

REIMAGINING INDIAN UNIVERSITIES

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Editorial

Weekly E- Essay Series of Scholarly Articles on Reimagining Indian Universities

It is aptly said that there is no such thing as a coincidence and everything happens for a reason. Little did we imagine when we finally zeroed in on the title, 'Reimagining Indian Universities' just a couple of months ago, that the world would take such a sudden somersault with the attack of COVID-19 pandemic. The world as we knew it, has changed forever in the past few weeks. And the universities too! Perhaps, this is why it is the best time for the Association of Indian Universities to come out with book 'Reimagining Indian Universities' containing essays on the much needed change required in the field of higher education by the most experienced and renowned scholars in the country.

It is a pride as well as pleasure to bring it on board that AIU which is in its 95th Year is continuing all its activities with increased vibrancy and exuberance and is taking initiatives to make Indian Higher Education system more progressive and relevant. One of the key annual activities of the AIU is to convene the Vice Chancellors' Meets at Zonal and National level to discuss various issues related to higher education. These Meets are important platforms not only to discuss the significant issues of higher education but they also play a catalytic role in carrying the voice of the leaders of higher education to appropriate authorities. Themes to be discussed during these Meets are identified with a lot of care, ensuring that they are of contemporary significance and relevance, and the deliberations and recommendations of the Meet are useful for steering Indian higher education towards future orientation.

With the accelerating changes in the rate of information technology and disruptions rooted out from innovations in science, technology, economy etc., faster and more profound changes are taking place in social and cultural milieu. This has necessitated the higher education system to keep track of emerging trends and support the preparation of students for life in the unexpected future realities. The universities therefore, ought to be futuristic and should function with the mission to prepare students for an unknown future in which the rules of the game will have changed. Simultaneously, it ought to be preservative of the traditional knowledge and skill base, values, virtues

and customs. In view of this, AIU, as a flagship body felt the need to gear and steer the Indian universities towards becoming more responsive to the present and future demands of higher education. It is in this context that the theme 'Reimagining Indian Universities' was chosen for discussion in this year's Annual Meet of AIU which was to be held from 23-25 March, 2020. We were poised to hold the Annual Meet and also release the title on 'Reimagining Indian Universities' containing a collection of the modalities and strategies for reimagining Indian universities obtained from eminent scholars and experts of the field to transform the Indian Universities into future ready institutions equipped to respond to the emerging needs of higher education. But the lockdown caused due to COVID-19, paused the Meet for an uncertain period of time so neither we are in a position to come out and hold the Annual Meet nor publish the said book for the time being.

As Albert Einstein said, "we cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them". Moreover, since change is the essence of life and necessity is what brings about innovation, this situation too has compelled us to solve the problem differently. We are indeed very fortunate to have been born in this period of time when Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has come as a panacea for many problems we are facing today. Making best use of ICT, we have started a 'Weekly Essay Series' on our website where we shall release select the essays of book 'Reimagining Indian Universities' one by one every week. The series is being initiated with the Essay of Prof Bhushan Patwardhan, Vice Chairman, University Grants Commission, India.

Hope you cherish the idea of being able to access these brilliant pieces on our website, which is part of the change we seek to bring about in this day and age of COVID-19 for making information available to all!

The essays written by eminent authorities and distinguished experts in a broad range of fields cover a variety of topics pertinent to Reimagining Indian Universities. Each essay is unique and comprises the words and opinions of the author.

We've found these essays to be enlightening and inspirational. We hope you do as well !

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