

Hello  
Spring!

# THE PINE CHRONICLE

News, Views and Creative Expressions

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## EDITORIAL

Even a cursory examination of the philosophy of the ancient civilizations reveal an amazing insight into life as well as the inter connectedness of all life forms. The sanctity of life and the unbridled love and respect humans extended to nature found reflection in both religious beliefs and cultural practices of all indigenous faiths and religions emanating in the Orient. Every rock, tree, river, animal or mountain was ascribed some form of divinity and worshipped. Even a major religion such as Hinduism has a pantheon of Godheads that may number hundreds of thousands. Interestingly, it is the dialogue between the human being, the animate and the inanimate and the realization of higher levels of consciousness that has laid the foundations of myriad philosophical traditions. These represents the amazing thought process that celebrates the oneness of all creation. Interestingly, though the minute and fragile inter-connectedness of all creation has become fairly evident to the modern scientific man, yet prevalent economic theories and systems of production and consumption that guide human society has clearly adapted a sledge hammer approach to this concept. This is based primarily on the premise that increased consumption would result in higher GDP's that in turn would lead to development. Unfortunately, it is being realized all over the world, that the GDP approach is based on grossly inadequate parameters. This approach simply lacks the sophistication to ensure appreciation let alone acceptance about the reality of the existence of a symbiotic relationship between the different constituents of nature, and the inability to factor in wellbeing and happiness in humans, the *raison d'être* of life. While the single-minded pursuit of GDP goals led to consumerism emerging as the mainstay of human society, it quietly reduced art, aesthetics, health and wellbeing to a consumer items. In the process what was easily forgotten was fact certain things in life would forever defy commodification. Health is not about the number of hospital beds available per thousand population it is more about wellbeing and happiness. By extension, it may be said that aesthetics is born out of the appreciation of the finer nuances of

life, and that it cannot be reduced to a mere tradable item. With consumerism emerging as the dominant paradigm of our times, markets, profits and an insatiable thirst for more and more consumption has often blurred the need between need and greed. As a consequence, all manifestation of modern life spanning from popular culture to educational systems, human organizations to life goals and production and consumption systems reflect an amazing decadence that has painfully robbed mankind of empathy and imagination. Shorn of these two basic ingredients that had originally transformed man into a human, a certain emptiness and the lack of purpose and direction has inevitably set in. Without a doubt, the educational system owes it to the future generations to arrest this slide and bring about a fundamental shift. It may begin by developing a curriculum that would not only impart general knowledge but also develop general intellectual capacities in the individual. This would stand in contrast to a standardized professional, vocational, or technical curriculum that often promotes a tunnel vision by confining itself to a single domain knowledge structure. By broadly offering a broad intellectual foundation and the basic tools to think critically, reason analytically and express ideas clearly the education system could easily produce leaders to transform society. These proficiencies will enable one to successfully navigate the complex issues facing mankind and also empower the individual to confidently face the future and sort out all challenges with an open and innovative mindset capable of viewing any scenario from multiple perspectives. This openness to ideas tempered by respect and empathy would certainly lay the foundation for a Just and Sustainable World, a legacy worth passing on to the future generation.

## ABOUT NUKSA

Nuksa The Pine Chronicle is the monthly news magazine of IIM Shillong.

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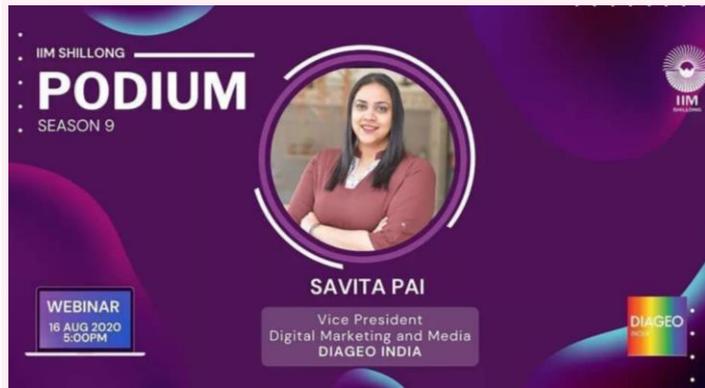
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On 8<sup>th</sup> August, we hosted Mr. Shravan Alavilli, the Client success director of Gramener. It is a data science consultancy firm also specializing in storytelling from data and data visualizations. Data science is the latest industry interests. Many companies have been integrating data science-based actions into their functioning. He spoke at length about the importance and application of data insights in driving strategic business functions and the Gramener's role in this service.



On 16<sup>th</sup> of August, Podium hosted Ms. Savita Pai, Vice President-Digital Marketing and Media communications at DIAGEO India. The session was focused on the changing landscape of media and digital marketing. Ms. Pai spoke about both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of digital marketing while also speaking about the transformation in the field of media and communications led by the ever-changing consumer behavior. Being a veteran in the field of strategy and marketing communications, Ms. Pai spoke also spoke about the various career choices available to B-school graduates in the same field and gave her insights on how they can ace their careers in this niche domain.



On 21<sup>st</sup> August, Mr. Shrikant Lonikar, CHRO and Board Director of Pernod Richard India, had an audience with the PGP participants and shared insights on the Future of workforce planning and how Pernod Ricard plans to take care of its employees post COVID-19 pandemic. He highlighted some of the current concerns of human resource management and the shaping of workforce factors and expectations in the emerging new normal.



The session on 22<sup>nd</sup> August, hosted Mr. Siddharth Deshmukh, National Head - Modern Trade and General Trade at OnePlus India. He spoke about distribution in the handset industry. Focused on modern and general trade channels and contrasted them with the online distribution channel. Further, he discussed about various intricacies in pricing, marketing, and regulating distribution in the modern and general trade channels.



On 25<sup>th</sup> August, Mr. Srikrishnan V, Key Account Director- Talent, Learning and Engagement at LinkedIn India joined as the guest speaker for the online Podium series. Mr. Srikrishnan delivered the session on leveraging the power of LinkedIn in times of shifting of hiring process to online mediums. He spoke at length to the participants as to how they can use LinkedIn to establish their personal brand and build their network effectively. He also stressed on the importance of learning and development to advance one's career.

## KREN

The second episode of **KREN** – the annual HR Conclave of IIM Shillong was organized online on 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2020. The panelists for the day were Mr. Satyajit Mohanty, CHRO at Crompton Greaves Consumer, Mr. Sumit Neogi, HR Director - South Asia, and the Middle East at The Lubrizol Corporation, and Mr. Rituraj Sar, Vice President, and Head Learning and Development at Lupin Limited. Prof. Rohit Dwivedi moderated the panel on the merging HR concept called the Gig Economy. Gig economy is



## One of Its Kind Onboarding

### Dancing To The Tunes Of The Time

It all started in the month of March when our admission interviews for IIM Shillong were scheduled. We were ready with our weapons to emerge victorious over thousands of candidates and earn admission to the Cloud campus. Little did we know that an unpleasant surprise was raising its head to take down the world full of 8 billion humans within a few days. On 21st March, the Prime Minister came on TV to address the nation and announced an unprecedented decision of complete lockdown to contain the highly contagious virus. We all were all left perplexed without a plan, and just like everyone else in the country, we were also hoping to see things return to normal and life to bounce back to hugging and trudging the streets of our cities and villages. Unluckily that beautiful day hasn't come since March. Today, while I am writing this anecdote sitting in my village home, sunflowers of my desire to be on campus with my friends and seniors from across the country start blooming like winter's sunny afternoon.

With proactive and empathetic planning, the admission cell of IIM Shillong conducted the online interviews for the first time and finally dispatched the offer letters on 27th May. With it came the happiness of converting one of the most prestigious B-Schools in the country, the joy of new friendships, and the cloud campus's dreams. Not just these but also came the infinite streak of WhatsApp groups, Facebook requests, and rumors, which were further exacerbated by anxiety induced by the pandemic. Even during these times, the PR and Alumni committee stayed in continuous communication with us and kept inviting us for alumni talk sessions called "**NEXUS**" in June and July. The admission cell was also in direct touch with all the converts through e-symposium sessions. Eminent leaders from business and politics were invited to talk about India's northeast, its cultural and economic dimensions, and about IIM Shillong's journey for the last 12 years. Such sessions were very appealing as these were the windows of niche information from all parts of industries and businesses about which there's not much information available online. Our alumni who are now holding leadership positions were answering all the questions we wanted to ask.

On the other hand, political leaders were expanding our horizon by explaining the nitty-gritty of government policies. For new B-School participants, yet to start their academic curriculum, these sessions were empowering. It was the Ambrosia for the voyage they were about to embark upon.

### Chasing the bus

On the fateful night of 4th August, exactly 17 days before official registration, we received a mail at midnight at 12:32 AM from an

unknown sender. It directed us to fill a profile information form and that "they" will address us on the evening of 5th August. With social media's help, we figured out that "they" were the seniors. We weren't able to contemplate the possible reasons behind the scheduled Zoom session. Yet to be officially enrolled to IIM Shillong, and we didn't know what to expect out of such communications. They commanded and we followed! What unraveled was a 14-day plan aimed at conditioning our personalities and habits and inducing agility, which had rusted during the unprecedented lockdown. This module was aptly named "**The Foot Step**" and it was loaded with multiple virtual conference sessions, PowerPoint presentations, introductory classes, and soft skill tasks. It had everything, which are essential prerequisite of an MBA journey. It was so well designed and competently executed that we were amazed at the steep learning curve it imparted. Peer learning and developing a congenial academic culture to maximize everyone's learning and experience are basic needs of any MBA curriculum. It was getting hampered in an online medium which we were grappling with. TFM module took care of this by allotting a new team for every new task to get to know each other and realize everyone's potential and learn from our peers from different educational and professional backgrounds. We also had many seniors on rotation, mentored us for various presentations, and kept us motivated by conducting regular fun activities. Seniors also took our Knowledge transfer classes for some subjects like Accounts, Economics and Excel, etc., to create parity between our knowledge levels so that no one was left behind.

At times, we felt overburdened with the assignments and presentations we were bombarded even before official classes had started, but PGP19 always told us that we have to sail through it and can't afford to give up. We kept chasing the bus, and in the end, we all boarded it to enjoy the journey of pragmatism, a journey of realization of our potential, and a journey dipped in friendships formed in sleepless nights. In my childhood, I had read a poem by George Meredith called "In The Woods," but those 14 days of TFM were when its true beauty was realized.

The lover of life knows his labor divine,  
And therein is at peace.

On the last day of TFM, our seniors played a prank on us, and they were successful in deceiving 247 of us. It took us a while to solve the trick and figuring out the prank. It solidified our relationship with our seniors, and we had a great end to a great but tiring session.

### Tides from the sea of wisdom

Gurus have always been venerated in the Indian culture and placed higher than the almighty. Our Indian values find a guru in every individual irrespective of age, education, and religion. The

batch of PGP20 found the first words of wisdom from business leaders who were invited as guests to describe their life journeys and inspire us in the first steps of our journey. These sessions were named "**SAMBHAV**," which translates into everything is possible because these were motivational talks which were enticing us to trudge the most challenging paths to become the person we want to be in our dreams. We had the privilege to meet many business leaders who had humble beginnings, but with perseverance, they achieved great heights and demonstrated that it's you who owns your future. At the end of each session, we were allowed to interact with the guest and ask questions; we capitalized on these rare opportunities and extracted priceless wisdom, which will benefit every one of us for years to come. SAMBHAV sessions were running parallel to TFM sessions. Hence, on the one hand, we were learning about case competitions, excel, and other technical stuff; on the other hand, we were peeping in the future through our esteemed alumni and business leaders' eyes.

On 21st August, we officially became MBA participants of Batch 2020-2022 at IIM Shillong. The whole process was conducted online by uploading relevant documents to support issues faced by participants. It was then followed by the alumni session and the guest session "**SAMBHAV**." On the evening of 24th August, the official commencement ceremony was organized with the eternal sound of holy mantras and welcome words from all notable office bearers of IIM Shillong. Although all of it was conducted online, it was still captivating and will be remembered as an important day in our lives. From 25th August, we were supposed to take remedial classes under the expert guidance of college professors. We had remedial courses for the next five days, and this module was named appropriately "**The First Step**." Professors from almost all the departments showered upon us with the wisdom acquired over a year and helped us climb the first steps of the staircase to success. All such sessions and were very well executed and were developed empathetically not to overburden new participants over our capacities.

**Lenin, the Soviet Union's Grand patriarch, once said that "there are decades where nothing happens, and there are weeks where decades happen."** Past one month in which we experienced adventures of "The Foot Steps" organized by seniors, captivating talks by alumni, and wisdom exuding sessions by eminent professors were such a mesmerizing experience that it's difficult to describe the boundaries of mere words. But these highly efficient sessions have made us stronger, and we are ready to subvert the dominant paradigm.

**Nishthit Nandan**  
PGP'20

## ODE

### Adulging

Never realised how each day passed,  
every memory had a reason to surpass

Those days come to an end when future could be sorted by  
procrastination alone  
and now there will be the time to find a way all by own

The ease with which every mischief was supported under the  
name of degree,  
there has come this time when my name is the only thing with me

The golden phase passed with a blink,  
as I never sat back and let it sink within

All the efforts put in me have to be surfaced into reality,  
carving a niche is soon going to be the vitality

This is life never does it wait for someone nor does it let someone  
stay still,  
Happy is the man who has led it with a thrill!

**Isha Arora**

**PGP 2020-22**

## ALUM SPEAK

### What I learnt from being an official flag bearer at the ICC Cricket World Cup

I had the opportunity to be a volunteer at the ICC Cricket World cup in 2019, which saw England lift the trophy for the first time in history. There were 6000 volunteer applications received, of which a total of ~2000 were selected, across the UK. The flag team, that I was a part of, had around 20 individuals at each venue.

Over the duration of 6 weeks, I was an official flag bearer for 5 countries (India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, New Zealand, Australia) positioned with the cricketers in the field of play, while the national anthems played in the background. All this, in front of a packed audience of around 25,000+ at the Oval and Lord's (including the grand final at Lord's where I held up the New Zealand globe during the national anthems).

It was a great learning experience, and here are a few key takeaways:

1. Most of the fellow volunteers in the flag team were students or fresh graduates. Understanding their priorities, their way of engaging with social media and their outlook towards life, work and more, provided me with insights that no white paper would have
2. The 'behind the scenes' event management effort to pull off an international tournament is often underestimated. Clockwork precision in decision making, coordination and execution, are vital in achieving positive outcomes. There is no luxury of paralysis by analysis.

3. I worked for team leaders who were fresh out of college. Having managed teams at the workplace, it was a huge learning opportunity to swap roles
4. No task is a mean task - The glitz of being on TV and proximity to sports stars were the perks of the role. However, each of us rolled up our sleeves and did what was required of us - from executing the flag code to clearing trash
5. Being professional even as a volunteer - People think that being a volunteer means delivering on a best effort basis. On the contrary, it is about going over and beyond, since it is something a person has chosen to do, wholeheartedly. Being punctual, attention to detail and real-time crisis management are as important in volunteering, as in a full-time job
6. Being neutral - It is very easy to be carried away by emotions, especially when a country you support wins or loses. But it is far more important to remain neutral and deliver the job at hand. There will be a time for celebration and enjoyment - during breaks or once the shift is done
7. Networking - Volunteering brings together people from diverse backgrounds, linked by a common passion. I have made good friends with retired Head Teachers, Media professionals, Event Managers and students from a variety of countries.



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8. Support from family - You give up your personal time to volunteer for a cause/ project. Support from family is very important to accomplish tasks without guilt. The six weekends away from my family made me appreciate their support (especially from my spouse) even more.

I have thoroughly enjoyed being a Cricketeer (as the volunteers were officially called), and special thanks go to the International Cricket Council for the opportunity provided. There could not have been a closer finish to the tournament than what we witnessed this time, last year.

Here's to more such experiences in future! Learning is as important as Earning... ☺

**-Ashutosh Dikshit (PGP 08)**  
**Head of Service Innovation, UCL, London**  
**Member of the Board of Governors, IIM Shillong**

### Through the Eyepiece!

**Rahul Nair**  
**PGP 20**



**Albert Hall**



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