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Evolving the Concept of Sahaaya Mitra for Solving Issues in Society through Higher Education Institutions with the Help of Probable National Accreditation Council Parameters

Devender Kawday*

In our Bharat, there are around 56205 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) (as per AISHE 2020-21) spread across 748 districts in 29 states and 7 Union Territories catering to around 4.14 Crore of students and 15.5 Lakh teachers. As per the National Education Policy (NEP), every HEI has to come for Assessment and Accreditation (A&A) process for quality up-gradation, accordingly, related policy formulation is going on. If we can implement the concept of “*Solving issues in Society with the help of HEIs*” it will be a great contribution towards creating *Viksit Bharat* by 2047 by bringing a revolution in the country benefitting the institution, students, stakeholders of HEI, and society.

Suggestive aspects can be one of the essential parameters in NAC’s A&A process. Thus, in this way, HEI will be forced to take a concrete step in the direction of social welfare measures by hook or crook, thus benefitting the society at large. In order to make such things possible, the help of Sahaaya Mitra can be taken.

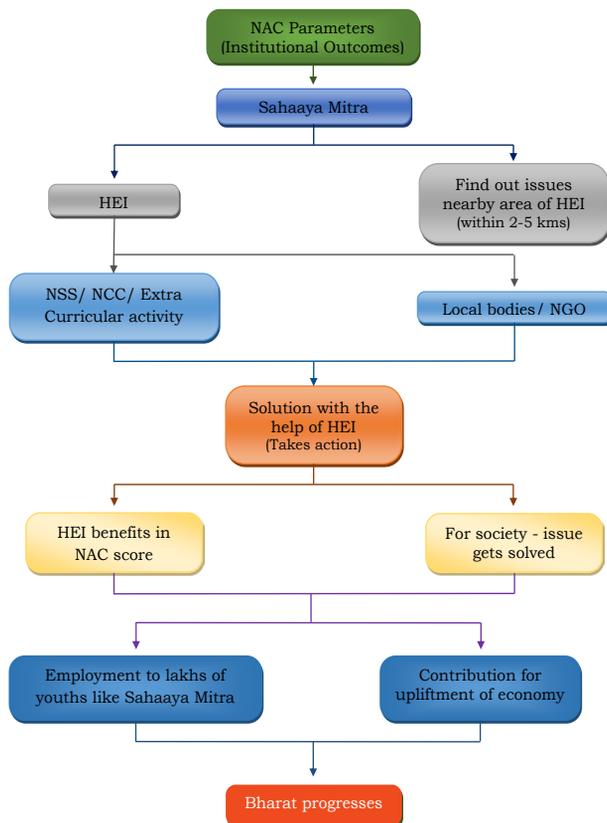
Sahaaya Mitra will be a friendly person (a youngster) to help the stakeholders to get the issue resolved. He will be a mediator between the HEI and society. Sahaaya Mitra can be *ad hoc* contributory, part-time, full-time, etc. Even NGOs, philanthropists, corporate houses, and cooperative societies can also play the role of Sahaaya Mitra (Figure 1).

Role of Sahaaya Mitra

- Sahaaya Mitra must find out issues in society daily and convey them to HEIs. There can be various issues on which Sahaaya Mitra can focus, for example; issues related to pollution, plastic carry bags, beggars, wastage of water, medicinal issues, eye, and mental-related diseases in children, mobilization and unemployment, electricity overconsumption, over-usage of plastic disposable plates and glasses, throwing garbage into sewages and blocking them, over usage of papers, fuel over consumption, power cut problems, unnecessary road repairs, temporary floods, drug addiction to college students etc.
- Whereas, rural problems like lack of support to farmers, lack of technology-based work, transport and communication issues, lack of quality in educational institutions, etc.

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Fig-1: Pictorial Depiction of Sahaya Mitra



- Sahaaya Mitra will follow up with HEI till the respective issue is solved.

Role of HEI

- After receiving the information from Sahaaya Mitra, HEI will place the same in front of the Committee (NSS/ NCC/ Extra Curricular activity, etc. to analyze it. HEI with the help of Committee members including students and in collaboration with the local bodies, will take the initiative to solve the issues.
- HEI will get a credit score for taking action against issues and solving them, after submitting the necessary document while applying for A&A process of NAC.
- HEI will become a model for other institutions and society.
- Students will be influenced to do such healthy social work.

- HEI may think about some innovative ways to solve the issues in society with the help of its research and innovation cells.

Benefits to Society

- If one HEI solves 4-5 issues a month, then the number of solved issues may be around 60 per year.
- If at least 30% of the institutions in India join this work, then thousands of issues may be solved per year nationwide without much exertion.
- Rural areas can be elevated because of HEI's interference.
- Brain drain will be minimised.
- Boost to cottage industry and inclusive development.

NAC's Perspective

- The National Accreditation Council (NAC) very soon will be engaged in conducting accreditation of Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) such as colleges, universities, or other recognized institutions on the basis of defined criteria/ parameters. HEIs would seek accreditation during the course of major transformative stages. NAC functioning through its parameters will remain resilient, adaptive, and agile. This will entail the design of a novel generic accreditation framework focusing on outcomes considering the factor of diversity in HEIs. One of the major outcomes of the HEI may be called Institutional outcome considering into account the regional diversity and geographical conditions of remote areas local relevance etc. Here an Institutional outcome means the contribution of the HEI in resolving the issues in the society directly or indirectly.
- There is a firm belief that HEI's existence is for the welfare and well-being of society. Thus, there is a need to derive such parameters that extract the deeds from the Institution for the welfare of the society.
- Considering this initiative, NAC's A&A process will result in the upliftment of society, which will further help in the progress of our Bharat. □

Pioneering National Reconstruction: Swami Vivekananda as a Modernist and More[#]

K Paddayya*

The achievements and contributions of some institutions and personalities so overwhelm our minds that we are prompted to say that their names will be etched in golden letters in the annals of history. But in history's long and crowded rush of events and happenings, these names sometimes recede into the background. Surely, quirks of history are such that situations arise sooner or later when society keenly feels the need to bring these institutions and personalities back to the surface and reassess their relevance in the contemporary context. Swami Vivekananda happily belongs to this rare category. We pay our homage to him on the occasion of his 161st birth anniversary.

Narendranath Datta a disciple of Swami Ramakrishna Paramhansa became popular as Swami Vivekananda. Swami Vivekananda's story is too well known to need any elaborate account. He showed his inclination towards spirituality and meditation from his childhood. His childhood was already marked by a contemplative and spiritual bent of mind. While he spent his high school and college years obtaining a firm grasp of European learning comprising philosophy, logic, history and civilizations, sciences, and English literature, his persistent queries about God led him to Brahma Samaj and Sri Ramakrishna. His direct question "Have you seen God?" to Sri Ramakrishna elicited the mind-changing answer: "Yes, I see him as I see you, only in an infinitely intense sense". The five-year-long and 'blow hot, blow cold' apprenticeship of Vivekananda finally ended in his total surrender to the master's extraordinary spiritual powers. And, shortly before his death, Sri Ramakrishna anointed Vivekananda with a mission for life: "Today I have given you my all and have become a Fakir. By the force of the power transmitted by me, great things will be done by you; only after that you will go to whence you came".

We are familiar with the resounding success with which Vivekananda accomplished, in a short

[#]The Article is being published to commemorate the 161th Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda on January 12, 2024.

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span of fifteen years, the mission of spreading his mentor's message of the godliness of man; his ability to realize the divinity embedded in himself; serving man is but serving God himself; universal love and equality of faiths; and conception of God as a formless entity or as *atman* or pure self or as personal God, as according to the nature of one's mental dispositions. His magnetic personality, sound knowledge of the Indian and Western streams of thought, and powerful communication skills swayed large gatherings of people both within India and in North America and Europe. Vivekananda emerged as a tall world-class spiritual leader. His mission had a second and practical component which was geared toward the upliftment of the poor and downtrodden in India.

The Ramakrishna Mission which Vivekananda established in 1897 emerged as a worldwide institution. Over the last century and a quarter, the Mission and its numerous branches played a significant role both in spreading India's ancient wisdom and in bringing about improvements in the conditions of less fortunate sections of society. This laudable work continues unabated. The Institute of Culture was established in 1936 as an adjunct to the Mission for educational purposes. The Institute published three volumes of *The Cultural Heritage of India* in 1936 on the occasion of the birth centenary of Sri Ramakrishna. It elaborated the series and published six volumes between 1958 and 1986. These contain chapters on almost every aspect of ancient Indian thought, culture, and science. Written by over one hundred senior Indian scholars, these essays present a true "panorama of the cultural history of India". These volumes still serve as a veritable mine of information for both teaching and research purposes.

In October (2023) this year I was invited as a guest to participate in the convocation ceremony of the Institute of Culture and this occasion enabled me to gain a more complete understanding of its work as a vibrant educational institution. I was very happy to learn that it runs more than a dozen introductory courses in Indian and foreign languages. Its short-term courses on ancient India

include Indian philosophy, Indology, Functional Sanskrit, and the Ramakrishna Vivekananda movement. Vivekananda's vision of the spiritual unity of mankind is laudably reflected in the course on a comparative study of the world's religions and the UNESCO-approved course on International Understanding for Human Unity. Praiseworthy too are the scholarly gatherings (seminars, meetings, and lectures) that the Institute organizes periodically and the proceedings are promptly put out in print for use by a wider circle of people.

This interaction with the Institute obliged me to strengthen my layman's understanding of Vivekananda's thought and work by reading some of his writings and works written about him. The literature is vast. My readings are limited to *Selections from the Complete Works of Vivekananda* (Swami Vivekananda 2007) and *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* in nine volumes (2022-2023); and some general works such as *The Life of Swami Vivekananda* by his Eastern and Western Disciples published by Advaita Ashrama (2023), *Swami Vivekananda Centenary Volume* (edited by Majumdar 1963), *India's Contribution to World Thought and Culture* (edited by Lokesh Chandra et al. 1970), *Swami Vivekananda: The Prophet of India* (edited by Jayaraman 2004), and Banhatti's book *Life and Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda* (1995).

There are many estimates of Vivekananda as a Vedantist, monk, nationalist, writer, reformer, educator, art critic, etc. Still, my fresh admiration for him entices me to say that there is a clear need to revisit both his reinterpretation of our spiritual legacy and his views about social upliftment in the context of the unsettled nature of contemporary times. In the following pages, I propose to first examine briefly the overall context of the rise of the Vivekananda movement. We shall then consider his reformulation of Vedantic thought and his views about social reformation. We shall conclude with some observations about their relevance in the contemporary context.

Crises of Spirit

The human story, which Pandit Nehru admiringly called "the astonishing adventure of man", is long and punctuated with many highs and lows. The latter include recurrent crises of spirit. Crusades and Reformation are well known in European history. In India we have examples of the rise of Buddhism and Jainism, Sankaracharya's

Advaitic movement, and the emergence of Hindu and Sufi saints in medieval India such as Dnyaneshwar, Tukaram and Kabir.

Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan's Spalding Professorship inaugural lecture titled "World's Unborn Soul" delivered at Oxford University in 1936 was devoted to one such crisis of spirit in modern history. Radhakrishnan says that the rise of Buddhism and other faiths in ancient Asia and the transition from the ancient to the medieval period and from the latter to the modern period in Europe were free from any high degree of tension and anxiety. In contrast to this, the modern period suffers from a lack of maturity of spiritual experience arising from colonial hangovers and the rise of affluence and materialism. To put it in his own words: "In the souls of men today, there are clashing ideas of colour and race, nation and religion which create antagonisms and clashes, myths and dreams that divide the society into hostile groups" (Radhakrishnan 1969: 384).

Radhakrishnan was an unrepentant humanist and bridge-builder. Combining elements drawn from Sankara's *Advaitic* thought and the absolute idealism of the West, he formulated Neo-Vedantic thought which underscores the primacy of spiritual life, the universality of man and his values, and common threads of all faiths. He concluded his lecture by stating that "Humanity's ultimate realization of itself and the world can be attained only by an ever-increasing liberation of values that are universal and human... what we require... is the power of spirits in the hearts of men, a power which will help us to discipline our passions of greed and selfishness and organize the world which is at one with us in desire" (1969: 412). Radhakrishnan toned down the ascetic or philosophical orientation of Sankara's Advaita and his conception of Brahman underscored the divine element in man and wanted people to free the Divine from all its appended objectifications and anthropomorphic attributes. (Surprisingly, he did not mention that Vivekananda had made a similar attempt more than four decades earlier.) He developed these ideas further in *Religion and Society* (1947), *Recovery of Faith* (1955), *Religion in a Changing World* (1967) and other works.

Parliament of World Religions in Chicago city in 1893, which catapulted Vivekananda from the level of an ordinary monk to the status of an outstanding spiritual leader of the world, was held in response to a crisis of spirit similar to what

Radhakrishnan referred to in his lecture. This global congregation of religious faiths was conceived as a spiritual complement to the World Columbia exhibition showcasing the material advances of modern civilization. It was the brainchild of the Swedenborgian (a Uniformitarian) layman (and he was a judge) Charles Carrol Bonney and was held against the background of the rising multiplication of divisions and sects within the world's major religions and loss of perspective about the larger goal of the institution called religion. This was the first-ever organized gathering of the world's religions and was aimed at promoting interfaith dialogue.

The Chicago congress was attended by invited delegates from India representing Buddhism, Jainism, Brahmo Samaj, Prarthana Samaj, and Theosophical Society. Hinduism went unnoticed and Vivekananda attended it as a penniless monk and uninvited participant. But he championed the cause of Hinduism as a "warrior monk", as Sister Nivedita later put it, and captured the unequalled attention of the audience comprising over 7000 people. He spoke in the Parliament on six different days (Swami Vivekananda 2007: 1-18). On the first day, he drew the attention of delegates to the pervasive influence of sectarianism and fanaticism, and reminded them how these unworthy feelings besmirched the story of human civilization. He hoped that this congress would sound the death knell of these negative attributes of the human mind by calling attention to the common threads that run through all religions. He quoted Bhagavadgita to emphasize that all religions finally lead to the same goal of god realization.

Vivekananda gave a full lecture on Hinduism on the third day (19 September 1893). It is this address which is most often cited in India. He called the latest discoveries of science more echoes of Vedanta philosophy. He put forward its major tenets as follows:

- a) Unity of existence;
- b) Creation without a beginning and an end;
- c) God as a creative force, formless and everywhere, "By whose command the wind blows, the fire burns, the clouds rain, and death stalks upon the earth" (*Ibid.*:8). [Here we are reminded of Spinoza's concept of *Natura naturans*, Einstein's (1956: 34-5) notion of cosmic religion, and the Sioux (American Indian tribe) idea of Wakan. 'Spiritual without being religious' is an ongoing movement in America (Miller 2018).]

- d) Man's ability to achieve divinity by realizing the godliness in himself

Referring to idolatry which is common in India but invited much derision from the West, he clarified that "the images, crosses, and crescents are simply so many symbols—so many pegs— to hang the spiritual ideas on ... the attempt of undeveloped minds to grasp high spiritual truths" (Swami Vivekananda 2007: 13). Recognizing that "Unity in variety is the plan of nature", he said that the Hindus knew it long ago in the realm of religion. In his own words: "... To him, (Hindu) all the religions, from the lowest fetishism to the highest absolutism, mean so many attempts of the human soul to grasp and realize the Infinite, each determined by the conditions of its birth and associations, and each of these marks a stage of progress..." (*Ibid.*: 12). So Vivekananda concluded his lecture by calling upon the followers of different religions to assimilate the spirit of other religions while preserving their individualities. He ended with the cry words: "Help and not Fight", "Assimilation and not Destruction", and "Harmony and Peace and not Dissension" (*Ibid.*: 18).

We are familiar with the flurry of Swamiji's activities that followed the Chicago event – a large number of lectures discourses and interactions at different places in North America and Europe for four years; return to India in 1897 and enthusiastic reception at different places; founding of the Ramakrishna Mission; second round of peregrinations and discourses across the country; establishment of the Advaita Ashram at Mayavati in the Himalayas; second visit to America and Europe; return in 1900 and a third round of visits and discourses in the country. Vivekananda's interests and energies were hurricane-like and he was able to accomplish in 15 years what would otherwise have required 50 years. Full details of this series of events are provided in the two volumes of *The Life of Swami Vivekananda* authored by his Indian and Western disciples (2023). Endowed as he was with razor-sharp powers of understanding, discrimination, and judgment, he used the experiences arising from his visits and interactions with people within the land and outside to arrive at his panacea for elevating the spiritual and material well-being of people.

My understanding is that Swami Vivekananda's programme for the resurgence of spirit was a judicious combination of elements drawn from various sources. While he was deeply influenced

by his mentor Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual experiences, he was aware of their overall mystic nature and recognized the need to place them in a larger conceptual or philosophical context and render them approachable to the people at large. Likewise, he was surely drawn to Brahmo Samaj's call for reforms in Indian society but rejected the West-influenced notion of total displacement of the existing framework; instead, he pleaded for building further from the older civilizational foundations. Vivekananda was well-read into the history, thought systems, and philosophy of the West and accepted the relevance of science and technology for bringing about material improvements in Indian society.

As concerns changed in the spiritual realm, he saw no need for help from outside but located a rich indigenous source in Vedanta philosophy. And, as we shall note below, he showed his stroke of originality by shrewdly reconciling conflicting notions about reality or Brahman and coming up with the concept of Practical Vedanta or Vedanta for all. It is equally important to note that his numerous visits within and outside the country and interactions with various groups made him realize that the materialistic and affluence-filled Western society needed a spiritual upliftment, while the Indians themselves required first and foremost better living conditions and freeing of mind from superstitions and age-old social frigidities before being introduced to philosophical doctrines. Accordingly, he formulated a two-pronged missionary programme: a) spiritual regeneration with the scope of universal application and b) social reformation aimed at improving a lot of the poor and downtrodden in India. Vivekananda thus simultaneously played the roles of a modernizer of India's spiritual thought and a forerunner of national reconstruction.

Vivekananda as a Modernizer of Advaita

Vivekananda modernized Vedantic thought by reimagining it. This arose from his fresh reading of the Vedas, Upanishads, and Bhagavadgita (for a lucid account, see Chatterjee 1963). Vivekananda's originality lies in *samanvaya* or reconciliation of the disputations about Brahman or Reality between Sankara's Advaita or monism, dualism or Dvaita and Visistadvaita. For this, he took a cue from his mentor Ramakrishna's spiritual realizations. As we have noted earlier, Ramakrishna held that a *jnani* or person of philosophical bent of mind considers Brahman as formless and nameless; it is the *atman* or pure

self for the *yogi* or meditative person; it is personal God for the believing devotee. All these are valid characterizations of Reality and are meant for people with varying levels of familiarity with philosophy and religion. Again, like Ramakrishna, he saw God in all items, animate and inanimate, and rich and poor. He went further and stated that Jnana, Karma, and Bhakti paths are complementary and not conflicting approaches for reaching Brahman, according to one's mental predicaments and achievements. He goes still further and says that one may be adopting these approaches even on a single day, as governed by the nature of activities he is engaged in. He held that an approach that is equally philosophical, emotional, and conducive to action would be acceptable to all minds. Belief in the unity of existence, the presence of God everywhere, respect, not merely tolerance, for other belief systems, and belief in one's abilities to accomplish a task are the other components of his reimagined Vedanta or universal religion.

Vivekananda formulated these propositions as mere guidelines and warned that these were not to be construed as a new sect. He called these ideas Practical Vedanta (Swami Vivekananda 2022-2023, Volume 2: 285-350). He believed that these would be particularly helpful to the society in the West where materialism had already taken a heavy toll on human minds. True to his anticipation, his message was widely and enthusiastically received. Commenting on its wide impact, the poetess Wilcox writes: "He gave the message that strengthened the man of business, that caused the frivolous society woman to pause and think; that gave the artist new aspirations; that imbued the wife and mother, the husband and father, with a larger and holier comprehension of duty" (as cited by Banhatti 1995: 105).

Allowing a small digression, as an archaeologist I am glad to say that the final message coming from human sciences like history, anthropology, and archaeology, more particularly the study of man's prehistoric prelude, is in full consonance with Vivekananda's reformulations of Vedanta. The celebrated Australia-born archaeologist Gordon Childe, the theoretician *par excellence* of modern archaeology, wrote that archaeology persuades one to "think more clearly and act more humanly" (1956: 127). The Cambridge prehistorian Sir Grahame Clark (1965: 251-64) noted that archaeology promotes solidarity and integration among peoples of the world by revealing their common roots and traditions. My

teacher late Professor H.D. Sankalia, the doyen of twentieth-century Indian archaeology, wrote that in prehistory “There is no room for any parochialism or bias for any particular country. One truly becomes a citizen of the world and begins to realize its oneness” (1977: 2).

Vivekananda and the Indian Situation

Vivekananda was well aware of India’s fame as a land of gentleness and generosity. He recognized too the overwhelmingly spiritual or philosophical orientation of the Indian mind derived from centuries-old traditions. He knew also that even common or non-literate people, while they may go to the temple and routinely worship one or more images of divinities, actually view God as a supreme, formless force. As a school-going boy long ago, I was a witness to an event when the simple-minded village priest, totally irked by the persistent queries put up by a high-school student about the existence of God, briskly led him out into the open, pointed to the sky above and said it was all divine. I also have before me the vivid picture of my father (a non-literate small farmer) who would every morning do for some minutes worship before a framed picture of Ram and then come out in the open with *prasad* to offer it first to the unseen and unknown divinity above. Implicit in these acts is the belief in God as a supreme force. This is Vedanta in practice.

This is not to say that Vivekananda felt that Indians did not need his new Vedanta. Contrary to it, he wanted or desired Indians to adopt these principles in practice to elevate their minds by avoiding the evils of materialism and rising from their world of follies such as intolerance, selfishness, obsession with rituals, jealousy, and hatred of outsiders.

The more important component of Vivekananda’s India programme concerns the promotion of the material welfare of people. The tone of the various letters which he sent from America after the Chicago event to his disciples and others in India (Swami Vivekananda 2007: 504-48), the lectures and addresses he gave after return to India (*Ibid.*: 175-302) and his conversations with disciples at Belur Math (*Ibid.*: 419- 63) tells us much about the deep feelings of empathy that erupted in his mind towards the sufferings and miseries of people, aversion to frigidities and inequities of the Indian society and his eagerness to deal with them. Here Vivekananda was presaging

or anticipating ideas which may be viewed as part of the postmodernist trend in a general sense of the word. Like Gandhi and Nehru, he saw India not as an anthropomorphic entity but as a land filled with people, and for him, their well-being mattered most. He unwittingly assumes the role of a social reformer.

Let us briefly examine his views about the ills plaguing Indian society and his answers for remedying the situation. To him, Indian society is like a ship that has been on a cruise for many centuries and developed many holes in it. Writing in 1894 to Margaret Noble (later Sister Nivedita) he warns about the “harsh truths” she would face during her proposed visit to India: “You cannot form any idea of the misery, the superstition and the slavery that are here. You will be in the midst of a mass of half-naked men and women with quaint ideas of caste and isolation. ...” (*Ibid.*: 533). In a letter to Maharaja of Mysore sent in the same year, he pleads with him to “feel intensely for the suffering millions of India sunk in ignorance” (*Ibid.*: 510). In another place, he views India as a country occupied by “hundreds of men who are bundles of superstitions and selfishness and whose one aim in life seems to be like that of the dog in the manger” (*Ibid.*: 511). On some other occasion, he calls it “the birthplace of disease, sorrow, and affliction, where men are emaciated through starvation, and weak in mind” (*Ibid.*: 426).

Talking about the factors that led to this dismal situation, Vivekananda says that foreign rule, self-imposed insulation of mind from the outside world, and priest-power made people forget that they were worthy human beings; Mindless superstitions, intolerance, blind beliefs, and unnecessary fretting and fuming became order of the day. The caste system privileged certain groups and suppressed the lower classes. Disdain for material comforts and the prohibition of meat eating made society weak and an easy target for outside powers.

Vivekananda says that the earlier proposals (e.g. Brahma Samaj?) for social reconstruction did not leave behind significant results because these were based on “inconsiderate imitations of Western means and method of work” and also because these indulged in total denunciation of the existing framework of the Indian society. His pragmatism comes to the fore when he, while granting that “our people are on the whole most godly, and our institutions are, in their plan and purpose, best suited

to make mankind happy,” emphasizes the need for change and that this change was not from bad to good nor from error to truth but one from good to better and from truth to higher truth. It was this message or task of bringing about societal transformation based on national lines that he entrusted to his band of young disciples (Swami Vivekananda 2022-2023, Volume 4: 362-365, 397-406, 436-477).

Elaborate accounts are available about the scope and methodology of Vivekananda’s programme of social regeneration (e.g. Swami Vivekananda 2022-2023, Volume 4; 485-492; Chowdhury 1963; Banhatti 1995: 222-297). One thing that could be said unhesitatingly is that he was far ahead of his times and was already envisaging social development plans which the governments at state and national levels began to initiate after independence. Reference to a few of the measures proposed by him will suffice to reveal the broad scope of his mission and his burning desire to improve the material and moral well-being of people. Saddened by his experiences of people suffering from poverty, starvation, and disease, he felt that “some sort of materialism, toned down to our requirements” was called for. So, he called upon his followers to spread to the countryside and persuade people to give up their idling-away attitude and instead engage themselves in trade, commerce, and agriculture. He desired people to acquire organizing powers that would enable them to bring the best results out of the smallest causes (Vivekananda 2007: 190). Holding that ignorance was the breeding ground of superstitions, selfishness, intolerance and other mean mental feelings, he recognized the need for educating the masses. Here we are reminded of the great Mauryan emperor Asoka’s Dhamma policy and scientific temper of mind promoted by Pandit Nehru (see Paddayya 2016). He desired his followers to go to villages carrying with them maps, globe, etc., and open up their minds by exposing them to astronomy, history, geography, and other cultures and peoples.

Vivekananda minced no words in denouncing the special privileges claimed by the upper castes and the evils of inferiority complex, slavish mentality, illiteracy, and untouchability inflicted on the masses by the priestly class. Recognizing the long historical context of the caste system, he adopts an evolutionary approach and says that changes will occur in it over time when people are obliged to change from their traditional occupations. He goes further and says that even a *Pariah* can achieve

Brahminhood by acquiring the attributes prescribed by the Vedas – spiritual bent of mind, renunciation, love of wisdom, altruism, etc. (*Ibid.*: 212-43). We are reminded here of the one dozen odd attributes that the Buddha prescribed in Dhammapada that can make any person a Brahmin.

There is postmodern humanism in Vivekananda’s concern for people in distress. In a letter sent from California in 1900 to his disciple Akhandananda, he asks them to go to the interiors of (Bengal) districts affected by natural disasters such as famine, flood, diseases, and pestilence and open small orphanages or relief centres with people’s support will become larger in size and benefit hundreds of thousands of people (*Ibid.*: 544). He also wanted relief centres to be opened for orphaned girls.

Vivekananda’s thoughts about women too were far ahead of his age and foretold contemporary liberation movements (Swami Vivekananda 2022-2023, Volume 9: 207-226). He was ambivalent about widow remarriage and left the choice to them but opposed child marriage. He was a staunch advocate of equality for women and brushed aside their inferior status. Expressing concern that they have for long been kept on a lower pedestal, he writes: “They have all the time been trained in helplessness, servile dependence on others, and so they are good only to weep their eyes out at the slightest approach of a mishap or danger”. He is confident that with education women will solve their problems. Here too Vivekananda’s statements are prophetic: “Along with other things, they should acquire the spirit of valour and heroism. In the present day it has become necessary for them also to learn self-defense. See how grand was the Queen of Jhansi!” (Swami Vivekananda 2007: 462). These observations assume special importance now with ever-increasing cases of sexual violence against women and minor girls.

Vivekananda abhorred the idea of education as rote learning through books which only makes man into a machine (Swami Vivekananda 2022-2023, Volume 4: 478-484). Instead, he prefers “that education by which character is formed, the strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which, one can stand on one’s own feet” (*Ibid.*: 462). At the same time, he prudently recognizes the importance of technical education for the developmental needs of the country. So he pleads for a curriculum where Western learning is coupled with Vedanta. As he says, “What we need... is the

study of... different branches of the knowledge that is our own, and with it the English language and Western science; we need technical education and all else that may develop industries so that men, instead of seeking for service, may earn to provide for themselves, and save something for a rainy day” (*Ibid.*: 454). A nineteenth-century call for start-ups which are now much talked about!

What about Vivekananda’s views about India *vis-a-vis* the outside world? Far from allowing his deep knowledge of the country’s long heritage and respect for it to entertain any narrow, chauvinistic ideas and, true to the Vedantic spirit, he espoused the adoption of a catholic or universalistic bent of mind. He calls upon his countrymen not to shun the outside world but to learn from it. He writes: “Doubtless I love India. But every day my sight grows clearer. What is India, England, or America for us? We are the servants of that God who by the ignorant is called MAN... There is but one basis of well-being, social, political, or spiritual – to know that I and my brother are *one (sic)*. This is true for all countries and all people” (*Ibid.*: 522). A gentle warning to the modern world rattled by “Nation First” euphoria!

Finally, a note on Vivekananda’s unique way of reconciling Hinduism and Islam. Here the letter which he wrote to Mohammad Sarfraj Hussain of Nainital from Almora in 1898 assumes much importance. He writes that *Advaitism*, whatever the name used to call it, is the last word of religion and thought and that through this prism one can consider any religion or sect with love. It is universalistic and he therefore calls it the religion of the future enlightened community. From an antiquity point of view, Hindus may have first arrived at the formulation of *Advaitism* but when its basic tenets of equality and oneness are adopted by any other religious order as part of everyday life, these become part of its contribution. From this standpoint, “all religions are but the varied expressions of the Religion (*sic*) which is oneness...” India, to him, is the confluence of Hinduism and Islam. There is wisdom and hope incarnate in his words: “I see in my mind’s eye the future perfect India rising out of chaos and strife, glorious and invincible, with *Vedanta* brain and Islam body” (*Ibid.*: 535).

Conclusion

To say in a few words, Vivekananda ardently desired Indians to develop a sound mind in a sound body. It is now 120 years since he died but still,

his message has not lost its relevance a wee bit. Going by the public statements that have become commonplace now, a new crisis of spirit seems to be sweeping across the country. Conflicting statements and assertions resonate in public life. Hindustan is said to be the land of Hindus and we are told that the world was originally occupied by 700 crore Hindus. Not unexpectedly, there is a retort that every child in the world is born a Muslim but the parents convert him to another religion. Aryan/ Harappan blood is said to be flowing through the veins of every Indian but it is countered by statements that assert that Indian history and culture stretch far beyond the Aryan/Harappan culture. India is said to be *Viswaguru*, the mother of democracy and inventor of plastic surgery and airplanes. Many writings have appeared in recent years that tend to undermine secularism and the syncretic nature of Indian culture and instead promote nationalistic feelings and sentiments by forefronting its civilizational basis or Bharat Vaibhav. Inevitably, a new wave of resentment and bitterness is being built up against colonial rule. Even casual references to secularism, freedom, fundamental rights, equality, etc. are immediately dismissed as manifestations of colonial mindset and symptoms of servitude. I have recently heard a speaker expressing displeasure about the founding of the Asiatic Society by Sir William Jones and he even went to the extent of tracing the quadrangular plan of Oxford and Cambridge colleges to the layout of ancient Indian universities. The contributions of celebrated Indologists like Max Mueller are being discredited on the alleged ground that their final aim was one of baptizing Indians.

As part of this new wave of enthusiasm about our cultural heritage, Vivekananda and his role in bringing Hinduism onto the world stage at the Chicago congress are sometimes remembered. But it is forgotten that his reformulated Vedantic thought was not about the worship of this god or that goddess nor about the rituals to be followed for this purpose but rather about some fundamental propositions contained in the ancient Indian texts and about man’s understanding of himself and of the reality of which he is a part. It is these great ideals that need to be remembered once again for overcoming the present crisis of spirit arising from a mixture of religious, ethnic, economic, and political factors. If Vivekananda were alive today, he would surely have contrasted the catholic content and pacific tone of his Practical Vedanta with the insular character and

aggressive tenor of the Hindutva movement. Also, present-day planners of social development can derive much inspiration from his ideas of national reconstruction.

Vivekananda's mission of spiritualization of Western society is again not without contemporary relevance. In 1981 the famous anthropologist Marvin Harris published his book *America Now: The Anthropology of a Changing Culture* in which he bemoaned the breakdown of cultural and spiritual fabrics of the American society. One does not see any improvement ever after 40 years. Instead, there is an increase in the number of uncalled-for shootings including innocent school children and so is the case with drug addicts and homeless people. Democracy, liberalism, secularism, and humanism are lofty ideals but these have come under stress. In 2020 Trump's supporters almost captured the American capitol. Democratically formed governments are being toppled by military juntas in West Africa and elsewhere or they are changing into elected dictatorships as in Israel, Turkey, and Hungary. Governed partly by the large-scale influx of population groups from the Middle East and North Africa, nationalism is reemerging in Germany, the Netherlands, Hungary, Italy, Sweden, and other parts of Europe (Traub 2019:135-231). Fukuyama (2022) calls it ethno-nationalism. Some writers place India too in this category of democratic autocracies and ethno-nationalism. The ongoing wars between Russia and Ukraine, Armenia and Azerbaijan, and Israel and Palestine are manifestations of these trends. Fukuyama holds moderation as the key factor in overcoming these conflicts. Perhaps more relevant is the adoption of Vivekananda's Vedantic propositions of equality of people and cultures, oneness of mankind, and positive appreciation of other faiths and cultures.

The Birth Centenary Volume edited by Majumdar lists over 40 books and 70 articles in Indian and foreign journals and newspapers about Vivekananda. The number of writings that have appeared since 1963 must be equally impressive. I still feel that some aspects of his thought and work need further and closer study. For example, his sudden emergence as an outstanding spiritual leader in the Chicago Congress was not entirely due to his impressive personality, oratorical skill, and ability to put forth before the large assembly the fundamental tenets of ancient Indian thought that are of universal application. In my view, it was also a

case of hoisting the right ideas at the right time. The nineteenth century was called a 'wonderful century' by the British naturalist Wallace not merely because it witnessed many fundamental scientific discoveries but also because it saw many changes in human thought.

As described at length by Raymond Schwab (1984), the rediscovery of ancient Indian learning set in motion by the Asiatic Society in Kolkata created an Oriental Renaissance which brought to Europe "an antiquity more profound, more philosophical and more poetical than that of Greece and Rome" (1984:11). It is important to note that North America did not remain unaffected by the new renaissance. As has been noted by Swami Ranganathananda (1970: 669-70) and probably others too, already in the second quarter of the century Emerson, Thoreau, and other transcendentalists of New England were swayed by the spiritual messages of the Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita. Unity of creation, the good nature of man, and the importance of intuitional thinking already become component elements of transcendentalism. Swami Ranganathananda states "These various spiritual influences ... predisposed the American spirit to Vedanta. When Vivekananda stood before the Parliament of Religions on its opening afternoon, the moment was ripe with potentiality. There was discernible expectation of a *message* (sic) and not mere oratory" (1970: 670).

I believe that this receptivity of the American mind was also facilitated by two other major developments that took place in the second half of the 19th century, viz. a) the rise of the Unitarian movement which treated Jesus as only a messenger and not God and asked for the use of reason in religious discourse and b) emergence of pragmatism as a dominant philosophical trend under the tutorship of Peirce and Willam James. Pragmatism holds that scientific concepts and thought patterns are nothing but systematized versions of practices of everyday life. So I suggest that the background for the organization of Chicago Congress of 1893 and the ready reception accorded to Vivekananda's speeches are a fit topic for regular research.

Another topic worth researching further concerns the background for the structure of Vivekananda's reformulated *Advaitic* philosophy and his programme of social regeneration. The relative importance of various factors such as the impact of Ramakrishna's spiritual messages, the influence of

Brahmo Samaj, exposure to Western learning, his agonizing experiences of misery among people, and proneness of their minds to superstitions and fetishism needs careful and systematic study.

There is a third topic which also needs further study. Vivekananda was a self-made philosopher. Also, he was already playing informally the role of a social scientist in the closing decade of the 19th century. His writings contain streaks of a sociologist, an anthropologist, and a historian. His three-phase peregrinations across the northern, western, southern, and eastern parts of the country spanning eight years, while these were meant for conveying his new spiritual messages, also alerted his sensitive mind to the realities or what he called “harsh truths” about the Indian society. From the letters that Vivekananda sent to his disciples after the Chicago congress and the addresses that he gave on his return to India, one can easily guess the kind of mental agony he was experiencing due to the miseries, sufferings, and poverty of the Indian masses. For example, he wrote to his disciple Alasinga Perumal (who brought out the first issue of *Brahmavadin* in 1895) in Madras: “Feel, my children, feel: feel for the poor, the ignorant, the downtrodden, feel till the heart stops and the brain reels and you think you will go mad...” (Vivekananda 2007: 512). Disappointed as he was by the poor response in the West to his request for help in the alleviation of the sufferings of the poor, he formulated his programme of social upliftment. These are definite signatures of an informal sociological statement linking cause, symptom, and remedy.

Vivekananda’s main lecture at the Chicago parliament was not merely a brilliant attempt to capture the core spiritual truths of Hinduism but simultaneously represented an anthropological effort towards an explanation of the diversity of religious faiths. Taking recourse to the ancient Hindu text Bhagavad Gita, he says that unity in variety is the plan of nature and that religion is no exception to this plan. “To the Hindus, then, the whole world of religions is only a traveling, a coming up, of different men and women, through various conditions and circumstances, to the same goal. Every religion is only evolving a God out of the material man, and the same God is the inspirer of all of them” (*Ibid.*: 13).

Why then the variety in belief systems? Vivekananda explains it by invoking the notion of adaptation which the anthropologists employ as

a major concept in the study of cultural diversity. He writes: “The contradictions come from the same truth adapting itself to the varying circumstances of different natures. It is the same light coming through glasses of different colours. And these little variations are necessary for purposes of *adaptation* (emphasis added). But in the heart of everything, the same truth reigns...” (*Ibid.*: 13). The methods of worship may vary but the goal is the same – faith in God realization. As he writes, “Idols or temples or churches or books are only the supports, the helps, of his spiritual childhood: but on and on he must progress” (*Ibid.*: 12). We may note that much later social scientists have come up with full treatises on this topic of adaptational explanation of religious diversity, e. g. William James’s book *Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study of Human Nature* (1961) and Roy Rappaport’s *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (1999).

Finally, we must note that Vivekananda had his ideas about the nature and purpose of history. While conceding that history is a record of improvements both in material culture and spiritual realizations, he says that in the case of India, it is the progress in the spiritual domain that forms the core element of history. We are reminded here that Gandhiji called the enhancement of divine elements in man the vertical coordinate of history (Gokhale 1972). Ashis Nandy (2002) called the *itihasa* tradition embedded in the ancient Indian texts history’s doubles. Arguing from this spiritual vantage point, Vivekananda disagrees with the views that treat Indians as barbarians without any history and asserts that “we have our history exactly as it ought to have been for us... Those who have eyes to see find a luminous history there, and on the strength of that they know the nation is still alive. But that history has to be rewritten ...” (Vivekananda 2007: 451-2; Swami Vivekananda 2022-2023, Volume 6: 169-179; Volume 9: 273-290). He is further emphatic that history has a purpose to fulfil: it guides the feelings and actions of people. His words are unambiguous: “A nation that has no history of its own has nothing in this world ... That faith in himself would curb his actions and feelings, so much so that he would rather die than commit wrong. So, a national history keeps a nation well-restrained and does not allow it to sink so low...” (*Ibid.*: 451).

In conclusion, I am persuaded to say that in conceptualizing the linkage between India’s past,

present, and future, it is Pandit Nehru who among all leaders of modern India almost completely falls in line with the thought stream of Swami Vivekananda. If the Swamiji had survived to see independence, Nehru would perhaps have gladly accepted him as his Rajaguru or philosopher-guide for building modern India. And he did pay him a well-deserved compliment which is worth repeating: "... Rooted in the past and full of pride in India's prestige, Vivekananda was yet modern in his approach to life's problems and was a kind of bridge between the past of India and her present.... He was a fine figure of a man, imposing, full of poise and dignity, sure of himself and his mission, and at the same time full of a dynamic and fiery energy and a passion to push India forward. He came as a tonic to the depressed and demoralized Hindu mind and gave it self-reliance and some roots in the past..." (Nehru 1960: 338-9).

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Revival of Area Studies in India through the National Education Policy–2020

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Area Studies implies the study of a specific region or area with an extensive focus on its socio-political, historical, and cultural dynamic. The Area Studies Programs, which lack a coherent definitional framework, are primarily interdisciplinary, and their heterogeneous character includes areas and issues ranging from history, politics, philosophy, culture, economy, language, foreign relations, anthropology, etc., to cover both humanities and social sciences. Area specialists take part in producing geographical knowledge with the help of area-specific programs. They study a particular geographical locality through its “history, literature, and language,” among other things (Kuijper, 2008).

The research scholars in America used the phrase “area studies” without adhering to any clear-cut definition of it. An area study could be as simple as studying a specific region or area, “at least if it is concerned with some branches of the social sciences”. Area studies can also suggest “the comprehensive study of a given region” from different perspectives that aim at the region’s role in global politics (Hanso, 2016).

Area Studies Programs, owing its origin to the Cold War, reinvented itself in the 1990s. The demon from its problematic history, however, did not leave Area Programs as they were challenged economically and intellectually, as put forward by Jon Goss and Terrence Wesley-Smith in their paper “Remaking Area Studies” (2010). Some renowned scholars like Edward Said and Michel Foucault started questioning the interconnection of knowledge with power and how it questions the epistemological basis of the modern knowledge production project (Goss & Wesley-Smith, 2010). After the end of the Cold War, area studies programs were criticized for their “lack of disciplinary methodological and theoretical rigor” and “late colonial concepts and perspectives” (Basedau

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& Köllner, 2007). The era of globalization brought new challenges to area studies since boundary-specific knowledge came under severe scrutiny. With globalization, traditional nation-state systems got weaker by the forces of social and political movements (Ludden, 2000).

However, Area Studies Programs survived the test of time and re-established itself as a dominant field of study across the globe. The growing number of universities and institutions today, including the developing and underdeveloped regions of the world, that provide area-specific knowledge in several disciplines is living proof in this regard. With the rise of alternative powerhouses across the globe to check American and Western hegemony in world politics, which includes emerging economies like China, India, Japan, Australia, and Brazil, etc., area-specific knowledge has become more and more relevant today. Economists like Amitabh Acharya have advocated a Global IR approach to challenge the negligence endured by Western scholars towards the “non-Western world” or the “Global South” (Relations, n.d.). This approach emphasizes understanding the Global South with its own theoretical and historical explanations instead of following the Western-based traditional IR theory. Global IR stresses the necessity of challenging this Western hegemony in IR and for the non-West “to get its histories into play within IR” (Acharya & Buzan, 2017). The non-Western regions in the world should endeavor to find a way to gather their own historical and philosophical resources by overcoming the Western understanding of history and philosophy. It is noteworthy that Global IR emphasizes on bringing the Area Studies and IR together. However, this paper will try to understand Area Studies as an independent branch of study while emphasizing the need for a non-Western academic initiative to approach global politics. In the process, Area studies will complement the case of Global IR in the long run.

Therefore, considering the significance of area studies today, Indian Universities and Higher Educational Institutions should look for a way to address the existing problems crippling the area study

courses and come out of it with a vision to re-establish themselves with the changing global dynamic. This could be achieved through the newly published NEP 2020, which visualizes an interdisciplinary Higher Education structure in the country. The policy has advocated several changes in this domain, and it would be interesting to see how the area study programs benefit from the proposed changes.

This paper aims to establish a relationship between the advocated interdisciplinary education by NEP2020 and the scope of Area Studies in the country. In doing so, it emphasizes understanding area studies in the context of the current political environment and its significance in the long run to shape the country's geo-strategic position in the world.

The paper seeks to address the question: Can NEP2020 serve as a platform for Area Studies to re-establish itself in the light of the changing global power dynamic?

Background and the Problematic History of Area Studies

Area Studies as an academic discipline came to the fore in the 1990s as the American academia showed interest in understanding the social-political and cultural diversities of the non-western world. Area studies programs became popular in the US due to the need for American political analysts, decision-makers, corporate leaders, and native citizens to understand the non-Western world (Hall 1947). When American political leadership waged a cold war with its Soviet counterpart, the academic world was gifted with the area studies program, which made its origin story problematic. Area Studies programs got their first financial funding through the Ford Foundation in the US and published their research and other educational documents in a state-controlled domain. The Ford Foundation in the US came forward with extensive financial aid to help area studies grow in the American subcontinent (Kennedy, 2022). The Rockefeller Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation of New York joined in. Carnegie Corporation granted a considerable amount of money, approximately seven lakhs and forty thousand US dollars to develop a "Russian Research Centre" at the prestigious Harvard University. Around 34 universities received a grant of more than two hundred and fifty million from the Ford Foundation at the beginning of the Cold War. This

grant was solely used to produce area and linguistic knowledge in the respective institutions (Cumings, 1997). These aids helped area specialists acquire linguistic and area knowledge at that time.

The Ford Foundation played an essential role in the evolution of Area Studies Programs across America. Several Higher Educational Institutions in the US received funds from the foundation to develop area and language studies. In 1956 "The Association for Asian Studies" was established, which was one of the first institutional arrangements for producing area knowledge in the U.S. (Cumings, 1997).

Area Studies Programs gained an immense response from other European countries and started to grow in European academia, including countries like the U.K. and the Soviet Union. Today, Area Programs are well developed in several major universities worldwide. Area Studies Programs are labeled differently in different academic circles. This diverse field includes American Studies, Russian Studies, Middle Eastern Studies, Caribbean Studies, Chinese Studies, South Asian Studies, and Southeast Asian Studies, etc.

Although many Higher Education Institutions today offer Area Studies Programs, the courses are limited in India. Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, leading in this field, offers Masters's Programs in areas ranging from U.S. and European Studies to Latin American and Indo-Pacific Studies.

This list confirms the lack of importance the Area Studies programs are receiving from the higher educational institutions in India. All the universities featured in the list provide only a few Area courses; the majority of them provide only one, the School of International Studies, JNU being an exception. Apart from these institutions, many State and Central Universities in India provide area courses as thrust areas in their International Studies course. It is to be noted here that very few Universities in the country offer courses on Regional Studies which should not be confused with the Area Studies programs being discussed in this paper. For instance, the Centre for Regional Studies, University of Hyderabad, offers M.A., M.Phil, and Ph.D. programs that draw largely from the discipline of Geography.

In India, area studies started to develop in academic institutions right after independence under the leadership of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

Table 1: List of Area Studies Programmes Offered in Indian Universities (Updated)

Universities	Common Area Study Programs
Jawaharlal Nehru University	Sub-Saharan African Studies Francophone African Studies South Asian Studies Southeast Asian and Southwest Pacific Studies Central Asian Studies Inner Asian Studies Russian and Central Asian Studies Chinese Studies Japanese Studies Korean Studies West Asian and North African Studies Gulf Studies Pakistan Studies European Studies American Studies Latin American Studies Canadian Studies
University of Delhi	African Studies Chinese Studies Japanese Studies Korean Studies Pakistan Studies
Jamia Millia Islamia	West Asian Studies European and Latin American Studies Islamic Studies Third World Studies North East India Studies
Banaras Hindu University	South Asian Studies Nepal Studies
University of Rajasthan, Jaipur	South Asian Studies
University of Madras, Chennai	South and Southeast Asian Studies
University of Calcutta, Kolkata	South and Southeast Asian Studies
Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati	Southeast Asian and Pacific Studies
Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan	Indo-Tibetan Studies Chinese Studies Japanese Studies Islamic Studies
Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh	West Asian Studies and North African Studies South African and Brazilian Studies
University of Mumbai	African Studies Eurasian Studies
Jadavpur University, Kolkata	European Studies
Goa University	Latin American Studies
M. S. University of Baroda, Vadodara	Canadian Studies
Pondicherry University	South Asian Studies
Central University of Himachal Pradesh	South Asian Studies
Central University of Punjab	South and Central Asian Studies

Note. Adapted from *The Fallacies and Flaws of Area Studies in India*, by V. Sahni, 2009, p. 6263.

Nehru pioneered area and international studies and took the initiative to develop the discipline in the country. In 1955 “International relations studies” was introduced at the “Indian School of International Studies”. It was one of the first steps taken toward the evolution of the area and international studies in the country. The institution later assumed ‘Deemed University’ status in 1961. Afterward, the institution offered Ph.D. programs in several area courses (Sahni, 2009). However, the history of area studies in India had its shortcomings, which started to show up in the later years. According to Sahni, Area courses have been suffering from several “conceptual fallacies” and “operational flaws” in India. These programs lack a multidisciplinary perspective and a theoretical foundation. Apart from these, area programs in India do not inspire enough fieldwork, which eventually leads to the reliance on secondary sources while doing research, and area specialists also lack the language skills required to study specific regions. The programs offered in Indian Universities are often too broadly formulated (Sahni, 2009).

Exposition of Area Studies through NEP--2020

The National Education Policy (NEP 2020) envisions a radical change in India’s existing education system at all levels. The policy, known as NEP2020, puts forward the vision of a dynamic Higher Education structure in the country, which the proposed document wish to achieve by the year 2040. It promotes an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary Higher Education for all the students studying and working in different fields. The sixty-six-page long document stresses on the importance of an interdisciplinary education in the country today, citing the reference to ancient Indian Universities like Takshashila, Nalanda, Vallabhi, and Vikramshila, which had a flourishing interdisciplinary higher education structure in the past. The proposed reform focuses on a research-oriented academic program in higher education. The Universities can either become research-intensive or teaching-intensive. Still, in either case, the curriculum will follow a multidisciplinary and cross-disciplinary pattern where both the students and the teachers will gain independence and flexibility in the teaching-learning process. All Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) will have adequate autonomy in choosing their academic curriculum towards achieving a multidisciplinary and holistic academic path with equity and access to all. By 2040, all HEIs

(including the Colleges and Universities) shall aim to become multidisciplinary institutions and to have a more significant student enrolment, preferably in the thousands (NEP, Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020). Therefore, increasing the Gross Enrollment Ratio of students throughout the country is also an aim of the Policy.

NEP—2020, with its staunch support for interdisciplinary higher education, brings with it a glimmer of hope for the reinvention of Area Studies in the country. Although it does not mention Area Studies anywhere, the proposed document envisions an academic future where the students will be able to pursue academic courses from various disciplines, which makes the academic program interdisciplinary. The Area studies programs, with the help of their interdisciplinary nature, could provide a way to achieve this goal in India. Area studies emphasize on understanding a specific region with all its historical and cultural dynamics. To do that, they bring all the other mainstream disciplines of study under its umbrella, including international relations, political science, economics, history, geography, etc., making area studies heterogeneous. Therefore, the NEP–2020 provides the right platform for area studies programs to flourish in Indian Universities.

As highlighted by the NEP–2020, one of the major problems faced by the current higher education system in India is the “rigid separation of disciplines with early specialization and streaming of students into narrow areas of study” (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020). Interdisciplinary by nature, the area courses can bring together students from different disciplines and provide for a flexible academic program in higher educational institutions. The diverse area programs in different HEIs of the country host students from different academic backgrounds starting from Political science, history, geography, and literature to mathematics, engineering, and commerce. The area courses bring out different perspectives in students and expose them to the political, social, and cultural issues prevalent in a particular region. In achieving a holistic and multidisciplinary higher education in the country, the NEP–2020 agrees that learning outcomes could be improved through the integration of “humanities and arts with science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)” (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020, NEP, p 36). Area courses aim

at establishing an integration of different disciplines to bring out a holistic understanding of the targeted region.

The policy envisions incorporating science, mathematics, poetry, language, literature, debate, music, etc into the academic curriculum. An interdisciplinary and broader area study program could help achieve it too. Since these are the components that constitute a culture and area studies are practically an academic discipline that aims to gain the socio-political and cultural knowledge of a particular area or region.

With the internationalization of education, the policy intends to attract more and more foreign students to the country. It suggests the establishment of an “International Students Office” at each Higher Educational Institution to host foreign students. The International study programs, including area and cultural studies, could be an interesting addition to this context. Indian Universities have already developed such programs as South Asian, European, Chinese, South East Asian, and African Studies, etc., in their academic curriculum, but they are still developing. The NEP2020 could be the perfect opportunity for these area study programs to shine.

The University Grant Commission (UGC) has recently published a draft regulation allowing foreign universities and educational institutions to set up campuses in India. The draft regulation states that a foreign university with a global ranking among the top 500 institutions in the world or a respectable reputation in its native country or place can apply to the UGC to set up a campus in India. The NEP 2020 envisioned a similar academic future in the country with its firm advocacy for the globalization of higher education in India. Although the current draft regulation by UGC does not follow the NEP, it keeps the document as a pretext. The spirit provided by the NEP to make India an educational hub for foreign students and academicians is carried forward by the new draft regulation. This initiative could positively impact the growth of area studies in the country. Foreign universities bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise in various disciplines that can be shared with Indian students and scholars. This broadens the scope of research and teaching in area studies. Academicians from different parts of the world can engage in different regions’ cultural, political, and social dynamics and bolster the growth

of ever-developing area programs. Universities from across the world will provide a cross-cultural understanding of academic issues with a diversity of perspectives. Area studies will adapt and grow positively in this global academic exchange.

One of the key issues that the new education policy could address is the need for more vocational opportunities for area scholars. As the discipline itself is shadowed by IR and Political Science, area scholars in India are not encouraged vocationally. Students from area programs find it difficult to continue their academic and vocational journey because very few institutions in the country offer area study programs today.

The NEP–2020 aims to make Indian higher education institutions globally competitive. Area studies can play a vital role in achieving this goal by promoting a better understanding of other regions and their cultures, which can help Indian students and researchers engage better with their global counterparts. Area studies and NEP2020 compliments each other in the long run with their interdisciplinary and global approach.

Relevance of Area Studies in the Present Scenario

Academic programs have always been a powerful weapon of the West to create and distribute knowledge across the globe, and Western educational institutions and academicians have always influenced their non-Western counterparts over the years (Lie, 2012). The evolution of Area studies, especially in the non-West, could not escape this criticism. Area courses are constantly under scrutiny for their Westernized curriculum. The Western gaze that shaped the geographical boundaries of the non-Western world haunts area studies even today. Since its inception, area programs have been a “part of a modernist project” that aimed at reshaping the rest of the globe following the convenience of the West (Goss & Wesley-Smith, 2010).

Moreover, area studies were heavily associated with the Cold War and the global events that molded the area programs during that period. After World War II, the US-USSR rivalry dominated the academic discussions of the time and, in a way, determined how area studies were to be studied. In the USA, the state and private corporations were actively involved in the academic happenings of the area discourses to make it more complicated. The CIA, the FBI, and

private corporations monitored the Universities and Centers that produced area knowledge in different programs. Bruce Cumings, in his paper, provides some extensive data on how the CIA and FBI were involved in the making and continuation of Russian and Chinese Studies at Harvard and Columbia University in the US. After the Second World War, the 'Ford Foundation' showed a significant interest in developing area studies through some social science research projects, which ultimately received help from the CIA (Cumings, 1997).

With the end of the Cold War in the 1990s and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the relevance of Area studies programs came under severe scrutiny. The continuation of the area discourses became widely irrelevant for America and its corporations. Area programs and Centers in the US and elsewhere faced the brunt of a vast fund reduction from private foundations. The US, through its private and public institutions, promoted area studies during the Cold War period to understand the political and cultural dynamics of the non-Western countries to enhance its national interest in the long run. All the major private organizations in the US started to reconsider their commitment to area studies and considerably stopped their financial assistance to these programs (Goss & Wesley-Smith, 2010).

Changing global dynamics altered certain perceptions of power, knowledge, and security. Nevertheless, area courses have put behind their American past, and it's no longer a medium through which states promote their nationalistic agendas. Various area research and publications have helped develop International Studies across the globe. Even the Third World and developing nations are interested in providing area-specific courses in their higher educational institutions. The socio-political culture of a particular region plays a vital role in deciding the broader scheme of things in international politics. Therefore, area studies programs have come out of the age-old Western influence to help understand the cultural pluralism inherent in every region. Today, Area studies provide a viable academic option for non-Western and developing countries to understand the world better away from Western-centric perceptions.

Area-specific knowledge in India is undeniably higher today than ever before. Global politics is not entirely dominated by American and Western policymakers anymore. The geopolitical locations of the countries are significantly coming into focus

today. India's strategic stand in the South Asian region makes it a key player in the entire Indo-Pacific. The SAARC, ASEAN, BIMSTEC, BRICS, QUAD, and other regional and multilateral organizations are changing the political dynamic of the globe. In this changing time, area-specific knowledge is becoming ever more critical.

Academically, India's dream of establishing itself as "*Viswa Guru*" could be achieved through a steady growth of Area Studies programs in its Higher Educational institutions. At present, the programs are limited in the country. For instance, only four universities in the entire country have a center for South Asian Studies. While India is a key player in the South Asian region, the academic endeavor to understand the political and cultural dynamic of the region is somewhat minimal. An area specialist based in the US or in any other Western University is either influenced by Western bias or is limited in resources to understand the cultural pluralism in South Asia. Therefore, a South Asian country needs to produce area specialists to overcome the Western bias and be guided by adequate resources in understanding the cultural and political dynamics of the region.

Area studies programs will also attract more foreign students from around the world. Instead of branding area courses under Political science or International Relations, a specific area studies center will attract a group of target students from across the globe. This will help the aspiration of NEP-2020 to reinvent Indian higher education as a hub of knowledge for students across the globe.

Conclusion

Area studies play a key role today in understanding the politics of geography. Area specialists use spatial knowledge to locate a region's interest and influence in global politics. Today, the relevance of spatial knowledge is immense while forming a country's foreign policy. It also fulfills the academic need to understand the geographical distributions of the world.

NEP-2020 is an idealistic agenda promoting radical change in the education sector, which differs from the previous policies on education in various ways. The policy can change the future of Area Studies programs in India through its holistic approach. As the Area programs have left behind their imperial legacy to establish themselves as an important discipline in the academic discourse, Area specialists

across the globe are asked to reinvent themselves with newer approaches and newer knowledge about governance, security, and geopolitical power politics. Academicians in India today are working towards this goal in various Universities across the country. The NEP–2020 will provide a platform for the Area Programs to work in a complimentary relationship with the mainstream disciplines like International Relations or Political Science and not under their shadow. As promoted by NEP–2020, the holistic approach will widen the scope of Area Studies in India to reach a broader audience in the long run. Nevertheless, the achievements of NEP–2020 can be celebrated only after its full-scale implementation in the forthcoming years, which will be a challenge for the existing Higher Educational Institutions. It demands a new curriculum, newer tools for research, more area experts working in various Universities and academic institutions across the globe, better infrastructure, and a vocational opportunity for the students and faculties who opt for Area Studies Programs in the future.

The statement provided by NEP–2020 towards an interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary Higher Education in India is courageous and welcoming for the area programs in the country. Area courses demand a contemporary perspective to deal with the changing global politics, especially after the globalization of world politics post-1990s. The National Education Policy did well to address this issue in time.

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Integration of Indian Knowledge System: A Way to Revive Higher Education

Amrita Maheshwari*

The Indian civilization being one of the oldest in the world has contributed immensely to the indigenous knowledge base which is slowly being recognized the world over. The Indian knowledge system is derived from the various philosophies of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Islamic, Christianity, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism. Therefore, it is not surprising that down the years a rich repository of knowledge has accumulated in the Indian subcontinent and is manifested in terms of rich traditions and practices. This knowledge system has played a significant role in the advancement of various fields be it Mathematics, Science, Astronomy, Medicine, Philosophy, Education, Cosmology, Architecture, Metallurgy, Visual and Performing art, and Agriculture.

UNESCO has stated more than forty civilizations in the history of the human race. Out of these forty-five civilizations are become the past and are already extinct, still one civilization is lives and has continued through and survived this is the civilization of India. This is a beautiful summary by the noted Sanskrit scholar of the 20th Century *Pandit Bhagavat Shastri Ji*, '*Bharatiya Gyana Parampara-sanatana Ganga- pravaha*' (i.e. Indian knowledge tradition is a perennial flow of the Ganga). Each word used in this expression depicts the characteristics of India's knowledge tradition; as our civilization is a continuum, not an event or an era, and the true nature of modernity is derived from evolving intellectual and cultural traditions. It is a flow and not a stagnant body of water. It is fresh and flowing - pertinent and living just like a river it has also witnessed its summer and rainy seasons, but it never totally dries up. Ganga is a symbol of purity and liberation as it descended from heaven to give *moksha* to the sons of Sagara and millions and millions of people in this *yogabhumi* i.e. Bharata. This is the Ganga of *Gyana-Ganga* is perennial and ever-flowing.

In our culture, knowledge is the supreme value. In the *Bhagavadgita Srikrishna* himself declares, *nahi*

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jnanena sadrisham pavitramiha vidyate - Nothing purifies like knowledge (*Bhagavadgita*: 4.38).

The history of Indian civilization is a great continuous journey from darkness to light and from falsehood to truth. This journey is also to defy death and achieve immortality. Knowledge has sustained this great civilization.

Indian knowledge systems are rich sources of evolving knowledge, comprising six main *Darshanas* (philosophies), fourteen *Vidyas* (sources of knowledge), and sixtyfour *Kalas* (specialized art and skills). Six sets of *Darshanas* offer various points of view as open knowledge systems for mature propositions and sophisticated logic for understanding and experiencing. Fourteen *Vidyas* include 4 *Vedas*, 4 *Upavedas*, and 6 *Vedangas*. *Kala* means performing art in Sanskrit. *Kala* also means specialized skills. In ancient India, these skills were considered to be important for the holistic development of a cultured individual. The diversity of *Kalas* is astonishing. Several *Vidyas* and *Kalas* remain very precious in the current context as diverse dimensions of life in the 21st century which is the era of information/knowledge. India is well equipped with a critical outlook to discover its contemporary relevance in the global milieu from its own Intellectual and Cultural Traditions.

Bhartiya Gyan Parampara: An Exposition

The evolving Indian civilization excels not only in metaphysics but also in science, mathematics, astronomy, pharmacology, numerals, geometry, algebra, trigonometry, and medical sciences. Indian knowledge systems have an evolving legacy from the Indus Valley civilization, Vedic, Buddhist, Jain, and hundreds of local knowledge traditions. Indian civilization was a center of learning in several branches of knowledge for scholars from all over the world especially in South East Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. The origin of various branches of mathematics, science, art, and philosophy is attributed to this civilization. IKS aspired to know everything that the mind can comprehend from tiny atoms to the universe.

India's knowledge tradition expands from *jijnasa* (desire to know) to *neti neti* (an incessant quest of what is beyond and has not yet been recorded). Such has been the commitment towards knowledge that sustained this grand civilization.

Panini, A Sanskrit Grammarian proposed a comprehensive and logical theory of phonetics, phonology (near 600 BC) which even today is recognized to carry the most unambiguous rules of grammar for machine translation. *Charaka* introduced systemic perspectives for understanding biological change, cause-effect relationships, and evidence-based approach to medicine, *Sushruta* is the pioneer of surgical tradition all over the world (nearly 400 BC). *Kautilya* was an Indian Teacher, Philosopher, Economist, Jurist, and Royal Advisor whose *Arthashastra* is considered a classic in political economy. Original contributions of master Astronomer and Mathematician, *Aryabhatta* (476 AD) are well recognized. In his classic text, *Aryabhataiyam*, he describes the process of measuring the motion of planets and eclipses. *Aryabhatta* proclaimed that the earth is round, that it rotates on its axis, that it orbits the Sun, and is suspended in space. *Aryabhatta's* most significant and well-known contribution is the concept of zero. *Varahamihira* (499–587 AD), in a classic text, *Pancha Siddhanta*, notes that the Moon and the planets are lustrous, due to sunlight. In the *Brihad Samhita*, he detailed many discoveries in the domains of geography, botany, and animal science. *Nagarjuna* (800 AD), in the classic text, *Rasa Ratnakara*, outlined many interesting experiments in metallurgy, and bio-assailable drugs made from metals and minerals. Another great scholar and Master of Arithmetic and Astronomy was *Bhaskaracharya* (1114–1183 AD). In his classic text, *Surya Siddhanta*, he made a note of the force of gravity. The appreciation of ancient knowledge and scholarship can help us to rediscover our roots by tracing the history and philosophy of Indian medicine as an example. These are merely but glimpses indicating the intellectual legacy of Indian civilization.

Ancient Indian Higher Education System

India had the first and foremost universities in the world, more than fifteen ancient universities existed from the period 6th century BC to 1200 AD. *Takshashila* is known to be the oldest. *Nalanda* was established in the 5th century and remained

the center of excellence till it was destroyed in the 12th century A.D. epitome of higher Education include *Vikramshila*, *Mithila*, *Valabhi*, *Pushpagiri*, *Odantipuri*, *Somapura* etc. *Darshanas* form the philosophical foundations of the Indian knowledge and education system. During 600 BC the *Ashram* System gradually evolved in several multidisciplinary universities such as *Takshashila*, *Nalanda*, *Vikramshila* and many more. *Takshashila* was a centre of learning for several centuries best known because of its unique alumni such as *Kautilya*, *Panini*, *Charaka*, *Vishnu Sharma*, *Jivaka*.

The Guru Kula system which involves close and highly personalized interaction between 'Guru' (teacher) and 'Shishyas' (disciple) is also a worthy tradition of IKS. Ancient Indian University campuses such as *Takshashila* or *Nalanda* were essentially multidisciplinary hubs with several spokes for specialized studies. The depth, diversity, and rigor of education in ancient Indian universities were exemplary. The blended pedagogy was based on inquisitiveness, inquiry, dialogue, discourses, debates, critical thinking, rationality, and an evidence-based approach. Pedagogies were built on four stages of teaching-learning: *Adidhi* (information and theory), *Bodha* (understanding and analysis), *Acharana* (performance and practice) *Pracharana* (propagation and preaching).

The universities in ancient India had a unique model that ensured the holistic development of students to make them highly skilled professionals, artisans, thought leaders, warriors, nation builders, responsible citizens, and humble human beings. Almost till the 12th century, Indian universities used to attract students from different parts of the world.

The period from 6th century BC to 12th century AD may be considered as the golden period of Indian scholarship and education.

English dominated based on the British model, the first university was established in India on 24th January 1857 at Calcutta, and universities were established in India during the British Raj primarily to create a bandwagon of clerks and bureaucrats to serve the English rulers. These universities framed on Macaulay's strategy ensured the erosion of local languages, culture, and Indian knowledge systems. During the colonial period, the British Raj started universities mainly to distort the cultural identity of locals and to develop human resources needed

as a workforce for the rulers. He identified that the education system in India was responsible for the deep attachment of Indians to their tradition, culture, and rituals. He recommended a policy of introducing the English language to dominate our education system. Gradually Indian knowledge systems were sidelined and completely replaced with Western education systems. Due to this development Sanskrit and regional languages were suppressed. The main objective of university education shifted from scholarship, knowledge generation, and innovation to the production of graduates who could serve in British colonial establishments more as a bandwagon of clerks and *babus*. This was the impact of Macaulayism.

Over time, the Indian HEIs have distanced themselves even from these and started embracing the American pattern.

Measures to inculcate IKS in Higher Education

Even after more than seven decades of independence, India still has not been able to come out of the influence of Macaulayism. To revive Indian Universities and make them suitable for the future, we have to rediscover their roots, strengths, and knowledge sources these philosophical and historical ventures must be carefully considered. While adopting these sources we should not become dogmatic by taking a stand that ‘we know everything’. We must avoid ‘self-pride-past-glory’ syndrome. It is important to keep an open mind to welcome new ideas and our quest to add new knowledge must continue. It is worthwhile to draw inspiration from these achievements to demonstrate contemporary relevance and explore future innovations in higher education. The best way that could be pursued is to discard all that is Western and design our own material, methods, and processes.

- *Designing the Higher Education System on the Concept of Swadeshi*

In our universities, all courses, methods of teaching, curriculum, etc. are modeled on Western lines and each time, there is only an unsuccessful attempt to rethink and modify the existing system. This is the most unfortunate for a country like ours, which inherited a treasure trove of knowledge from the past. Unfortunately, even a minimum effort is not put into designing Indian education system. The countries of South Asia too have their patterns, like

Singapore, South Korea, Hong Kong, etc. Taking the cue from Japan, who copied the Western model in the beginning emerged successful in designing their system of education and competing with the Western countries in every possible field. Even though the countries in Europe have many things in common with USA and UK; they still stand apart in many other respects, in the field of education. Though small in size and number, each of them is distinct, a small country like Sweden, remains an example and is quoted year after year for Nobel Prizes at the Swedish Academy Awards. Finland is known throughout the world for the Best Educational Initiatives and the highest spending (about 7 per cent of GDP) on education. Even smaller countries like Luxembourg, Norway achieve almost 100 per cent literacy by following their system of education.

To get this position, the best way could be to discard all that is Western system and design *Swadeshi* Higher Education System.

We have to create suitable literature based on the classical languages and modern languages as the preferred language for the medium of instruction, examination, and evaluation and even for writing scientific papers. We should take a cue from France, Germany.

Serious probe is done into the scientific expedition that were created by our ancestors like *Aryabhatta*, *Varahamitara*, *Nagarjuna*, *Bhahmagupta*, *Patanjali* and many others. As the iron pillar in Mehrauli, the secret of this is yet to be unfolded. The Government of India can take measures to establish a ‘Centre for the Study of Ancient Indian Science and Technology’ as the establishment of the ‘Indian Institute of Heritage and Conservation’ under the Ministry of Culture as a deemed University.

- *The Gurukula System*

The most famous aspect of Indian education is the *Guru-Shishya parampara*. In the *Guru Kula* system, education was about grooming the latent capacities and potentialities of the pupils concerned. It was treated as a process of the biological development of the student it is not only a mere mechanical process of training. In this *Parampara*, The transmission of knowledge had taken place one-to-one uninterruptedly. The *Guru* is considered

the embodiment of knowledge and the duty of the disciples is to draw from the treasure as much as they can. There was no distrust between them. Their relationship was mutual and learning was considered to be for a lifetime. Students had to stay along with the *Guru* and inculcate them with their learning and knowledge. For the *Guru*, all the Students are equal; irrespective of their social and economic backgrounds. The sons of the king cannot avail of any special facilities and preferences. The *Guru* had abundant love and affection for the students and treated them like their own children. The power of this style could be witnessed by knowing the fact that the Vedas – an unwritten script – were handed over from generation to generation only by oral reciting and learning them by heart. This could be happening only when there is utmost dedication and the intensity of learning (Mukherji and Mukherji, 1953).

Thousands of students from the Far East and Europe were coming to India for Higher Education. *Nalanda* and *Takshashila* had the strength of about 10,000 students and 2000 teachers. The students were taught Vedas, Philosophy, Yoga, Medicine, Grammar, and many other Arts. Xuanzang (the Chinese traveler), who visited the *Nalanda* during 7th Century CE, stated that the university was offering a variety of disciplines, and almost the “entire circle of knowledge” was available. He described that the Vice Chancellor of the university – *Shilabhadra* – was the ‘highest living authority’ in Yoga, who studied ‘*yogashastra*’ in *Nalanda*. *Guru* enjoyed complete autonomy in all aspects from the selection of students to designing their syllabi. And, when the teacher was satisfied with the performance of the students, the course was concluded.

Teachers must inspire young university students to take education seriously. Teachers have to present themselves as role models who can protect universities and students from antisocial elements. Teachers must tap their potential and channel their energy for nation-building and in promotion of civil society. They need to be the facilitators and mentors as ancient *Guru*.

- *Issue of Quantity verses Quality*

There is a big discrepancy regarding the number of universities and colleges in India, what is the optimum size of a college or university? There are no fixed caps or standards. National Knowledge

Commission (NKC) opined that India needs about 1500 universities (GoI, 2006). The legislative power of establishing universities is vested with both central and state governments, there does not appear to be any common policy as to how many universities India can contain, whereas the states are being very liberal in founding more state universities and also in granting permission for the establishment of private universities. Radhakrishnan Commission feared that the proliferation of universities without purpose was happening. There must be a serious discussion on this subject to formulate a policy on this account. In addition, in the pursuit of fulfilling the objective of enhancing access to higher education, HEIs were encouraged to open new programs suited to current needs as there are universities in some states that are not able to meet the criteria of 12(B) of the UGC Act, 1956.

It is appreciable that in the NEP 2020, there is a proposed categorization of HEIs into three types:

- Research Universities with equal focus on research and teaching; numbering between 150-300;
- Teaching Universities numbering between 1000-2000, with a focus on high-quality teaching (with targeted enrolments between 5000 and 25,000;
- College which focuses on Undergraduate Courses, enjoying autonomous status (numbering 5000-10,000) with enrolments varying between 2000 and 5000. In effect, the NEP is putting the number of universities at around 2300 and the colleges at 10,000. In the case of universities, the number proposed by the NEP is much higher than what was proposed by the NKC.

NEP-2020 is in favor of downsizing the number in respect of colleges. As a matter of fact, there are about 40,000 colleges now under the affiliation of various universities in the states. This shall come down to about one-fourth. There must be a clear-cut policy on the number of HEIs.

All good institutions provide the facility of a sabbatical to their staff and allow them to upgrade their knowledge and experience in the best possible manner as they deem fit. The same concept is to be applied to the students and hoped that the degree one receives after a “gap” year would be much more meaningful as It gives the time to the student to pursue other passions, and gain field experience, which helps the students to know his/ her strengths

and weaknesses better; one can evaluate the utility of her/his course/study and will have the opportunity to redesign their career.

- *Redesigning of University System*

As we are following the British model, only general universities have come into existence in India and they have not contributed much to the development of the nation. University needs to be based on a trans-disciplinary approach having academic excellence, flexibility, professionalism, and self-reliance through integrating traditional and modern knowledge because universities need to break out of the stranglehold of a single cultural and intellectual tradition. Now we must redesign about 80 percent of the existing universities as skill-based universities, and the remaining 20 per cent to be multi-faculty general universities to teach all kinds of Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, and those related to the human enlightenment. As country requires people with requisite skills that can carry out the jobs with great precision. It is for this reason; that a Master of Arts degree holder is not able to earn more, than a mason, plumber, or even unskilled labor. This pathetic situation is the result of our present education system. Therefore, something radical needs to be thought of and implemented. Education is intertwined with practice from the beginning but in our present-day setting, there is little emphasis on the practice part. This must change. As a solution, the existing universities must be converted to skill universities, focusing on certain kinds of skills. The NEP has proposed Research Universities and Teaching Universities (GoI, 2019)

Therefore, the entire skill-based education should be brought to the 'Centre Stage' and not be pursued as an 'adjunct activity'. One more contrasting issue of Higher Education must be resolved, As a measure of competing with the world, a practice is chosen to create certain 'islands of excellence'. By policy, governments have started favoring the establishment of these institutions which are named 'Institutes of National Importance'. The institutions thus created include IITs, IIMs, NITs, and IISERs and many others. In the same manner, Central Universities are deemed to be exclusive. Now, the UGC has taken measures to recognize a few HEIs as Institutions of Eminence (IoE) and issued relevant regulations in 2017. The idea is said to be providing a regulatory structure that

enables these institutions to emerge as world-class teaching and research institutions. While this idea is not faulty, this leads to starving a vast majority of the institutions. There is a striking imbalance in the allocation of funds between Central Universities and State Universities. While almost about 80 per cent of the total funding is received by about 50 Central Universities, the remaining 20 per cent fund is handed down to the large number of about 400 State Universities. This lopsided treatment only makes the people of India feel that the so-called State Universities as worthless institutions. This will in due course amount to such a situation of 'calling it mad and then killing it'. Therefore, either to prohibit the State Governments to establish universities without adequate funds; or elevate them at least to the status of Central Universities, one thing that needs to be noted clearly is that the colossus of Indian Higher Education is resting on the edifice of State Universities alone. Therefore, equity is a must in the higher education sector in India. It is time now that India must re-design its current Higher Education on the foundations of Indian knowledge systems and integrate advanced science, technology, social science, contemporary art and humanities.

We have to shed the colonial mindset and understand our own history and glorious heritage. Respect our own value systems, culture, and languages without losing sight of the value of English at the global level. Embrace technology-led innovation with sustainability principles. Revive and recognize diverse artisan skills as part of education. Mainstreaming agriculture involves businesses, industry, governments, voluntary organizations, and society in the teaching-learning process. The blue-collar and white-collar divide must be ended by ensuring equal weightage to skill mastery and degree education to innovate new India-centric universities, integrating ancient and modern approaches. Merely increasing the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) will be disastrous for a country like India if the glorification of hollow degrees produced by existing university factories producing unemployable graduates on the assembly line continues. The existing model of Higher education must be changed before it is too late.

Summing Up

A University is considered as an institutional space where a community of teachers and scholars

is engaged in higher education and research. Universities award academic degrees in various academic disciplines. Universities are temples of knowledge where ideas, innovations, and skills are nurtured. Redesigning Higher Education does not mean discarding the Western approach or replacing current practices. The integration of Indian knowledge systems in education should not be done blindly in a dogmatic manner or by taking a stand that 'we know everything'. We must avoid 'self-pride-past-glory' syndrome. The Indian knowledge systems may not be studied only to know our glorious history and to feel proud. It is crucial to discover their contemporary relevance and potential for future innovations through serious academic study and rigorous trans-disciplinary research. It is important to keep an open mind to welcome new ideas and our quest to add new knowledge must continue. This will require a complete overhaul to prepare our Higher education system future ready.

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Determination Supersedes Comfort

Droupadi Murmu, Hon'ble President of India delivered the Convocation Address at the 165th Convocation Ceremony of the University of Madras, Chennai on August 06, 2023. She said, "I appeal to all the students to never let any anxiety overwhelm you. There is always an opening or opportunity which may not be visible for some time. Have faith in your abilities and keep moving forward. As you embark on the next phase of your lives, I would urge you all to set your targets high, but at the same time, not to feel pressurised by your goals. Try to work hard to fulfill your dreams with determination and fearlessness." Excerpts

This region has been a cradle of civilisation and culture. The rich tradition of Sangam literature is a precious heritage of India. The great wisdom preserved in Thirukkural has been guiding all of us for centuries. The great Bhakti tradition of poetry started in Tamil Nadu and it was taken to the north by the wandering saints. The temple architecture of Tamil Nadu, the statues and sculptures are a tribute to human excellence. With pride in the immensely rich cultural heritage that they have, the young students have to become important citizens of the global knowledge society of the 21st century.

I am told that about 1,85,000 students are currently studying in this university and its affiliated colleges. Out of these students, more than 50 percent are girl students. I am delighted to note further that 70 percent of 105 students who received their gold medals today are girls. The University of Madras is a shining example of gender equality.

By investing in the education of girls, we are investing in the progress of our nation. Educated women can make greater contributions in the economy, provide leadership in various sectors, and make a positive impact on the society.

Founded in the year 1857, your university has the distinction of being one of the oldest modern universities in India. This university has played a critical role in dissemination of knowledge. It has been a catalyst for social change and progress.

Throughout its journey of over 165 years, your university has adhered to high standards of academics, providing an environment that fosters intellectual curiosity and critical thinking. It has been a cradle of learning, producing countless scholars, leaders, and visionaries. They have also influenced the world of learning in the global context. Your university has also served as a lighthouse, playing a

pivotal role in the establishment and growth of many reputed universities in the southern region of India.

Your university has a rich history and glorious legacy. It is indeed a matter of great pride that six former Presidents of India were students of this University and walked the same corridors that you walk through today.

I respectfully remember my illustrious predecessors from this University—Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Shri V.V. Giri, Shri Neelam Sanjiva Reddy, Shri R. Venkataraman, Shri K.R. Narayanan and Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. The eminent freedom fighter who also served as the first Governor General of India, Shri Chakravarti Rajagopalachari was a student of this university.

Sir C.V. Raman and Dr. S. Chandrasekar, Nobel Laureates and students of this university have made exceptional contribution to the world of science. Two Chief Justices of India, Justice M. Patanjali Shastri and Justice K. Subbarao have enriched the sphere of jurisprudence. The very idea that your university has produced such great people should make you strive hard for achieving excellence in pursuit of learning and nation building.

I feel proud to pay homage to the memories of the Nightingale of India Smt. Sarojini Naidu and the indomitable Smt. Durgabai Deshmukh. They were also students of this university. Those two great women were much ahead of their times. They were iconic women who have inspired several generations of Indians and will continue to inspire future generations. All the students of Madras University, specially the girl students should draw special inspiration from their exceptional stories.

Last month, I interacted with a group of eminent Alumni from different academic institutions

who have made major donations to educational institutions. I was happy to meet the prominent alumni and benefactors contributing to the cause of education and society. In this context, the alumni of the University of Madras can play a significant role in its growth as a global centre of excellence. The University has contributed to their success in many ways, therefore they should try to give back to their alma mater. The alumni can mentor the young students. The University should also reach out to the alumni to seek their cooperation for the betterment of the institution.

The University of Madras has promoted a culture of research and academic rigor. This has enabled the development of skilled human resources which have been driving various industries and sectors.

I would urge the university to invest more in cutting-edge research, encourage inter-disciplinary studies, and promote international collaborations. Embracing emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, and data analytics can strengthen this University as an institution that attracts global talent. The University of Madras should be at the forefront of finding learning-based solutions to the problems being faced by the nation and the world at large.

I take this opportunity to re-emphasise an issue close to my heart which affects the well-being of our young students. In today's highly competitive environment, the pressure to excel in academics, the fear of not getting into good institutions, the anxiety of not landing a prestigious job, and the weight of expectations from the parents and the society are causing acute mental stress amongst our youth. It is important that we come together as a society to address this issue and create an environment that promotes holistic growth and well-being of our students. I appeal to all the students to never let any anxiety over-whelm you. There is always an opening or opportunity which may not be visible for some time. Have faith in your abilities and keep moving forward.

Parents, academic institutions and faculty members can come together to help the students navigate through the numerous challenges they face. Educational institutions should create an atmosphere that promotes two-way communication, where students feel comfortable discussing their fears, anxieties, and struggles without being afraid of judgment. We must strive to work collectively to create such an atmosphere where our youth feels loved, valued and empowered to face the challenges with confidence and courage.

As you embark on the next phase of your lives, I would urge you all to set your targets high, but at the same time, not to feel pressurised by your goals. Try to work hard to fulfil your dreams with determination and fearlessness.

To conclude my address, I will invoke some immortal lines from Mahakavi Subramania Bharati which are quoted very often because they always infuse new inspiration. [I QUOTE]

“मंदरम् कर्पोम्, विनय तंदरम् कर्पोम्
वानय अलप्पोम्, कडल मीनय अलप्पोम्
चंदिरअ मण्डलत्तु, इयल कण्डु तेलिवोम्
संदि, तेरुपेरुक्कुम् सातिरम् कर्पोम्” [UNQUOTE]

This can be interpreted as:

“We will learn both scripture and science We will explore both heavens and oceans We will unravel the mysteries of the moon And we will sweep our streets clean too.”

I am very happy that today in the evening, I will participate in a function to honour Mahakavi Bharathiyar.

I once again congratulate all of you on achieving a major milestone in your life and career. I am sure you are capable of building a very bright future for yourself and for the country. The future belongs to you. With this message, I bless you all.

Jai Hind

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CAMPUS NEWS

National Conference on Smart Library Eco-system

A two-day National Conference on ‘Smart Library Eco-system in the Learning Landscapes’ was organized by the Postgraduate Department of Library and Information Science, Berhampur University, Berhampur on December 01-02, 2023. The event aimed to explore and discuss the integration of smart technologies into library services. More than 120 delegates from various parts of the country participated in the conference.

The Inaugural Session was graced by Prof. Geetanjali Dash, Vice Chancellor, Berhampur University who served as the Chief Patron. Prof. Dash emphasized the transformative power of smart technology in libraries, envisioning traditional libraries evolving into smart hubs of knowledge. Prof. S K Baral, Chairman, PG Council of Berhampur University shared his views and emphasised on reading habits of the students. The Convenor, Dr Jyotshna Sahoo, Head, Department of Library and Information Science introduced the esteemed delegates. She also provided an insightful overview of the event’s theme, sharing the significance of smart libraries in higher education. The Chief Guest of the event, Prof. Ajay Pratap Singh, Director General, National Library Kolkata and former Director General, Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF) presented a comprehensive overview of the Government of India’s initiatives to enhance the nationwide public library ecosystem. Additionally, he outlined the government’s plans of establishing libraries at the Panchayat level. Mr. Goswami Golam Debata, IAS (Retd.) marked his presence as the Guest of Honour, captivating the audience with his valuable insights on books with poetic expressions.

Prof. Pitambara Padhi, Former Professor, Department of Library and Information Science, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, Odisha graced the occasion as another Guest of Honour and delivered an impactful speech on the significance of smart libraries. He shared his insights advocated for a centralized library system and emphasized the need for a robust movement toward enhancing the Public Library System in the state. Dr. Raj Kishor Kampa,

Organizing Secretary of the event, proposed the Vote of Thanks. The conference witnessed the presentation of over thirty papers by delegates from across the country, complemented by nine high-impact invited talks from distinguished speakers from various institutes. All the technical sessions were conducted successfully where more than thirty participants presented their papers related to the theme of the conference.

During the Valedictory Ceremony, Sri. Satya Ranjan Sahoo, OAS, (Special Secretary) and former Collector-cum District Magistrate, Boudh, Odisha underscored the importance of reading, donating books, and establishing personal libraries stating that books are the second mother to every individual. Some of the participants shared their feedback with immense satisfaction, emphasizing the desire for the university to organize similar events at regular intervals.

National Seminar on Reconditioning Indian Tradition and Culture through NEP-2020

A two-day National Seminar on ‘Reconditioning Indian Tradition and Culture through NEP- 2020: Multilingual, Multicultural and Multidisciplinary Educational Approaches’ is being organized by the Department of Lifelong Learning and Extension, Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University, Kanpur from March 01-02, 2024. The primary goal of this proposed seminar aligns harmoniously with the overarching vision delineated in the National Education Policy-2020, which places substantial emphasis on fostering a deep-seated sense of pride and reverence for India’s opulent heritage and culture within the realm of educational institutions spanning schools and Higher Education Institutes (HEIs). The event serves as a conduit for nurturing inventive ideas and critical frameworks that converge divergent perspectives to champion the diverse manifestations of Indian languages and cultures. It acts as a platform to craft pragmatic strategies for the seamless integration of India’s multifaceted indigenous knowledge systems—encompassing tribal lore and local sagacity—into the very foundations of national curricula’s pedagogical frameworks. In alignment with the NEP’s recommendation for institutions,

both technical and non-technical, such as IITs and universities, to transition towards multidisciplinary and comprehensive educational frameworks, the event underscores the critical necessity of elevating cultural identity and fostering a consciousness of cherishing our indigenous wisdom and time-honoured systems. The Subthemes of the Event are:

- NEP-2020: Prospects, Challenges, and Implementation Strategies.
- Fostering *Atmanirbhar Bharat*: Nurturing Youth for Tomorrow's Trials via NEP.
- Vocalizing Local Voices: Embracing NEP for Cultural Expression.
- Skill Development in a Globalized Era: Imperatives and Significance.
- ICT's Role in Pedagogical Training: Empowering Educators.
- Resurrecting Lost Traditions: A Journey with NEP.
- Reviving Indian History and Culture in the Modern Context.
- Indigenous Knowledge Systems: Indian Scriptures and Societal Relevance.
- Interdisciplinary Horizons: Theories, Practices, and Values in Education.

For further details, contact Convener, Dr. Manas Upadhyay, Assistant Professor, Department of Lifelong Learning and Extension/ Sociology, Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University, Kanpur - 208024 (Uttar Pradesh), Mobile No: 09936262920 and 09026014470, E-mail: conference2024@csjmu.ac.in. For updates, log on to: <https://sites.google.com/csjmu.ac.in/national-seminar-nep2020/>

International Conference on Recent Advances of Probability and Statistics

A three-day International Conference on 'Recent Advances of Probability and Statistics in Interdisciplinary Research' is being jointly organized by the Department of Statistics, Faculty of Science, University of Allahabad, Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh and Indian Society of Probability and Statistics from February 06-08, 2024. The objective of the vent is to bring academicians and researchers together from across the globe on a forum for discussion and dissemination of advanced ideas and principles in

Probability and Statistics and its application in other disciplines like agriculture, medicine, epidemiology, social sciences, forestry, environment, etc. The Themes of the Event are:

- Probability Theory and Applications.
- Bayesian Statistical Inference.
- Time Series Analysis and Forecasting Models.
- Statistics in Quality, Reliability and Operation Research.
- Demography and Population Studies.
- Data Science Techniques.
- Statistics in Agricultural and Medicine.
- Environmental and Forestry Statistics.
- Bioinformatics / Bio-statistics / Survival Analysis.
- Survey Sampling.
- Planning and Experimental Designs.
- Statistics in Management.
- Econometrics.
- Deterministic and Stochastic Modelling.
- Applied Statistics.
- Univariate and Multivariate Analysis.

For further details, contact Organising Secretary, Department of Statistics, Faculty of Science, University of Allahabad, Prayagraj—211002 Uttar Pradesh. E-mail: rapsir2024@allduniv.ac.in. For updates, log on to: <https://allduniv.ac.in/faculties/statistics>.

International Conference on Corporate Social Responsibility and Decent Work

A three-day International Conference on 'Corporate Social Responsibility and Decent Work in the Era of the SDGs' is being jointly organized by the FLAME University, Pune and WageIndicator Foundation from March 21-23, 2024.

In recent decades, decent work has increasingly been on economic and social agendas, with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) explicitly linking it to economic growth in SDG 8. The International Labour Organisation built on this by framing the Decent Work Agenda around the tenets of SDG 8. Governments actively promote this too; the G20 New Delhi Leader's Declaration in September

2023 committed to the cause of decent work for all workers. Though global fora like the UN, the ILO and the G20 may place decent work at the centre of global agendas, the responsibility of implementing decent work across value chains ultimately lies with corporations. This may take the form of paying Living Wages, providing better working conditions, ensuring gender equality or supporting collective bargaining.

There is no longer a trade-off between an economy that grows and an economy that helps people thrive. So how can we achieve this? As we stand at the halfway point between 2016 (SDG adoption) and 2030 (SDG implementation targets), it is necessary to assess how corporations can catalyse the achievement of SDG 8, and how these efforts will fit within the larger realm of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The Themes of the Event are:

- The Scope of Corporate Social Responsibility.
- The Centrality of Living Wages in Enabling Decent Work and Economic Growth.
- The Role of Governments, Labour Law, and Regulation in Decent Work.
- The Power of Collective Bargaining in Ensuring Decent Work.
- The Unique Challenges of Enabling Decent Work in the Gig Economy.

For further details, contact the Organising Secretary, FLAME University, Gat No. 1270, Lavale, Off. Pune- Bengaluru Highway, Pune - 412115, Maharashtra, E-mail: sdgconference@flame.edu.in. For updates, log on to: www.flame.edu.in

National Conference on Embracing the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (NEP-2020)

A two-day National Conference on ‘Embracing the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (NEP-

2020): Exploring Perspectives and Confronting Challenges’ is being organized by the MANUU College of Teacher Education, Bidar, Karnataka from January 29-30, 2024. The event is a vibrant, future-focused gathering of academics, thought leaders, innovators, and policymakers across the country to design a rigorous and vibrant Integrated Teacher Education Programme.

The Integrated Teacher Education Programme aims to prepare teachers for Foundational, Preparatory, Middle, and Secondary Stages as per the new school structure of NEP-2020. It allows only outstanding students to enter the teaching profession. A student pursuing this course will be grounded in Indian values, languages, knowledge of Indian ethos, tribal tradition and latest advances in education, and pedagogy. This course caters to the needs of the 21st century skills—the 3Ls. The NCERT, NCTE and UGC must work a lot to successfully implement the ITEP by keeping multidisciplinary, holistic approaches with multiple entry and exit and to deposit the academic credits in ABC (Academic Bank of Credit). The Subthemes of the Event are:

- Curriculum.
- Teaching Methods/Approaches.
- Teaching-Learning Materials.
- Evaluation.
- Information and Communication Technologies.
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Education.

For further details, contact Organising Secretary, Prof. Sadaquat Ali Khan, Principal, MANUU College of Teacher Education, Shaheen Nagar, Shahpur Gate, Bidar, Karnataka-585403, E-mail: ctebidarConference@gmail.com. For updates, log on to: <https://manuu.edu.in/college-teacher-education-bidar>

AIU News

Faculty Development Programme on the Role of Intellectual Property Rights

A five-day Online Faculty Development Programme on ‘Role of Intellectual Property Rights in Higher Education’ was jointly organized by the

Association of Indian Universities (AIU)—Academic and Administrative Development Centre (AADC), Shri Vaishnav Vidyapeeth Vishwavidyalaya (SVVV), Indore from November 20-24, 2023. Around sixty participants registered for the event. Through a series

of ten online sessions, the experts explored various aspects of Intellectual Property Rights in the digital era. These sessions not only enabled the experts to share their insights and expertise but also facilitated an exchange of knowledge between them and the attending faculty members.

The Inaugural Session began with the Welcome Address by Dr. Upinder Dhar, Vice Chancellor, SVVV. Dr. Dhar welcomed the Chief Guest, Resource Persons and all participants. In his address, he emphasized the understanding of intellectual property with special reference to adhering to the University Grants Commission norms for plagiarism and other IP's.

Nodal Officer, Dr. Anand Rajavat, Dean Academic, SVVV briefed about the programme and its relevance. He gave brief outline of programme and requested all the participants to enrich their knowledge through the programme by active participation. He mentioned the objectives of the programme.

The Chief Guest, Prof. Vinay Kumar Pathak, Vice Chancellor, CSJM University gave his insights on the filing of IPR in his Keynote Address. He said that every educator must spread awareness on IPRs. Prof. Pathak said that our ancestors have never given so much emphasis on the IPR earlier, we have developed a lot of things but we have never taken IPS for those things. Suddenly we have seen across the world that we know a lot of things for years but when it comes to the world that patent is with somebody else, he further said. He expressed his sincere thanks to the host university for inviting him as the Chief Guest.

Dr. Nitu Katariya was the Coordinator of the inaugural session. The session concluded with the Vote of Thanks proposed by Ms Mansi Trivedi, Coordinator and Assistant Professor, Shri Vaishnav Institute of Law, SVVV, Indore.

Dr. Upinder Dhar headed the session on 'Intellectual Property Rights: An Overview'. Dr. Dhar talked about the meaning and understanding of IPR. According to him, it is the creation of the mind over which the IPR is taken. He discussed some of the important international conventions on the protection of IPR with their need and benefits in detail i.e. ensuring innovation enhances economic growth. He elaborated on the existence of IPR in India, being a part of different treaties and conventions for the

protection of IPR. He talked about different IPR policies in India including different cells and offices in India i.e. DIPP, CIPAM, etc.

Mr. Gaurav Singhal, Principal IP Attorney and Sighwal Tech Law OPC Pvt. Ltd. provided insights about the Trends in Patents, Patent Filing and Procedure. He discussed the challenges which are faced while filing the patent and the General Procedures of *Patent Office and Multi-country Filings*. He showed all the forms needed to be filled out for applying patent and the financial aspects too.

Dr. Alka Chawla, Professor, Incharge Campus Law Center, Delhi University, New Delhi spoke on 'The Law of Copyright in India'. She explained that copyright is a right given by the law to creators of literary, dramatic, musical and artistic works and producers of cinematograph films and sound recordings. She made it clear to the participants that it is a bundle of rights including rights of reproduction, communication to the public, adaptation and translation of the work. There could be slight variations in the composition of the rights depending on the work.

Dr. Priya Sipaha, Professor and Dean, School of Legal Studies, Avantika University, Ujjain spoke about Cyber-crimes in IT Sector related to Copyright. She gave her insights on the cyber-crimes including cyber enabled crime and cyber dependent crimes. She explained the difference between phishing and hacking and vulnerability of elderly people to fraud. She also talked about the practical implementation of laws and regulations

IPR Chair, Dr. Anindya Sircar, Professor, NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad headed the session on 'IPR Issues in Digital Domain and Emerging Media'. He elucidated the usage of AI in the legal field and how AI's potential can be used in reducing workload and assisting lawyers. He also threw light on the ownership issues of AI-generated artwork and adaptive and augmented CSR policy.

Dr. W M Dhumane, Adviser, Centre for Research in Intellectual Property, MNLU Mumbai and Former Senior Joint Controller of Patents and Designs, Govt. of India addressed the next session. He delivered a talk on the topic 'Need for Teachers to have Pedagogical Content Knowledge of Intellectual Property Right'. The speaker provided an in-depth and comprehensive overview of the subject matter.

Dr. Dhumane discussed that it is important for teachers to be able to communicate the idea of IPR to the students and teach them the importance of IPR requirements. He insisted that the teachers must focus on R&D for IPR and should collaborate with industries; with this, both shall benefit.

Mohit Patwardhan, Director, Legal Compliance and IP Litigations, Lotus Pharmaceutical (Alvogen Group) addressed the session on the topic ‘Prior Art Search before Filing Patents and Patent Oppositions, Invalidations and Revocation’. He stated that Prior art is anything that is available in public domain. He discussed that how prior art search can be made before filing patents. He also discussed about Tools and databases available freely and on payment basis for the prior art search. He explained and discussed about the filling of patent opposition invalidations and revocations and their timelines. He also discussed about the difference between patentability search and its distinction with prior art search.

Dr. I A Palani, Professor and Dean R and D IIT Indore spoke on ‘Importance of Patent and Innovation in Educational Institutions’. During the presentation, Prof. Palani demonstrated various technology readiness levels with case studies from the textile, mechanical and pharma sectors. He explained how academicians can move ahead with their idea to a final product and how the Idea can be protected.

The Programme ended with Valedictory Session. Coordinator, Dr. Nitu Katariya presented by comprehensive event report. Dr. Upinder Dhar delivered the concluding remarks of the event. Valuable insights and opinions about the programme were shared by the participants during the feedback session. Expressing gratitude and appreciation, Dr. Anand Rajavat, Nodal Officer proposed the Vote of Thanks.

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Themes/Subthemes for the Special Issue of University News-2023-24				
S. No.	Zonal Vice Chancellors’ Meet-2023-24	Theme/ Subthemes for Special Issue	Last Date to Contribute*	Date of Publication
1.	North Zone	<p>Globalization and Internationalization of Higher Education</p> <p><i>Subthemes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Collaborations and Partnerships: Building Bridges for Higher Education • Global Higher Education Policy and Regulation: Harmonizing Standards • Student Mobility and Diversity: Enhancing International Experience 	January 31, 2024	February 12-18, 2024

*The Articles may be submitted to The Editor, University News, Association of Indian Universities, New Delhi through E-mail: ramapani.universitynews@gmail.com and universitynews@aiu.ac.in on or before the last date mentioned above.

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THESES OF THE MONTH

SOCIAL SCIENCES

A List of doctoral theses accepted by Indian Universities
(Notifications received in AIU during the month of Nov-Dec, 2023)

Accountancy

1. Dalwadi, Pragnesh Bhikhabhai. **A study of corporate social responsibility of selected public sector undertaking in India.** (Dr. G P Japee), Faculty of Commerce, Gujarat University, Ahmedabad.
2. Mojindra, Ravindra Ladhahbai. **A comparative study of financial performance of selected cement companies in India.** (Dr. Hemendra Shah), Faculty of Commerce, Gujarat University, Ahmedabad.

Anthropology

1. Basar, Engam. **Reproductive health of Galo women of Arunachal Pradesh.** (Prof. H Vokendro Singh), Department of Anthropology, Rajiv Gandhi University, Itanagar.
2. Dindie, Hibu. **Culture continuity and tourism in Arunachal Pradesh.** (Dr. Md Ashghar), Department of Anthropology, Rajiv Gandhi University, Itanagar.
3. Doji, Nyato. **Identity in jeopardy: An anthropological study of the Monpa and the Shar chop in Arunachal-Bhutan bordeland.** (Dr. Dhritiman Sarma), Department of Anthropology, Rajiv Gandhi University, Itanagar.
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Commerce

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Psychology

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Public Administration

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2	Assistant Professor	Marathi	2		
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7	Assistant Professor	Psychology	2		
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B) Professors:				
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C) Associate Professors :				
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2	Pharmacognosy	01	01	----
3	Pharmacology	01	01	----
4	Pharmaceutical Chemistry	01	01	----
D) Assistant Professors :				
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2.	Pharmaceutical Analysis (100 Intake)	01	01	----
3.	Pharmaceutics (100 Intake)	05	02	VJA-01, OBC-01, EWS-01
4.	Pharmaceutical Chemistry	02	---	VJA-01, OBC-01
5.	Pharmacology	04	02	SC-01, VJA-01
6.	Pharmacognosy	02	01	SC-01
M.Pharmacy Section				
A) Professors:				
1.	Pharmaceutics	01	01	----
2.	Pharmaceutical Chemistry	01	01	----
3.	Pharmacology	01	01	----
B) Assoc. Professors:				
4.	Pharmaceutical Chemistry	01	01	----
C) Asst. Professors:				
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