today's digital era, the public perception of teachers has changed a lot. They are no longer considered a provider of knowledge. For today's generation, Google and YouTube are the knowledge sources. Even a kindergarten child knows how to use these on a laptop and smartphone. Today's children learn to attain every skill through the internet. They learn foreign languages, learn music and other skills easily using apps available on the internet.

Suppose the purpose of a university is to facilitate the advancement of knowledge and the development of high cognitive skills in the community. In that case, Google can aptly be called a 'Google University'.

In this era of 'Google University', a teacher is considered secondary, mostly to act as an intermediate between humans and machines. For teachers to survive in this new world is challenging, especially for school and college teachers.

Teachers in the earlier generations ranked based on their knowledge in their domain and their attitude. Today if a teacher has to earn respect in the knowledge domain, they need to overpower the 'Google University'. This is a difficult task for many. The attitude of a teacher in the present generation is hard to define. Indian society gives high respect to teachers and the teaching profession. Our tradition considers teachers at par with God, and hence they expect some qualities from a teacher that a student can emulate.

Truthfully speaking, most teachers are just moving with the trends of the society and never try to keep their individuality at the forefront. They try to satisfy the needs of the present generation of students.

> ### IN THIS ERA OF 'GOOGLE UNIVERSITY', A TEACHER IS CONSIDERED SECONDARY, MOSTLY TO ACT AS AN INTERMEDIATE BETWEEN HUMANS AND MACHINES. FOR TEACHERS TO SURVIVE IN THIS NEW WORLD IS CHALLENGING, ESPECIALLY FOR SCHOOL AND COLLEGE TEACHERS

(The author is a science communicator and academic)

Many of today's teachers try to be friends with students to be in their good books and be among them. Partying with students, dancing with them and being with them on social media are new means of impressing students. There are hardly very few students who expect their teachers to be a knowledge repository.

Everyone in our society, be it students or teachers, has become an attention seeker through social media. Seeking attention is the basic human instinct. Toddler seeks attention from their parents; a student seeks attention from their teachers; a teenager from friends of the opposite sex, a professional from their peers; in every sphere of life and every stratum of society, people have become attention seekers.

The quantum of posts available on various social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, or Pixstory is ample proof of this. A teacher being a part of this new digital society is no exception. Teachers dancing with students, partying with students, or even dating students and posting their photos and videos on social media has become a new norm in this new world. Many teachers play appeasement politics with their students for their survival.

Of course, like any other person, a teacher has a professional as well as private life. There is no need to intrude into their private life. That doesn't make sense to have the teacher and student consuming alcohol together or taking a smoke together. There are excellent teachers who have their temptations like any other person. The authorities should check whether the teacher is doing their profession judiciously.

Even though a good teacher should be a friend to a student, they should know where to draw the line. They should know how to keep a distance from students. Too much closeness to students may be misused by some.

Many institutions have put forth a dress code for teachers, driven mainly by the prevailing traditions in that society. The dress code also gives dignity to the profession and helps demarcate teachers from students. Otherwise, it would be tough to identify a young teacher from a student. Imagine how our army men/women would look without proper uniforms.

The unwritten rules and codes of ethics formulated by society are based on the experience our ancestors gained through their experience. The teachers are dealing with students, who are mostly in the age group of adolescents or teenagers. Their brain is fluid and is driven by the temptations caused by body chemicals. Many times the outward behaviour a student expresses is beyond their control. It's the duty of every teacher not to instigate their physiological status to extremes. In a recent affidavit filed by the Kerala University of Health Sciences at the Kerala High Court, it was stated that "absolute freedom on attaining the age of 18 may not be appropriate and good for the society, and maturation is fully accomplished at the age of 25".

In this digital communication world, a teacher must be more cautious in their attitude and behaviour on social media, as their students are constantly monitoring them. In this era, it is the duty of teachers to teach students how to behave on social media and how to tackle crimes associated with it. They should teach students how to use the internet judiciously.

With the emergence of AI technologies, all creative things like writing, drawing, compositions, etc., where human brains need to be used, can be done using the internet within minutes. In this situation, evaluating a student and developing content for teaching is an arduous task for the teachers.

A teacher's job is not only to complete the syllabus or pass examinations but to equip the students to overcome the travails they face in their later life. A good teacher should play the role of a good student, friend and parent. Only if they consider themselves a student will they be curious to learn more from their domain. Similarly, they should be a good friend to students, listening to their concerns. They should also play the role of parents showing empathy and correcting them when they make mistakes.

The problem we face in our education system is that we lack teachers who are passionate about the profession. Many have taken up the job either by accident or by peer pressure.

Teaching is a divine profession, and teachers should show divinity by inculcating the spirit gained from our rich heritage.

Let Youth Succeed

As an emerging economy that aspires to be a leader in the coming years, India needs to give more peace to her youth so that they can reach their full capabilities. Young citizens are the flag-bearers of a nation, and the existing system of education and employment grabs everyone by the throat and pushes them into a never-ending labyrinth of cut-throat competition and stress

C N R Rao, former head of the Scientific Advisory Council to the Prime Minister of India had famously remarked in 2011 that, "India has no system of education, it only has a system of examination."

In a developing country like ours, education is not just a phase of life. It is the key to a golden future, the hard-earned ladder that a poor person wants his/her children to climb, to get up the social order. The privileged amongst us get to go to a school, learn, and envision a world created by geniuses like Tagore, Einstein or Newton, – only to realize by the end of it that we can never exist in such utopia or with the sense of liberty that they could probably experience. The existing system slaps us in the face through the doors of numerous entrance exams.

Come April-May each year, front pages of newspapers display toppers' photographs of various competitive exams, making every kid unlike them feel worthless. The seats for most exams and courses are small compared to the huge population of this nation, and the battle for each seat is fought with blood, sweat, heavy words like 'dedication', 'hard work', 'killer instinct' and of course, pocket-emptying coaching classes. The selected few get famous in their respective localities, glorified in the news, and advertised by every institute. But what about the majority? A youth population of roughly 150 million drowns itself in the ocean of competitive exams of various fields – some for medical and engineering, some for CA or MBA, yet others for further studies and research scholarships, and some for the most 'secured' government jobs.

The same story of numerous coaching institutes and 'toppers' and 'losers' continues. A few succeed, the rest spend precious years of their youth to gear up again. And yet, the hard and harsh truth is pretty logical and simple. Even if all the aspirants put in their cent percent effort and perform in the best manner possible with the best possible luck, it is impossible for everyone to qualify. Yet, students toil day and night, panic shared with their parents, and the enormously shattered ones even decide not to live. India ranks among the top few of those unfortunate countries where student suicides stand at a high rate of around [...] in three years. This rough[...] to one student dying

every hour each day. The recent student suicides in Kota, a prime hub of coaching classes, are a grim reminder of the same.

The question here is not just about letting the youth breathe, but also to ponder upon what we are running towards? Where do we stop and what are we achieving out of it? The statistics put up indeed a sad picture for India. India leads the group of nations that suffers the worst from every-day stress.

According to the recently released World Happiness Report by United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network, India ranks 136 out of 146 countries – which surprisingly makes her stand far behind neighbours like Nepal and Bangladesh. This may not be completely attributed to the system of examinations, but it cannot be denied that in a struggling country like ours, education is a major pathway to enter the workforce. The adult population consists of people who have either formal or informal employment, and while formal employment gives better job security and financial stability, entering it has its own set of struggles.

Most professional courses or government jobs are acquired in our country through competitive exams, some of which stand amongst the toughest in the world (not sure if that is something to be proud of). With the level of rigorous toughness that these entrances demand, ours should invariably be the most successful, happy, and inventive economy. But is that the case? Sadly, enough, we are not even close. Globally, only three Indian Universities have made it to the top 200 universities category as recently reported by the QS World University Rankings, 2023.

Indian research has been reported to be weak, due to the lack of patent culture and funding. Academia has become more of a degree-churning field, where rigidities suffocate the interest and enthusiasm of bright students. This stagnancy is evident as the number of patents filed by a single US firm in India in 2016-17 was more than double of all applications filed by the best laboratories in the country, which includes labs under DRDO, IISc, IITs and six research facilities

under ISRO.

On the Corruption Perception Index, released by Transparency International, India again has a shameful rank of 85 out of 180 countries, which also singles her out as one of the 'worst offenders' in the Asia-Pacific Region. This rank hasn't improved much over the past many years, and it indeed questions the honesty of the bureaucracy, the public-sector and ultimately reflects the corruption amongst the citizens in totality.

This is no indulgence in pitiful self-loathing and condemnation, but it is important to introspect how other countries are apparently happier and successful without subjecting their youth to the kind of strict competition that we have. While a Human Development Index or a Global Hunger Index determines the state of the economy and its governance, it may not be wrong to say that an unhappy, corrupt and stagnant economy that these indices show reflect the qualities of its citizens, which essentially determines their state of mind.

So, what goes wrong? In a homogenous human population, adapting to cut-throat competition translates to striving to be the best amongst all, and treating everyone else as a threat. This is indeed the progenitor to the creation of a community that is selfish, opportunistic, apathetic and insecure.

And thus begins the perpetuation of a society where everyone is running, no one trusts the other, and where losing or winning becomes the defining parameter of life.

We are so busy competing that we are never at peace. And in a country of 1.35 billion people, where 356 million are youth aged between 10 and 24, a large chunk of the population ends up feeling defeated due to the strangulating competition and limited seats. They lose self-esteem and interest in the process and often underestimate themselves by accepting under-employment, and that ultimately leads to the incomplete utilization of the huge human resource capital of this nation.

As Albert Einstein rightly points out, "Unlimited competition leads to a huge waste of labour, and to that the crippling of the social consciousness of individuals."

As an emerging economy that aspires to be a leader in the upcoming years, India needs to give more peace to her youth so that they can reach their full capabilities. Young citizens are the flag-bearers of a nation, and the existing system of education and employment grabs everyone by the throat and pushes them into a never-ending labyrinth of cut-throat competition and stress. After more than 75 years of Independence, the least a country can ensure is to provide a student the opportunity to pursue whatever he or she desires.

The reform in the education policy needs to go beyond the remodelling of UGC. Jobs need to be more readily available, research needs more funding and life needs to get better for each one of us.

Hence, it undoubtedly becomes the need of the hour to prioritize policy-making towards job creation in existing and emerging fields, increasing the seats of existing colleges and establishment of more colleges and universities in both professional and general-degree courses. The capital for this has to be organized with the genuine desire to give youth a better future.

The need for resource allocation for this purpose is more crucial than the immense amount of money that at times goes into unnecessary expenses. In India's unique social situation, a continuation of the present state may even lead to the propagation of hatred and divisiveness between different communities. Such a divided young population inevitably becomes vulnerable to vote bank politics, which further inhibits them in achieving excellence or in imagining themselves as a united force to transform this country.

Policy-making should realize that intense competition ceases to be positive after a point, and ultimately results in a society affected by depression and jealousy. Education cannot be a burden on young minds, instead it should bring a desire to change things and to take charge of the world's problems.

And if that does not happen, we just keep running without getting anywhere. Unless appropriately addressed, the demographic dividend we possess and claim to be proud of becomes less of a precious resource and more of a national liability.

ABHIPSHA RAY

The writer is a Research Scholar, Institute of Health Sciences, Presidency University, Kolkata

शिक्षा में सुधार का संकल्प

जगमोहन सिंह राजपूत

नववर्ष के संकल्पों में सरकार और समाज यह भी संकल्प ले कि शिक्षा क्षेत्र जिन सुधारों की बाट जोह रहा है, उन्हें मूर्त रूप देने में विलंब न किया जाए

एक और साल समापन की ओर है। यह गुजरता साल भी प्रश्न पत्र लीक होने के कलंक से नहीं बच पाया। हाल में ऐसे दो मामले फिर सुखियों में आए। पहला मामला राजस्थान का है। यहां शिक्षक भर्ती परीक्षा का पहला प्रश्न पत्र लीक हो गया। परिणामस्वरूप परीक्षा रद हो गई। अध्यापन प्रशिक्षण की डिग्री लेकर नौकरी के लिए प्रतीक्षारत युवा फिर से निराशा की गर्त में पहुंच गए। दूसरा मामला हिमाचल प्रदेश का है। यहां राज्य कर्मचारी चयन आयोग के एक अधिकारी को परीक्षा से पहले ही हल किया गया प्रश्न पत्र बेचने के लिए गिरफ्तार किया गया। वहां भी परीक्षा रद हो गई। ऐसे मामले केवल दो राज्यों तक सीमित नहीं, किंतु कुछ राज्यों में इसने एक व्यवस्था का रूप ले लिया है। जैसे राजस्थान, जहां मौजूदा सरकार के कार्यकाल में ही दस बार बड़े स्तर पर प्रश्न पत्र लीक हुए हैं। हर बार मुख्यमंत्री अशोक गहलोत वही बात दोहराते हैं कि जांच होगी और

दोषियों को बख्शा नहीं जाएगा, लेकिन इस बार तो उन्होंने यहां तक कह दिया कि दूसरे राज्यों में भी तो ऐसा होता रहता है। निःसंदेह, तथ्यों के आधार पर उनकी बात गलत नहीं, लेकिन ऐसे बयान पीड़ित परीक्षार्थियों की संवेदनाओं पर और तीखा प्रहार करते हैं। इतना संवेदनहीन बयान कुछ और नहीं, बल्कि कार्यसंस्कृति में घोर अकर्मण्यता की सत्तासीनों द्वारा स्वीकार्यता की कहानी ही कहता है।

हाल में ही शिक्षा के मोर्चे पर राजस्थान का कोटा शहर भी गलत कारणों से चर्चा में रहा। प्रतियोगी परीक्षाओं की तैयारी के गढ़ के रूप में स्थापित हो चुके चंबल किनारे बसे इस शहर में कोचिंग सेंटरों की आपसी होड़ में मोहरे बनते छात्रों पर आकांक्षाओं का बोझ उनकी जिंदगी को लील रहा है। इस साल वहां करीब 15 छात्र आत्महत्या कर चुके हैं। इस पर बड़ी चिंता जताई जा रही है। कोचिंग सेंटरों को जवाबदेह बनाने के साथ ही शिक्षा की आदर्श संस्कृति स्थापित करने का जन दबाव बढ़ रहा है, लेकिन राज्य की सरकार को तनिक भी चिंता नहीं लगती। यही कारण है कि संवेदनहीनता के मामले में मुख्यमंत्री गहलोत से एक कदम आगे निकलते हुए राज्य के एक अन्य मंत्री ने कोटा की 'कोचिंग फैक्टरी' को एक झटके में ही क्लीन चिट दे दी कि छात्रों की आत्महत्याओं का कोचिंग से कोई लेनादेना नहीं और ये संस्थान सभी स्थापित दिशानिर्देशों का पालन करते हुए अपना संचालन कर रहे हैं। जबकि सामान्य धारणा यही है कि कोटा में सब कुछ सही नहीं है। वहां जो प्रशिक्षण पद्धति अपनाई जाती है, वह बच्चों के बौद्धिक-मानसिक विकास के लिए उपयुक्त नहीं

है। वह बच्चों पर अनावश्यक दबाव डालकर उन्हें तनाव से ग्रस्त करती है। उसमें त्वरित सुधार की आवश्यकता है।

यह किसी से छिपा नहीं रहा कि कोचिंग संस्थान छात्र को 'सीखने के आनंद' की अनुभूति कराने और उसकी समग्र प्रक्रिया से गुजारने के बजाय केवल 'कम से कम समय' में उत्तर देने का कौशल सिखाने में विश्वास करते हैं। प्रक्रिया से अधिक परिणाम पर उनका ध्यान होता है, क्योंकि जितना बेहतर परिणाम होगा, उतना ही उनका लाभ बढ़ेगा। प्रश्न पत्र लीक के कई मामलों की जब गहन जांच-पड़ताल होती है तो उसमें कोचिंग से जुड़े लोगों के नाम भी अक्सर सामने आते हैं। ऐसे में पर्चा लीक करने वाले माफिया और कोचिंग संचालकों को संदेह का लाभ नहीं दिया जा सकता। अधिक से अधिक परिणाम लाने की उत्कंठा कोचिंग वालों के साथ ही कुछ छात्रों और अभिभावकों को भी अनुचित राह पकड़ने से नहीं रोक पाती। यही कारण है कि प्रश्न पत्र लीक का व्यवसाय लगातार फल-फूल रहा है, लेकिन इसकी कीमत चुकानी पड़ती

अवधेश राजपूत

है परिश्रमी विद्यार्थियों को। ऐसे विद्यार्थी जो कड़ी मेहनत करते हैं और जिनका काफी कुछ दांव पर लगा होता है, वे इस दुरभिसंधि के कारण ठगे रह जाते हैं। कई बार इसकी दुखद परिणति आत्महत्या के रूप में सामने आती है। ऐसे में कोटा में बढ़ रहे आत्महत्या के सिलसिले को इससे अलग करके नहीं देखा जा सकता।

इनके अतिरिक्त नकल माफिया ने भी शिक्षा जैसे पवित्र क्षेत्र को कलंकित करने का काम किया है। आखिर यह नकल माफिया कौन चलाता है? कौन सहयोग देता है? उसके संबंध कहां तक जुड़े हैं? उसकी पहुंच कहां तक है? ऐसे तमाम सवालों के जवाब सार्वजनिक दायरे में होते हैं, लेकिन सरकारें इनसे बेखबर या आंखें मूंदे रहती हैं। मध्य प्रदेश का व्यापम घोटाला इसका एक उदाहरण है। ऐसे माफिया की नेटवर्किंग क्षमता की मिसाल दर्शाती है यह शिक्षा माफिया शासन-प्रशासन में प्रत्येक स्तर तक तिकड़म भिड़ाने में माहिर होता है। इसका भयावह परिणाम लाखों मेधावी छात्रों को भुगतना पड़ता है, जिनके स्थान पर अपात्र लोग

चुनकर आ जाते हैं। ऐसे तमाम मेधावियों की पारिवारिक पृष्ठभूमि अत्यंत सामान्य होती है। उनके अभिभावक किसी प्रकार संसाधन जुटाकर उनके सपनों में रंग भरने के लिए हरसंभव प्रयास करते हैं, तो ये छात्र भी अपनी ओर से कोई कोर-कसर शेष नहीं रखते, लेकिन पर्चा लीक होने या नकल माफिया की सांठगांठ के आगे परास्त हो जाते हैं। ऐसे में उनमें और उनके अभिभावकों में तनाव बढ़ना बहुत स्वाभाविक है।

वास्तव में कोचिंग संस्थानों पर अभिभावकों की बढ़ती निर्भरता और युवाओं की उस प्रक्रिया से गुजरने की मजबूरी संस्थागत शिक्षा पद्धति की सर्वविदित असफलता का प्रकटीकरण है। सरकारी स्कूलों में नियमित अध्यापकों की कमी, शिथिल कार्यसंस्कृति, अध्यापकों के चयन में बंगाल जैसे अनैतिक घोटाले, शिक्षित माता-पिता का अपनी इच्छाओं की पूर्ति के लिए बच्चों को किसी व्यवसाय विशेष में जबरदस्ती भेजना और बच्चों की इच्छा को किनारे कर कोटा जैसी 'कड़ाही' से गुजरने को मजबूर करना उचित नहीं कहा जा सकता। इससे न केवल बच्चों की नैसर्गिक प्रतिभा नष्ट होती है, अपितु वे कुंठित भी होते जाते हैं। यह उनके समग्र विकास में बाधक बनता है, जिसके नतीजे अक्सर आत्मघाती होते हैं। ऐसे में नववर्ष पर लेने वाले संकल्पों में सरकार और समाज का एक संकल्प यह भी होना चाहिए कि शिक्षा क्षेत्र जिन सुधारों की बाट जोह रहा है, उनको मूर्त रूप देने में अब विलंब न किया जाए।

Vishwaguru

It is an infallible idea that encompasses everything from marketing to manliness

PRATAP BHANU MEHTA

THE IDEA OF a "Vishwaguru" is a new addition to the Indian political lexicon. It defines a lofty ambition, a call to lift India above itself, and be a beacon to the world. The highest offices in the land, from the President to the Prime Minister, promote it with gusto. If you were ever confused by the question, "What are India's aspirations?" help is at hand. Think of India as a Vishwaguru. All your doubts will melt away. It is the cure for an enervated soul, a healing balm for a wounded world. But how do we imagine India as a "Vishwaguru"? What tasks does it set before us? It is a beautiful concept that is imagined by our leaders in so many different ways.

Vishwagurus aspire to be teachers to the world. They point to the true spring of LIFE. You might think the idea of the Vishwaguru is simply MARKETING. But this is unfair. There is the pedantic point that no one ever became Vishwaguru without marketing. It is the genius of communication. But it is much more. Slogans stick in people's minds. They make the world familiar, and subconsciously motivate and inspire. Like a MANTRA, the incantation itself will have magical effects. We will become who we chant, if we chant it often and sincerely enough. It is the power of more than a billion Indians chanting the same thing in unison.

They do this in many ways. Vishwaguru signifies the comforting warmth of the MOTHERLAND. India that is Bharat is sacred territory. The territory itself washes off all sins. This is a signifier of purity; mere contact with it gets you redemption. Vishwaguru signifies the MOTHER. It is associated with natality. Much that is good in the world was already born here. It is an already accomplished fact. India is the mother of all democracies, the mother of all science, the mother of all ecology, the mother of all inventions, and the mother of all spirituality. Merely retrieving or acknowledging achievements in these areas is not enough; India has to be the mother if she is to be the Vishwaguru. No origin story, no title for the Vishwaguru.

If this maternal mode does not satisfy you, you can think of the Vishwaguru in the more itinerant mode. This is the land of MENDI-

> The Vishwaguru imperiously walks on the world stage. It stares down every external challenger, hunts down every internal enemy. But these are the more exalted ideals. The Vishwaguru is also MATERIAL power, the factory of the world, a leader in manufacturing, the self-sufficient powerhouse in defence production, the land of abundance and overflowing jobs that the rest of the world will envy and covet.

CANTS — those selfless purveyors of knowledge, the gurus to the world who, discarding all possessions and ego, go forth and transform people's souls. They give you a glimpse of the union of *atman* and Brahman. They free you from the bondage of desire, setting you on the path of true liberation. They provide glimpses of a life of service. They spread knowledge. India is the Vishwaguru because it is saintly. True, sometimes mendicants are known more for their MENDACITY than saintliness — all the new age gurus that have spread spirituality across the world. But that mendacity also has its uses: It points to an alternative world, a yoga in a different register.

The Vishwaguru, at its most useful, is a MEDIATOR. The world is wracked with conflicts: Russia versus the West, North versus South. The Vishwaguru is above all conflict, and is therefore the ideal mediator, the non-aligned that aligns the world, the swing state that stabilises it, the bridging power that unites it. Its own conflicts don't need mediators, since the Vishwaguru is mediation itself. In a world wracked by great power hypocrisy, the mediator stands for the common good.

But if all this is too spiritual for you, the Vishwaguru has much else to offer. It can offer a new vision of MANLINESS. As Aurobindo put it in his less enlightened phase, we shall show ourselves "to the nations as a people with a great past and ancient civilisation, who still possess the genius and character of their forefathers, have still something to give the world, and therefore deserve freedom — by proof of our MANLINESS and fitness, not mendicancy." Never mind that Aurobindo, probably wisely, renounced manliness for mendicancy. But the ideal of manliness endures, now made vivid by a leader who personifies it.

The Vishwaguru imperiously walks on the world stage. It stares down every external challenger, hunts down every internal enemy. But these are the more exalted ideals. The Vishwaguru is also MATERIAL power, the factory of the world, a leader in manufacturing, the self-sufficient powerhouse in defence production, the land of abundance and overflowing jobs that the rest of the world will

envy and covet.

The Vishwaguru is MODERNITY itself, the top of every index of development, cutting edge on every future trend. The Vishwaguru is the idea of the MARVELLOUS itself, India as an ethereally sublime experience that leaves you shaking your head and leaves you speechless. It is truly Incredible India, a riot of colour and culture like no other. Everything about it, its politics, its social idioms, defy classification. It is one of a kind. Behold the wonder.

I would not underestimate the power of the Vishwaguru. God knows humanity needs someone to claim that mantle to help it overcome the epidemic of collective narcissism that is sweeping the world. Someone needs to infuse a world wrecked with crony capitalism, dysfunctional nation-state forms, great concentration of power, ethnic tensions, territorial obsessions, ecological catastrophe, with new wisdom, bold new ideas and a track record of impeccable execution. The ideal of the Vishwaguru is exactly what we need: The spiritual, the material, the historical, the aesthetic and the political all rolled into one. Maybe it will help us rise above ourselves.

And while we are moved by the idea of the Vishwaguru, please make sure you do not commit a grammatical mistake. The philosopher Arindam Chakrabarti tells the story of the great saint Sitaramdas Omkarnath of the Ramanuja Sampradaya, who once gently reprimanded someone for using the epithet "Vishwaguru" to signify the teacher of the world. He turned around and pointed out that syntactically, Vishwaguru need not mean the teacher of the world. It is the one who thinks the whole world is my teacher (*jo vishwa ka guru mane*). But how dare Bhartahari's descendants, even liberated souls like Saint Omkarnath, come up with this interpretation? Its political corollary is deeply disturbing. For it implies not an India bringing enlightenment to a benighted world. But India being the place where anyone and everyone can freely feel at home.

The writer is contributing editor,
The Indian Express

IE 31/10