

THE PINE CHRONICLE

News, Views and Creative Expressions

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EDITORIAL

Perhaps one book quoted very often, sometimes misquoted but certainly the least read is the constitution of India. Except for a select few individuals who are students of law or political science, most other members of the educated fraternity are largely ignorant of the basic features of the constitution. It beats all logic that even after seven decades of being an independent country, the most vital document that determines our nationhood is not compulsorily taught to everyone receiving an education! As a result, most of the citizens are unaware of their rights and responsibilities. This has promoted a piquant situation that has proved difficult to resolve. As a nation, India has both ability as well as the potential to be among the greatest nations in the world. But at the same time it struggles to claw itself out of poverty and inequality. It continues to find itself at the bottom of human development indices. Would the situation have been different had we followed the constitution in letter and spirit? Unfortunately, most discussions about the constitution has confined itself to a binary format of debate about secularism and democracy designed to hog eyeballs in primetime television, instead of engaging in substantive clauses of the constitution that could have brought about holistic development. For instance, are we even aware of what the Directive Principles of State Policy mandates? That the State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting a social order which will ensure justice that will encompass all aspects of national life be it social, economic or political. That it will strive to minimise the inequalities in income, and endeavour to eliminate inequalities in status, facilities and opportunities, not only amongst individuals but also amongst groups of people residing in different areas or engaged in different vocations. To ensure that citizens have the right to an adequate means of livelihood; that the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to serve the common good; that the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment; that there is equal pay for equal work for both men and women; that children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment. That the State shall secure that the working of the legal system promotes justice, on a basis of equal opportunity, and ensure equality before the law. To create systems that lead to genuine decentralization of power, and promote healthy self-government. To promote employment avenues,

education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement. The list goes on to include promotion of good education, an inclusive economy, uniform civil code, environmental protection etc. Interestingly, these principles are not enforceable by a court of law in the manner of the fundamental rights. But seen in conjunction with the Fundamental Duties enshrined in the constitution, there is no doubt about the direction of our nationhood. It needs to be emphasised that the Fundamental duties are undeniably the moral obligations that each citizen has to live up to. The fact that the fundamental duties were not originally enshrined in the Constitution, but were added by the 42nd and 86th Constitutional Amendment Acts may suggest that there was a need to remind citizens of their duties in addition to their rights! In other words, this was a reminder that a citizen's right to enjoy all the privileges and freedom under the law carries with it the concept of corresponding fundamental duties. These duties begin with the obligation to respect the symbols of our nationhood, namely, the Constitution, the National Anthem and the Flag. It includes the duty to acknowledge and cherish the ideals of the Freedom Movement and to protect the integrity, sovereignty, and unity of India. It also enjoins citizens to serve the nation while also striving for national harmony and promoting fraternal feelings. Citizens are duty bound to preserve the rich national heritage of its composite culture and to also protect and improve the natural environment including lakes, wildlife, rivers, and forests. It is also the duty of every Indian to promote a scientific temper and ensure free and compulsory education of the children. If one looks at most of the major problems facing India today, it will be apparent that they relate to issues that would have never happened had we followed the constitution! Our education is in a mess, economic inequalities are growing by the day, the environment and the biosphere is often referred to as being toxic! Corruption is almost institutionalised and equality before law continues to be in the realm of an aspiration. It is time for us to read the constitution and hopefully display the wisdom to follow it!

ABOUT NUKSA

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

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TIMELINE

Executives of CPSEs attends Training

Various facets of *Cost Optimization* were discussed in a training programme for executives of CPSEs. Sponsored by Department of Public Enterprises, Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises, Government of India. This MDP from 16th-20th September, had 32 participants from all over the country attending it.



MDP on “Change Management “

A MDP on “Change Management” was organized for Officers of POWERGRID from 23rd to 27th September 2019. Inaugurated in the presence of Shri B.Pal.Choudhury, Senior General Manager, A.K. Borthakur-General Manager HR and MsGeetanjaliHijam HR of Powergrid corporation of India, the training had 28 participants from different locations of India.



MDP on “General Management with special emphasis on Leadership Competencies” for Executives of IOCL.

Principles of General Management with emphasis on Leadership Competencies was the focus of a MDP for Senior Executives of Indian Oil Corporation Ltd from 14th-19th October, 2019. Altogether 26 participants attended the training program.

This programme is part of an ongoing series of such training being conducted for the oil giant by the institute.



MDP on “Academic Leadership” under TEQIP III

There is a renewed focus on improving standards by developing leadership. Under TEQIP III sponsorship, the Assam Science and Technology University, organized a program on improving Academic Leadership that was conducted by IIM Shillong from 22nd-24th October, 2019 at the NEDFi Convention Center, Guwahati.

The inaugural saw the presence of Vice Chancellor of ASTU Dr Dhiraj Bora, the Chairman and Director of Higher Education, Govt of Assam, Mr Mukul Chandra Bora, Prof R. Barua, Academic Consultant ASTU, and Prof Nalini Tripathy, Dean Research of IIMShillong.



The Incubation Centre of IIM Shillong hosted a one-day mentorship session for selected startups to coach them about the different principles of management which plays a key role in shaping the entrepreneurial venture.

Under this, faculties from different domains such as economics, finance, marketing and operation acted as resource persons.



TITAN ELEVATE

Titan Elevate 6.0, an Annual Business Case study challenge was launched in October. It also provides students with a chance to hear from the top brass like Mr. C K Venkataraman, MD, Titan, and Mr. Rajnarayan, Chief Human Resource Officer.



IIM Shillong hosts lecture on Contribution of Indian

Hon'ble member of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India Dr. Dnyaneshwar Manohar Mulay, delivered an expert session on "Contribution of Indian Diaspora to India's Development: Prospect and Challenges".

During the session Dr Mulay spoke on the significance of diaspora and its various forms, while also highlighting the importance of skilled labour and student fraternity for enhancing the prospects for India.

He also talked about the various initiatives for Indian immigrants such as *Pravasi Bhartiya Samman*, Know India Program for youth, and the strategic relevance of such events in helping maintain a relationship with them as well as in opening further opportunities.



The session was of prime importance for the participants of the PGP Ex program who are training to become the potential resources for strengthening business relations between India, China, and emerging economies.

Striving towards inclusivity

Students and Faculty of the institute decided to set new bench marks in creating a clean and litter free Shillong . They decided to take a walk from the campus to Fire Brigade and pick up all trash that they saw on the way. The walk proved to be memorable as the people on the streets and nearby shops cheered and encouraged the team. Personally too, most participants reported feeling joyous after the event as it was the unique experience of doing something without expecting anything in return, save. Happiness! The EcoBiz Club of the institute is contemplating making these kinds of walks a regular exercise in the future.



The name of Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam continues to be invoked in the institution with great love and reverence. On his 88th birthday, the Nurturing Minds Team of the institute organized a get together with the young students of nearby schools namely the Dinet Manik School and the Nongthymmai Nepali School.



Students of these schools joined a function organized in the institute where they sang, played music, danced and electrified the entire atmosphere with energy and laughter. Dr Kalam was convinced that the future of the nation lies with the youth and if the talent on display was any indication, the country could look forward to exciting times in the future!



Technocrat Par Excellence delivers Dr. Kalam Lecture

The 4th Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam lecture series was delivered by Padma Bhushan Dr K. Radhakrishnan former Chairman of ISRO. Who spoke at length about India's space programme and also engaged with students in a lively Q&A session

Dr. Radhakrishnan's speech was followed by the release of the first official newsletter of Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Center for Policy Research and Analysis at IIM Shillong.



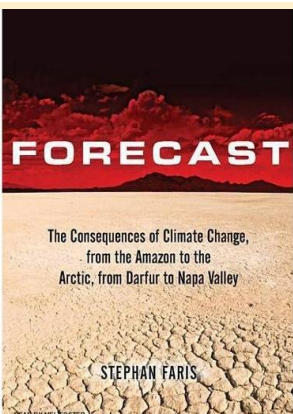
Sardar Patel's 144th Birth Anniversary

The National Unity Day or *Rashtriya Ekta Diwas* is observed every year on October 31, on the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, who is also known as the 'Iron Man of India'. The National Unity Day 2019 commemorated **Sardar Patel's 144th birth anniversary**. This occasion also provided an opportunity to re-affirm the inherent strength and resilience of our nation to withstand the actual and potential threats to the unity, integrity and security of our country.

IIM Shillong observed the National Unity Day by paying tribute to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on his birth anniversary at its campus. The occasion was marked by a gathering of Faculty, Officers and Staff taking the *Rashtriya Ekta Diwas* pledge and reading out the Fundamental Duties of Constitution as per Article 51 A, while Students read out the pledge in their respective classrooms.



From the Book Shelf



What makes Climate Change the most alarming and dangerous phenomenon is its unpredictability and uncertainty.

Forecast is one such book which looks at this unpredictability and as result has become a must read for the present day world. Written by Stephan Faris, the book connects the various dots of drought, floods epidemics, migration and food

security and the seriousness of Climate Change.

Today, scientists are talking that there are only 128 months left to save the Earth we know; otherwise, the extinction of human race is inevitable. Bangladesh, which every year faces the problem of the combating over-population, health and poverty gets an extra challenge from the floods. It has been reported that by the end of this century the land of Bangladesh would be claimed by the Sea. While Netherlands is facing a similar form of threat from rising sea level, it has already started preparing for the events and

building technology that can help them to cope with the aftereffects better. Developing countries like Bangladesh are nowhere near the technology, capability, and resources to achieve it.

Densely crowded, widely impoverished, geographically exposed, and geopolitically critical, South Asia might be the region where Climate Change has a chance to spark the greatest catastrophe. A tropical country like that of India which has all those perfect variables to be most affected by Climate Change. The economic issues like overpopulation, competition over limited resources, low literacy rate, limited land area, corruption, poor management of system of man and resources, poverty and deprivation of primary healthcare facilities makes India one of the most vulnerable region.

Climate Change acts like a catalyst in making the process of the system failure much more faster than it's original time.

Developed countries may be able to withstand the Climate Change due to their economic robustness and ability to tackle the changes with far superior technology, research, policies, and deployment of better sustainable systems. On the other hand, developing countries like India are still facing problems of providing the necessities of food, water, shelter, and healthcare to all its citizens. How can developing countries shift their focus to advanced and sophisticated sustainable technologies and systems, stringent environmental standards and policies. Developing Nations are still stuck on the physiological and safety needs of Maslow's hierarchy. A viscous circle gets formed when factors causing climate change are first ignored for the fulfillment of basic needs and then this climate change affects the availability of resources required to fulfill those basic needs.

The grim reality of the situation that is depicted by the Darfur, the riots, violence, killings and capturing of lands all become part of the Climate Change as going to root cause become essential. They are the byproduct of the ways things are taking shape.

It has been quoted multiple times that the Third World War will be fought over Water. Nations will fight for water sources and freshwater availability. What the world has failed to notice is that countries are already fighting for it. India and Pakistan fighting over the Indus River exactly tells that the world is heading towards more wars and holocaust and in the near future, such wars will become the new normal. It is the reality of today that the climate refugees are entering in neighboring countries, few legally and others illegally leaving behind the place of destruction.

Dealing with political tensions and insurgencies, host nation/region goes through a huge economic and ecological strain accommodating more than it can handle. Driven by the economic and political forces, environmental migration is the biggest reason for displacement than any war till now. Till date nearly 163 million have been forcibly displaced and another 250 million are more likely to be displaced by 2050. Though there can be many reasons

behind migration, certainly Climate Change is the factor that aggravates vulnerability among people.

Brazil tops the list of the loss in primary forest in 2018 and overall 12 million hectares of tropical forests have been lost. As a result, people are moving farther into the forests destroying the ecological balance as pointed out in the book.

The unprecedented and severe hurricanes and storms incident today is linked with Climate Change. In India recently Fani cyclone impacted the eastern region and halted life in the state of Orissa.

In Brazil, where the Zika outbreak created the havoc in the year 2015 can be directly relate to Climate Change. Temperature is the most important factor for Zika virus outbreak. Due to rising temperatures, mosquito incubation has become easier and people are also more likely to get infected because of exposed skin.

In India, Rajasthan tops the list of the most swine flu cases in the country till now. As per the Union Health Ministry, the H1N1 virus till now has infected more than 12,000 people and 377 have already succumbed to it. In Rajasthan alone, 3508 people got infected and 127 died since 2007. Rajasthan is reported to have the highest number of Swine Flu patients. Gujarat comes second with 1,983 cases of infection and 71 deaths till now. Swine flu requires cold and dry climate. Rajasthan being affected by droughts and monsoon failure in the past years has become the perfect host to the H1N1. Thus Climate Change is bringing epidemics to places that have never heard of those disease ever before.

While Climate Change is making life difficult and dangerous for majority of the world, human greed has still found a way to reap benefits from it. The Arctic, which is one the most inhospitable places on Earth, also known as the Frozen Desert, is open today for humankind to explore all thanks to Climate Change. The Arctic is a reservoir of resources like metal, minerals, oil, and gas tapped inside. Earlier, the multi-layers of ice would act as a barrier. Today, due to the rising temperature at the poles, the layers of ice forming each year is thin and small thus making an open path for the humankind to ravage the untapped resources for their greed.

Climate Change is not a local issue, restricted to one country or state. Rather it is a phenomenon with global consequences. It is the responsibility of each nation to protect the planet in order to minimise the impact of changing climate, and go beyond the boundaries that they live in to help re-establish, prevent and protect the World as we know.

**Swati
PhD Scholar**

Off Beat

The Idea of India: a citizen's account

The *Nasadiya Sukta* of Rigveda describes the account of the creation of the world. In the Hindu tradition, God is not understood as the creator of the universe but as a supervisor. After giving an abstract description of the process, there comes a rather curious *shloka*:

"Whence all creation had its origin,
the supervisor, whether he fashioned it or whether he did not,
the supervisor, who surveys it all from highest heaven,
he knows — **or maybe even he does not know.**"

- Rigveda, 10.129.7 (Emphasis added)

The Rigveda includes multiple points of view, no matter how absurd. Absurdly radical, one may say. Here is a hymnbook questioning the very existence of God, and is probably the first proclamation of atheism right next to praise of the supervisor. Not even God can say the last word about the truth of the world. This is one of the proudest moments in my life as an Indian.

We tend to forget in these nationalistic times that we, though, are a country, we are also a civilization. A civilization continuously existing in the present, past and future. A civilization in which 'ancient palimpsest on which layer upon layer of thought and reverie had been inscribed, and yet no succeeding layer had completely hidden or erased what had been written previously. All of these existed in our conscious or subconscious selves, though we may not have been aware of them, and they had gone to build up the complex and mysterious personality of India (Nehru, *The Discovery of India*)'. Indian civilization is lucky in the sense that in contrast to the Romans or Greeks, a continuity of ideas remains, similar to the Chinese civilization.

For me, the civilization is more important than the country. The country, an imagined community, was built through our freedom struggle consciously. The civilization was built through ages and ages of discourse, creative endeavours and violent clashes; the philosophies Charvaks of 600BCE, the violent confrontations between Vaishnavs and Shaivs in the medieval period, the creation of honeyed hymns by 3rd century Indian Christians and everything else churned and churned to produce the civilization. Indologists like A.K. Ramanujam and Linda Hess often remark about the difficulty of making generalizations about Indian civilization. There is such a cesspool of ideas; each idea has an opposite, and no idea is allowed supremacy. It seems as if as soon as an idea starts gaining power, an anti-thesis of it is also fuelled. And, if you are presenting a new idea, you had to argue with the predecessor. Everything is questionable, and no answer is complete.

The idea is not tolerance. Tolerance implies that the other is wrong or misguided or unfair like you tolerate a friend who smokes. It is as said in the NasadiyaSukta. No-one, not even the creator, can assert a claim on total truth. It is as literary critic Abhinavgupta writes in 11th century Kashmir: there is no one way of looking at any phenomenon. Each is as valid as another, and one may, despite being a devout follower of one idea, appreciate them all at different times through ways of fate or expanse of heart (Sahridayta). This is one of the central tenets of the idea of India. Repeated over and over, in philosophy, poetry and action. Echoed in AakhiriKalam written by a devout Muslim, Malik Mohammad Jayasi. Speaking through modern Pakistani writer IntizarHussain declaring he is a Hindu too. Acting through Srivara in 15th century Kashmir writing the story of Yusuf and Zulekha titled Katha-Kautakam. The intrinsic acceptance of plurality, this fundamental realization that what may be achieved is ever only an approximation of truth through dialogue (which, incidentally, was not always non-violent but messy, bloody and even genocidal) is the glue binding us together.

The nation is a European concept, as Anderson writes, based on uniformity. India, the civilization, is based in the intermingling of different identities. Multiple languages, Multiple religions, Multiple Gods inside all of us. A world where the Indus Valley bullock cart is walking next to a BMW. A world of Jalebis, Halwas and Sutarfenis: impossible without the mixing. What Maulana Azad termed as India's historic destiny. Naturally, the modern concept of nation cannot handle this diversity. That was the reason Don Taylor, the British journalist predicted in 1947 that India will fragment into smaller pieces. It has held on, despite the fact that the divine population (330 million) outnumbered the Hindu or even the total population of India. This number was born out of the same sentiment of the NasadiyaSukta, the urgent need to have diverse versions of truth(s), the endless possibilities of discourse and argument. AmartyaSen was on point when he wrote The Argumentative Indian.

**Avikshit Pratap,
PhD Scholar**

Be the Change initiative

Where all the interventions, from social, economic and political, to make the world a better place have not had a significant impact it is time to give a shot to this idea which tries to not only satisfy the ends but also focusses on the means. It is small things that we as humans should imbibe in ourselves to see the changes we want to see. We are aware of the problems that we face. We even have come up with solutions for these problems. But somewhere down the line the initiatives have failed because they are half hearted and lack – compassion, motivation- and are excessively focussed on the ends (the goals).

All the major problems that we as humans are facing – poverty, hate crimes, terrorism, climate change, economic troubles, trade wars, rising inequality, hunger etc. – have persisted because of this attitude.

The best way to deal with this is to inculcate such behaviour from an early stage. In japan students as young first graders clean

and maintain their classrooms, serve lunch and even clean the toilets. This practice might be considered child abuse in some countries but in Japan it is recognized as a holistic practice that allows children to grow up becoming responsible citizens.



This inculcates a sense of belonging to the nation in each person. A feeling that my country is my home and that we will not litter in public spaces rather put garbage in bins. Unless this urge comes from within, it is difficult to bring about meaningful change. BE THE CHANGE INITIATIVE calls for such a change.

**Amol Maske
PGP2019**

ALUM SPEAK

A New Opportunity

April 16th, 2018 was a particularly important day in my academic career. I was fortunate enough to receive three gold medals from the Hon'ble Vice-President of India at the IXth convocation of IIM Shillong. The two years of what was a roller coaster MBA, had come to a happy end. I was elated, content and looking forward to a career in commercial banking (my campus placement domain)

If anyone had told me then, that six months later, I would be sitting in a room at South Block, New Delhi working for the Defence minister of India, they would in all probability, be joking, right?

Ever since Independence, the civil services examination has been the only way to enter into the top echelons of Indian government and bureaucracy, but things are finally beginning to change and new opportunities are on the horizon.

In the last twenty years there has been a fundamental change in the nature of governance and conception of the role of the state in the country. We have shifted from imperative to indicative planning and from being a regulator state to a facilitator state. Globalisation, digitalization and issues like climate change are contributing to what is now being called a VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous) world. Hence, the governance ecosystem today requires a consistent cross- flow of ideas between career bureaucrats (generalists) and domain level experts (specialists) recruited from outside.

The structure and framework of the government are also beginning to reflect the changed external environment at an institutional level. In April 2019, signalling a paradigm shift, nine private sector specialists have been selected for appointment as joint secretaries in central government departments. Usually, the posts of joint secretaries are manned by the officers of the Indian

Administrative Service. The structure and framework of the government are also beginning to reflect the changed external environment at an institutional level.

In April 2019, signaling a paradigm shift, nine private sector specialists have been selected for appointment as joint secretaries in central government departments. Usually, the posts of joint secretaries are manned by the officers of Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS), Indian Forest Service (IFoS) and Indian Revenue Service (IRS). The Personnel Ministry had in June last year invited applications for the joint secretary-rank posts through "lateral entry" mode.

In line with international best practices, the union government is likely to expand the policy of lateral entry into Indian Civil Services by increasing the intake of officers at the Joint Secretary from outside the system to at least 40 per cent.

In the last few years, ministers appointing trusted, qualified people as OSDs (Officer on Special Duty), private secretaries and advisers, outside of the career bureaucracy, has become a common practice. (The writer is a personal beneficiary of this initiative)

While there have been several examples in the past like AMUL and UIDAI where lateral entrants have played a stellar role, the recent developments suggest that lateral entry into government services is an idea whose time has come. This offers a significant opportunity for premier management institutions in India and they must brace themselves to leverage it through appropriate and timely changes in both, curriculum and mindset.

Typical MBA peer- to peer discussions in the class and hostel rooms revolve around terms like investment banking, positioning, case studies, package, dream company, best fit, placement etc. In such discussions, government and bureaucracy are generally associated with negativity, characterised by red tape, inflexibility and corruption.

However, because of the intrinsic diversity of the MBA batch and curriculum, there are groups (albeit small) which do discuss "off-beat" issues like governance, political economy, society,

constitution and culture. I happened to be a part of one such group during my time at IIM Shillong. There were people who were inclined to work in the government space but were either not willing to take the risk of appearing for the "unpredictable" civil services examination or felt that the career path of the mainstream bureaucracy was too rigid for their liking.

The central government has been aggressively pushing the idea of infusing outside talent in a bid to increase subject matter expertise in administrative apparatus and usher in specialised niche skills in various government departments to improve governance delivery process.

The basic skill set for good performance in both the private and public sector are almost the same but working in the government does come with its unique challenges and requirements. A strong commitment to public service, working knowledge of the constitutional framework of India, basic understanding of the political economy and socio-cultural fabric of the country are some of the pre-requisites of working in the government set up. These need to be nurtured and inculcated along with the existing domain-based, experiential, practical learning that a good management program offers.

On a personal front, the last one year has probably been the most enriching, eventful phase of my life with tremendous opportunities for understanding the nuances and intricacies of the Indian government. My previous experiences of student leadership (read student politics) and preparation for the civil services (although unsuccessful) have definitely helped in smoothening the transition.

I realise that the paths we take or the life stories we have, might be completely different, but I am sure there are many others keen on exploring this new realm in their own unique way. The time to equip yourself and take the plunge is here and now.

Cheers.

(The Writer is Additional Private Secretary to The Hon'ble Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister. Previously worked as Additional Private Secretary to the Defence Minister of India)

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