

Hello
Spring!

THE PINE CHRONICLE

News, Views and Creative Expressions

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EDITORIAL

When one tries to study civilizations to understand the human past, one cannot help but notice amazing differences between the East and the West. In the East, the primary building block of its knowledge and wisdom was based out of the realization that man is but a small part of the larger reality and that there exists various levels and nuances of that reality. The purpose of life was seen in terms of embarking on a journey that would enable the seeker to discover deeper and higher levels of reality. The prescribed method of doing this was not only through an organized educational system but also by receiving direction and education from those who have traversed the path and reached a higher level. What was required of the individual was to embark on a journey of self-discovery and going deep into oneself. In this scheme of things knowledge was treated as divine and knowledge givers were treated with reverence. Probably, it was for this reason that a true teacher was referred to as the *Guru* or the dispeller of darkness. Since knowledge was equated with the divine, the logical corollary was that the proper use of knowledge was for the betterment of both self and society and the welfare of all. Within this orientation it was not possible to accommodate the concept of seeking pecuniary gain from knowledge and wisdom, or denying the benefit of such knowledge because of monetary reasons. In other words, the concept of Patent laws, IPR or TRIPS was anathema to the basic tenets of education in India for it resulted in commoditization of knowledge and wisdom. For Indian civilization, knowledge was for sharing and wisdom to be used for the benefit of mankind. It was this philosophy that was exemplified when the world was getting ravaged by HIV AIDS and millions were dying. Till date, there is no vaccine to prevent HIV AIDS. But what scientists succeeded in doing was to come up with a combination of drugs that was successful in treating and saving the patients. The only catch was that the treatment regime was extremely expensive and most people could not afford it. So what emerged was a scenario wherein only the rich could afford to receive the treatment and lived while the poor died because they could not afford the needed drugs. Soon, the situation so emerged that in the poor nations of Africa millions of HIV AIDS deaths occurred while the richer nations, be

it the USA or the European nation and Japan succeeded in saving their patients. At this crucial juncture, an Indian company stepped in with generic drugs that saved millions especially in Africa. The company in question was CIPLA which made available Antiretroviral therapy at a fraction of the price charged by pharmaceutical multinationals. This helped save millions of patients who till then could not afford the drugs, especially in worst affected Africa. Welcome to the world of generic drugs and India's leadership role in it. Generic medicine is a drug or a combination of drugs that contains the same chemical substance as a drug that was originally registered as a patented medicine. All patents are given for a definite time period and once the patents on the original drugs expire, they become open for manufacture by other companies. Generic medicines can be sold at a fraction of the cost of the original patented medicine and is considered to be a boon for the poor who cannot otherwise afford expensive branded drugs. Since the active chemical substance used in the medicine are the same, the medical profile of generics is supposed to be equivalent in performance. In other words, a generic drug would have the same active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) as the original, but it may differ in terms of the manufacturing process, formulation, used, colour, taste, and packaging. Normally patents are given for a period of 20 years. However, many countries and regions, such as the European Union and the United States, may grant up to five years of additional protection. This is known as "patent term restoration" Generic drugs have been a game changer in the health care sector and India has played a leading role in it. After saving millions of lives in providing cheap anti-retroviral treatment in the case of HIV AIDS, today, it has supplied tens of millions of doses of Hydroxychloroquine to the most needy nations thanks to its strong foundations of drug manufacture and generic medicine. It is certainly a huge achievement that India has emerged as a leader in this field and every Indian should be proud and happy about it.

NuksaThe Pine Chronicle is the monthly news magazine of IIM Shillong.

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TIMELINE

IIM Shillong initiates niche PhD Program

IIM Shillong inaugurated the commencement of its second batch of participants for its PhD programme for Working Professionals. This niche doctoral programme in management for working professionals envisages expansion of research frontiers for working professionals. Aimed at nurturing scholars for research with both theoretical and practical understanding of the complex problems facing today's organizations and management professionals. Presenting the programme commencement address, Director of IIM Shillong Prof. D.P. Goyal said, "The programme which is in line with our mission statement of generating and disseminating knowledge in all fields of management, I am sure will provide its participants with an excellent opportunity to contribute to the field of management sciences given its design of offering an interdisciplinary and holistic perspective to define and solve management related problems in various domains of management." He further said, "We need to develop creative and innovative leaders," while also expressing his contentment on the myriad profiles and work experiences of the current batch of 19 participants.

Encouraging quality research, publication, and practice, Prof. Goyal stressed on the fact that knowledge needs theory, models, tools, methods and techniques and thorough understanding of all aspects of management. "The combination of academics and practice is needed to succeed as a scholar. The data, learning and experience that you possess, we hope, will ensure the quality of your research, while also challenging the status quo in your pursuit of knowledge," he exhorted while further stressing on the arising need for contextual research.

Chairperson of the programme, Prof Moushmi Bhattacharya further added, "The Institute while granting admissions has considered valid scores of GMAT, GRE, CAT, GATE or JRF (NET). The minimum commitment to the programme is 3 years, but candidates are expected to complete the programme in four years and ensure that they complete the requirements of the programme within this stipulated time while also attaining learning goals. During the coursework, classes will be held in both online and offline mode."

Earlier welcoming the participants, Dean (Academics) Prof Keya Sengupta expressed hope that the participants will be able to contribute to their future organizations through their upgraded theoretical and practical knowledge.

It may be added that the PhD programme boasts of participation by senior corporate executives seeking to upgrade their knowledge towards research and publication in their respective areas of work and study.

IIM Shillong's e-Symposia Series Launched

The APJ Abdul Kalam Centre for Policy Research & Analysis under the aegis of IIM Shillong inaugurated the **e-Symposia Series on Emergent North – East India: Strategic and Developmental Imperatives** on June 05th, 2020. While welcoming the panellists and the participants, Shri Shishir Bajoria, Chairman of BoG,

expressed the Institute's sincere desire to effectively contribute in planning and delivering towards the concerted development of NER through the Dr. Kalam Centre especially in the areas of the six critical and viable sectors of the region i.e. logistics, tourism, horticulture, handicraft, handloom and BPO.

Speaking as Chief Guest during the inaugural session, Minister of DoNER Dr. Jitendra Singh fondly recollected his last meeting with the late President a week before his demise and acknowledged Dr. Kalam's life as a "privilege which God does not grant everybody". "It was the very next day that the Ministry of DoNER decided to step in to contribute and enrich his memory, and therefore that is how the APJ Abdul Kalam Centre at IIM Shillong was subsequently established. I am glad that over the years it has established itself as a full-fledged centre for policy research."

Speaking primarily on the theme revolving on the economy and livelihood of the people of Northeast, Dr. Jitendra Singh recalled one of the earliest statements made by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on wanting to raise the north eastern region at par in levels with some of the other developed states and regions of the country and stressed on the ongoing prioritisation of the region by the Government. "North East has both a huge potential of economy as well as attributes that have either not been explored, or are not known by the rest of the country and the world at large. I am glad that over the past six years there has been a very conscious and consistent effort to overcome the challenges that were coming in the way of the progress of the region." He further elaborated on the successful implementation of roads and railways in the region apart from other palpable development initiatives which are sincere attempts to make up for the lack of connectivity that was adversely affecting the progress of the region including development of the economy and welfare of the youth.

Further urging the Centre at IIM Shillong to develop its own unique identity specializing in the management avenues in the context of North east while taking advantage of shared borders with countries like Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar and the envisaged objective of the government through its promotion of Act East policy, he hoped that the Centre would be an enabling catalyst to create learning and understanding on how best to manage the prospects and potentiality which can pave the way for creating NER as the upcoming economic hub, and India's newest business destination. Member of the BoG and expert on NER Shri Atul Kulkarni pointed out relevant growth facts which have changed NER from being considered only as a consumption centre to now becoming a manufacturing region which means that NE states are now emerging as manufacturing hubs creating business opportunities for transporters, and logistics firms. "The thrust by India towards creating a transnational and multi border connectivity framework in the region will bring about a paradigm change in the supply chain dynamics of the region," he added. Citing the minimal intra-regional trade, he opined that projects like Kaladan, and Mekong-Ganga project can boost cooperation with ASEAN, can boost INDO-ASEAN trade which currently stands at only about 10 percent of India's global trade valued at 70 billion. He hoped that the recent development announcements such as the North East Economic Corridor and signing of MoU between India and Bangladesh

developing multi model trade routes will strengthen the growth of NER.

Earlier, the Secretary to the Ministry of DoNER Dr. InderJit Singh stressed on the need to assess both achievements and shortcomings while recalling the NEC plenary chaired by the Prime Minister where he had highlighted his desire to see NEC developed into a state of the art resource centre with necessary knowledge, resources and skills while also engaging expert institutions like the IIM in north east, pursuant to which the tripartite agreement including DoNER to set up the policy centre came into being. He hoped that the centre will continue its progressive work and come up with further action plans that are achievable on ground so as to positively impact the future of the people of northeast as desired.

The Secretary NEC and Chairman of the Governing Body of the Centre at Shri. K. Moses Challai while also speaking during the inauguration of the e-symposia series expressed deep concern on the requirement for economic resurgence of the region, particularly owing to the current Covid pandemic. He strongly highlighted the need for investments towards ensuring economic growth and development in the region while calling for a transparent SWOT analysis to understand the ground realities faced by the region.

Prof Keya Sengupta, Centre Coordinator highlighted the ongoing efforts of the centre and its thrust towards rural uplift through resolute work in the stated key areas since the sectors play an important role in the lives and livelihood of the region's people. "This can only be achieved by familiarizing with real life problems." The centre has till date initiated various workshops for capacity building in management skills, including programs built to increase information on relevant schemes and government initiatives which is lacking especially amongst the young population. The Centre launched its newsletter on October 15th, 2019 to mark the birth anniversary of Dr. Kalam. She further expressed, "The e-symposium series is expected to provide rich inputs and innovative ideas which will help the Centre in policy formulation."

Prof D P Goyal, Director IIM Shillong while presenting the vote of thanks assured that the Institute through the Centre in memory of Dr. Kalam would not only strive, but ensure significant impact and palpable contribution through its functioning.

The inaugural session was followed by a technical panel discussion moderated by Prof Keya Sengupta which included panelists Dr. SaibalKar, Professor of Economics, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Kolkata, Prof. Rajashekhar, HAG Professor and Head, Centre for Decentralization and Development, Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore, Prof. Madhurajya Prasad Bezbaruah, Professor, Department of Economics, Gauhati University, and Mr. Amit Raje, Ex -Managing Director, Goldman Sach's.

Tourism Sector Emphasized in IIMS e-Symposium

The Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Centre for Policy Research & Analysis under the aegis of IIM Shillong today hosted an **e-symposium on Tourism (Opportunities in NER)** under the **e-Symposia Series**

on Emergent North East India: Strategic and Developmental Imperatives.

Chairman of the Board of Governors, IIM Shllong Shri. Shishir Bajoria while welcoming the participants and speaking of northeastern states' bountiful nature and culture remarked, "This needs to be projected to a great extent, to the rest of the country, and to the world at large. We have huge scope of religious, festival, nature and archaeological tourism to name a few, which we are sure are aspects that the whole world would like to witness, but for this we have are in great need of international level infrastructural development. It is time to refocus on these requirements which can also directly impact the economic growth of the region." He also stressed on infrastructure development of NER and collaboration of educational institutions for improving the tourism sector, while also pointing out the requirement for improving connectivity and involvement of big private players to kick start tourism in all the states.

Congratulating IIM Shillong and its leadership on its effort despite the current pandemic constraints, Chief Guest of the event Shri. Prahlad Singh Patel, Minister of Culture & Tourism, Govt of India said, "Perception change is more valuable than wealth. We have a great opportunity in front of us, to change adversity into positivity by showcasing the picturesque beauty of NER and targeting a different audience who have till now opted to travel overseas than to experience tourism in their own backyard. This may be a good time to augment domestic tourism in the northeast. We need to weigh all options while coming out of the current pandemic, and subsequently open our doors to international tourists as well. This can only become possible when the government, tour operators and key stakeholders work together responsibly to ensure that the tourist experience remains memorable." Shri Patel also stressed on the need for strengthening connectivity and hoped for regional cooperation to increase convenience for tourists.

Moving on to a technical session on opening up of opportunities for NER, Prof Keya Sengupta, Centre Coordinator, stressed on converting the current crisis into an opportunity, "and find out ways and means through deliberations with policy makers, entrepreneurs, consumers and other stakeholders into ideating towards an enriched and new tourism model, and further channelize the learnings through close coordination with the Ministry of DoNER and NEC, Shillong to come up with some innovative policies so that the sector can contribute significantly in the development of NER."

Member of the Board of Governors, Shri Atul Kulkarni while moderating the session clearly emphasised on the mandate bestowed on IIM Shillong by the government of India, particularly through the Ministry of DoNER for increment in capacity building, academic support and research to assist operators and stakeholders, including incubation to help the young entrepreneurs to take advantage of the initiative and association with IIM Shillong.

Presenting the valedictory address, Deputy Chief Minister of Tripura, Shri JishnuDebbarma who dwelt largely on the current pandemic and the importance of reviving the economy opined, "Tourism today is one of the most important development need where states can enhance cooperation and regional integration. It

is now recognised that tourism not only increases foreign exchange but also increases employment possibilities and people to people dynamics.” Shri Debbarma urged IIM Shillong to work towards creation of ideas and innovation while being sensitive to the diversity of NER states so as to create a better understanding of the region even amongst mainstream Indian populace.

Highlighting the adverse impact of Covid 19 on the tourism sector, speakers delved on the need for confidence building measures to build trust across stakeholders and strengthening them to remain business ready, increasing accessibility, and also increasing facets of hygiene for the sector to bounce back, including prospects to ascertain return on investment through tourism promotion amongst others.

It may be mentioned that the entire conduct of the e-symposium was streamed live through facebook and twitter handles of the Institute.



Dr. Jitendra Singh Minister of DoNER inaugurating IIM Shillong's e-Symposium

Condolence Meeting

The IIM Shillong fraternity on 01st June, 2020 condoled the untimely demise of its faculty member Prof. Arindum Mukhopadhyay who passed away on 27th May, 2020.

Two minutes of silence was observed by the faculty, officers and staff of the Institute as a mark of respect and bereavement.

OFF BEAT

Living in the present moment

Happy Covid times! Yes, you heard me right, may such times last while you stay safe!

Are you in a confused state of mind more than ever before? After listening to endless zoom talks on mind, meditation, dealing with fear, anxiety and what not? Do you feel that they merely generated a few sparks here and there but did not really ignite you into action? Be it such online sessions or your course lectures, unless you can clearly grasp the 'why' and 'how' (why should I know this or how should I put my learning into action) they may fail to inspire you or get you into

action mode. This is not yet another sermon but an attempt to provide the why and how of a simple thing that you can practice which has the potential to completely transform you and bring success in all that you do.

What is it that each of us have equally- no one has less or more of? It is the present moment. What we do with the present moment makes all the difference in terms of outcome of our efforts. If we are completely aware of each moment that we live, then success is guaranteed. Unfortunately, we fritter away countless precious moments without realizing it. If, at this moment we are thinking of the past- such thoughts may be of bitter times or better times, but the present has in the meantime slipped out of our hands. On the other hand, if this moment is spent worrying about the future- will I do my exams well, will I get a good job, will I be recognized for my efforts in my organization, will I be able to realize my dreams, take care of my parents, manage my health... then too precious moments of the present are lost. Utilizing the present moment to think about the past and future completely ruins the present. That does not mean that we should not plan for the future. Drafting a well thought out plan is productive use of the present. We all have the tendency to think that a lot of things that we do in a routine manner like brushing our teeth, eating, driving our bike or car do not require the presence of mind and hence the mind can be engaged to take us to the past or future or to do some 'multi-tasking'- checking the phone or texting while eating, listening to music while studying, chatting or letting the mind drift while driving. Often, we would have driven from office to home or home to office without clearly recollecting the roads we passed through, or eaten food without being able to recollect the taste or ingredients of what we ate. This constant drifting of the mind from the present to past to future happens when we sit down to study. Therefore, our learning is 'patchy' with many gaps. There are no accidents in life, ever. It is the momentary absence of the mind from the present which causes mishaps. Once a seeker of Truth kept approaching a well-known master and requested to take him as his disciple. The master kept asking him to come back later. This happened for almost two years. The seeker was persistent but did not seek to question himself as to why he was not worthy of receiving knowledge from the master. It was a rainy day when he made another attempt. He stepped into the master's house and bowed before him. The master looked up and asked, 'On which side of the door did you leave your shoes and on which side did you leave your umbrella before you entered the room?' The seeker could not recall and the master said, 'I am sorry, you are not yet ready to receive knowledge'. My dear fellow seekers, let us practice from now on to live in the present moment. Nothing else is more precious. Success does not come one fine moment in the future. It comes out of each moment that we have worked to achieve something. It comes when we live in the moment whether in that moment we are engaged in something mundane or important. How to practice being in the present? Treating every single action as equally important helps.

Let us focus attention on every single step when we walk and get a feel of the muscles involved in the action, on every mouthful of food when we eat and try to associate the ingredients to the taste, on every sound when we are absorbed in nature and the emotions they

evoke, on the essence of the words when we are reading and the sense they make in the context, on the sound of every instrument in the background when we are listening to music and the vibrations they create in our body, on viewing everything on the screen when we watch a movie and try to feel the effect of what we see, on our mind and emotions. As we practice, our thoughts, words and actions slow down. By observing the space of silence between spoken words we will realize that during the silent gaps our mind did not run away. When we achieve mastery over living in the now, we will find it easy to draw our mind inwards. In the false understanding of 'rationality', we are all the time looking outward for answers. When our rational mind accepts that each one of us is unique, why should we look up to others for solutions to our problems? By practicing looking inward, all our questions will be answered and we will have absolute clarity of thoughts. Meditation is very vague for most of us. We may begin in right earnest and after sitting for ten or fifteen minutes with eyes closed, we may realize that the mind was not present for most of the time! By practicing being in the now, during each and every moment we will eventually reach the meditative state. Easy? Let us try!

Prof Lata Chakravarthy

ALUM SPEAK

Covid Musings

Covid-19 has thrown up lot of life challenges to all of us in workplace and at home. This world pandemic is sure to leave its long lasting impact not only on economy but also on in each one of us. This has been a time where we have come to know more about ourselves and our strengths and weaknesses. All those management skills which were mere part of the curriculum and long forgotten, seem to have come alive and put to good use.

While we are being forced to live with a lot of physical barriers and restrictions, lot of mental barriers have been forced to be broken as well. Many of the stereotype BCPs or Business Continuity Plan, which were devised to act as backup plans in case of system failures have been rendered defunct. We are being trained to think

the box in a way which will bring about long term sustainability of economy and the human race.

In such times, when the entire ecosystem is dealing with such unprecedented force majeure condition, the virtual world seems to be the "new normal". Chatting away on a lazy Saturday evening over a cup of coffee and snacks with friends seems to be distant past. Now it's more about connecting over virtual meeting rooms, more active participation over social media. So is this getting people closer or driving us apart into dungeons of solitude. Just a thought.

2020 can be coined as the Year of Musings. On one hand, it has brought in lot of uncertainties but also given us that time to reflect and connect those tiny dots backwards. Personally, I have done things which I never imagined I could do – cooking is one of them! It has been new life for me this year, in a new place with new family, new responsibilities, mixed feelings and new experiences. Writing an article is also one of those new things I have tried. Learnings for me this year has also been about life at large. The very fact that it is short and transient and is meant to be lived. That life is about living each day as if it was all you have and making a difference in someone's life. It is not always changing the world but putting in your one cent which can help someone be one cent better.

Let's also stop for a moment to think about the senior citizens in each of our families and surroundings. While all of us are busy handling Covid stress managing work at home and office, they are silently dealing with the fear and inhibitions, trying all modes of prevention of the disease. Maybe they need more of our time now than ever before, just to ease them out, give them more company, talk about pleasant memories of the past or bring up something exciting for them to work on.

Like the massive ocean where its waves have its own crests and troughs, Covid has been the deepest of those troughs. The highest crest is yet to come- till then we should endeavour to shape our lives to come out stronger and tougher for that better and brighter tomorrow.

Fire is the test of gold; adversity of strong men and women- Martha Graham (modified)

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