

autumn..
...is in the air.

THE PINE CHRONICLE

News, Views and Creative Expressions

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

I welcome all of you, the readers and contributors of "Nuksa – The Pine Chronicle" of IIM Shillong.

2021 has been a difficult year but with its own set of teachings, learning and experience. We are nonetheless very excited about what the rest of the year has in store for all of us. This has been a year of growth and new opportunities for everyone at IIM Shillong. One of our major achievements during the year has been our ability to settle in our new campus environment at Umsawli. We appreciate your continued commitment to the Institute and its progress. We are confident we can make this initiative mutually rewarding through shared ideas and interests.

Our dedication is our most treasured asset and the foundation on which the Newsletter was conceptualised with the knowledge that the only way to improve its reputation is to exceed expectations, meet commitments, and remain innovative in our approach to deliver quality content and exchange of knowledge, ideas and creativity.

By understanding, and embracing our readers' interest we aim to build stronger and lasting impressions that will multiply in terms of readers and contributors.

We recognize the importance of the initiatives entrusted on us, and need to ensure we take special care to meet and exceed expectations. In order to achieve this we remain invested in our talented team, while also trying to improve our culture and work environment through actions and creativities.

NUKSA is committed to delivering excellence. We hope you enjoy reading the Pine Chronicle as we look forward to your feedback so we can continuously improve along the way.

Prof. (Dr) D.P. Goyal,
Director, IIM Shillong and Advisor NUKSA.



ABOUT NUKSA

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

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FACULTY DESK

Function of Teachers

Because of the Covid-19 epidemic, schools and universities were closed, and yearly celebrations at institutions were substituted with virtual ones, so I chose to pen down the function of a teacher.

Teachers' Day is observed in India on September 5th to honour the birth anniversary of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. He was a well-known academic, Bharat Ratna winner, first Vice-President, and second President of independent India. On September 5, 1888, he was born. He was a distinguished envoy, academician, and, above all, a brilliant teacher in his capacity as an educationist.

There is no doubt that democracy is widely accepted throughout the world, but the importance of the teacher's role cannot be overstated because it is a teacher who instils the ability of tolerance in his pupils. There are many individuals in the world who hold opposing views and perspectives, but a great teacher's role is to instil tolerance in his pupils. If we look at the fundamental function of a teacher, it is to avoid dogmatism in society. It is terrible luck for mankind if dogmatic views proliferate everywhere and these beliefs win the fight, and fresh ideas die in the lap of dogmatism.

Since the teacher has been regarded in high regard since the Vedic period, he was naturally expected to have a number of qualifications. The learner was to see his instructor as the ideal person and to model his own behaviour after him. As a result, the latter was supposed to be devout of exceptional character. He was to be patient and fair to his pupils. Above all, he was to be well-versed in his particular field of study. The teacher's extensive scholarship, however, was insufficient. He must be able to interpret the most complex texts without trouble or delay, and he must have a fluid delivery, humour, presence of mind, and a large supply of amusing tales. In other words, he should be a scholar as well as a skilled instructor; only then would he be a great teacher, as Kalidasa points out. The instructor must also be able to inspire as well as instruct; his piety, character, knowledge, and cultured life should be able to have a subtle and long-lasting impact on the young pupils. Both were bound together by the communion of life. They did, in fact, commune with one another.

The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence. -Rabindranath Tagore

Prof. Ashutosh Murti



IIM Shillong Jumps 7 Steps Above in NIRF Management Rankings, 2021

NIRF RANKING 2021

IIM Shillong Ranked



The Ministry of Education- Government of India, ranks institutions of higher education in the country via NIRF or National Institutional Ranking Framework. IIM Shillong, the 7th IIM established in the country, has been ranked 23rd in NIRF 2021 in the management category, jumping seven steps higher from the last year. The institute has been onwards and upwards in its vision of providing quality management education and research with strong ethical values and sustainable development while being nested in a culturally rich and beautiful corner of the country in the Northeast.

Of all the IIMs in the country, IIM Shillong has always had a special place in the hearts of aspiring MBA candidates. With the peachy sight of cherry blossoms and the clear starry skies, the Campus on Clouds is a hit for nature lovers. The institute is known for its diversity and the legacy of Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, who attained the lotus feet of God, doing what he loved doing the most - delivering a lecture at the Institute's campus. The geographic location of the institute is strategic, with the highest number of international boundaries among all IIMs, thereby offering great opportunities for International Exchange Programmes. The placements and the alumni network of the institute have been notching higher with every passing year.

The achievement is phenomenally significant in the backdrop of the adverse pandemic situation in the country. Even in these challenging times, the institute successfully shifted to its permanent campus at Umsawli, from its previous campus at the former Mayurbhanj Palace, Shillong. The credit of IIM Shillong's constant upward trajectory goes to the highly dedicated faculty who continue to push their boundaries to achieve the objective of not only providing stellar education but also continuing with their research ventures. The students across the country have also been

displaying a unique sense of resolve and devotion, in these unique times, which is a huge factor in this accomplishment.



IIM Shillong conducts North East Summit on Food Processing

The Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Centre for Policy Research & Analysis of IIM Shillong hosted the North East Summit on Food Processing - Building *Partnership for Inclusive Growth in Food Processing Sector*. The summit supported by Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Government of India aims to concretize and explore the scope of Food Processing and business opportunities in NER. The focus areas are infrastructure and connectivity in PPP mode, skill development, financial inclusion, service sector development particularly in food processing.

Speaking as Chief Guest of the event, Hon'ble Minister of State for Food Processing Industries & Jal Shakti, Government of India, Shri Prahlad Singh Patelji stated that three important factors form the base for success – information, connectivity and communication and that the food processing sector is also dependent on these factors. He cited the example of how producing a product at a place where it can also find its purpose can lead to a successful venture and added that the industry itself has the power to generate employment and also aid in profit generation for the organisation, the State and the entire nation.

“Government of India has come up with schemes to aid the distribution of products,” he informed adding that the only concern is being able to clearly articulate the issues or challenges faced during processing. “We should discuss the issues properly and only then we can succeed. Discussion paves way for success. We all have the power of thinking and the strength to face any challenge that comes up,” said Shri Patel while addressing the gathering at IIM Shillong.

While speaking at the inauguration ceremony, the Union Minister paid tribute to former President of India Late Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, who delivered his last speech at IIM Shillong.

Presenting his welcome address, Prof DP Goyal, Director IIM Shillong said, "Being the only IIM in Northeast region of India, the Institute has from day one acknowledged the huge responsibility of serving as a leader and also a catalyst to assist in the overall development of this vast and complex region. The Institute is committed to continuously build engagements, particularly through our Centres."

"IIM Shillong aims to assist the state governments of the NER to improve on performance through innovative policies and recommendations. The Centre works as a bridge between the policy makers, stakeholders and beneficiaries," Prof. Goyal added.



Speaking in detail on the opportunities and challenges in the sector of Food Processing, Member of the BoG of IIM Shillong remarked, "The Summit has relevance to what we have gone through in the last one and a half years. This is the right time to talk about Food Processing Industry, the challenges, the emerging opportunities especially on the background of Hon'ble Prime Minister's thrust on Atmanirbhar Bharat, being vocal for local so that Indian entrepreneurs can emerge to become players in the global market. He further added, "Sustainable eco system and environment suitable for most types of vegetation is our strength. Organic produce, especially from the northeast is currently the hot topic across the world."

He stated that in the Northeast, there are only 60,000 units registered under MSME, which accounts for only 0.7 percent of the country's total registered units. He highlighted the lack of awareness of Government schemes among the public.

Sharing some of the challenges that the Entrepreneurs face in the region, he said that insufficient institutional support and inadequate R&D are some that can be resolved by the Ministry. Among the challenges, poor infrastructure and less financial support is what is dragging the region down even though there is potential, stated Kulkarni. He added that there is entrepreneurial competence in the NE region, which is a good sign and it can be capitalized to generate more income for farmers and provide employment opportunities.

Other invited speakers during the inaugural ceremony included successful entrepreneur of FPI Smt. Shubra Devi, Proprietor of Meira Foods from Imphal, and Ms. Taje Rita, Proprietor of Naara Aaba from Arunachal Pradesh.



Partnering Internationally

MoUs signed by IIM Shillong

- MoU with FPT University, Vietnam, on 28th June, 2021. Both the Institutes agreed to mutually collaborate on academic activities like exchange of students and scholars, exchange of faculty, short term program, IT training, Community outreach, Joint Conferences etc.
- MoU with Woosong University, South Korea, on 28th June, 2021. The area of cooperation will include any program like exchange of students and scholars, exchange of faculty, Joint Conferences, Joint Research, exchange of cultural activities, etc., subject to mutual consent.
- MoU with Newcastle Australia Institute of Higher Education, Singapore, on 28th July, 2021. Both the Institutes agreed to mutually collaborate on academic activities like exchange of students and scholars, exchange of faculty, Joint Conferences, Joint Research, exchange of cultural activities, etc.

MDP on General Management for Officers of Arunachal Pradesh

IIM Shillong organized a 7 days Management Development Program for Arunachal Pradesh Civil Service Officers at IIM Shillong Umsawli Campus. The training module was initiated through an MoU signed between Government of Arunachal Pradesh and IIM Shillong.

Prof. D P Goyal Director IIM Shillong in his session spoke on *Unleashing the power of technology for better Governance*. He mentioned about Digital India Campaign and the technology innovations that can be used in providing service to the citizens.



Dr Sanjay K Panda, Former Secretary Textile Ministry, Government of India spoke on promoting traditional strengths to ensure sustainable development, while Dr Vijay Kumar D, Commissioner and Secretary Tourism Department, Meghalaya addressed the session on Tourism: a sustainable way to ensure development.

Dr Kumar highlighted the key areas including the infrastructure development in the tourism sector that can attract Indian tourists. Understanding on limitless data and how to manage data through Visualization tools were discussed in the session. The influence on Societal development need assessment, monitoring and evaluation has also been discussed in order to meet the diversified cross cultural sections of Arunachal Pradesh having many tribes and societies."



MDP on "General Management" for Arunachal Pradesh Civil Service

Altogether 52 Officers are attending the training program

The Seven days training program was facilitated by in house faculty and Guest Experts/Faculty namely:

- Shri M.S. Rao, IAS, Chief Secretary to the Govt. of Meghalaya and State Vigilance Commissioner.
- Dr Ranjan Chatterjee, Retired from the Central Government in October 2012 as Secretary to the Government of India.

- Dr. Sanjay K. Panda, Retired as Secretary, Textile Ministry, Government of India.
- Dr. D Vijay Kumar, Commissioner and Secretary, Tourism Department, Government of Meghalaya.
- Dr. Vijay Page, Retired as Chairman Managing Director of - Konkan Development Corporation, Govt. of Maharashtra Undertaking.

Lens Caption

Photos of Wei Sawdong, East Khasi Hills, Shillong taken by **Anjan Patra**
MBAWE, W21005



METIER

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ODE

I Think the Future Is Going To Be Bright for Me

I made a project
 And submitted it for superiors' approval
 But the files piled on, no reasons, no communication
 My queries turned into patience, thinking if its dismissal
 I thought the future will be bright for me

I kept on leisurely pursuing
 No knee jerks, waiting and waiting
 I contemplated that the project will be good for everyone
 Suspicious and dejected, but kept smiling
 I thought the future may be bright for me

Timid ones neglected, half-intellectuals reasoned
 That my innovation idea is one with controversy
 Passionate and greedy ones showcased the same theme as bouquet
 But truly no one had any interest, acceptance, or mercy
 I still thought the future may be bright for me

The years passed by, teaching me a failure story of a success
 I learnt the wicked games of management
 The back door practices, mutual profits, and backstabbing
 Inside me, made my opinion to better be in ethical state of bewilderment
 Further, I thought the future can be bright for me

Gradually, I became stronger and judicious
 With strong knowledge and heavy momentum
 Not singularly on my innovation project
 But the functioning of pragmatic multidimensional system
 I strongly thought that the future will be bright for me

Emotionally, I cut apart all system barriers
 Highlighting the true essence of innovation and its necessity for organization
 Saam, Daam, Dand, and Bhed
 And led the project to its conclusion
 Now, I think the future is going to be bright for me

Prashant Sunil Borde
PhD - WP 2019 Batch

New Morning

Through this poem, I have attempted to convey the anxiety and sorrow of a man trapped in dark nights (figuratively). The poem is presented in the form of a story, using the art of metaphor and personification.

I have narrated how this man finds himself, his peace of mind, higher calling, and freedom by breathing in nature's beauty and understanding the insightful life lessons taught by nature. And in this way, dawn shines in his life as he awakens to a 'new morning.'

Stolen lights burned my soul,
 Craving escape were my deafening scars
 Being lost in nowhere, I found myself again
 Somewhere hidden in the depths of dark...

I saw when moonlight shimmered through curtains
 At the saplings and blossoming flowers outside,
 Deliriously dancing in the spring air,
 Along with butterfly hovering above; wild and carefree
 (Just like I had always dreamt myself to be)
 Breathing heavily, I stood up for an audacious adventure;
 My own expedition—a walk on the beach
 Strolling along the shore; tides rising low and high,
 I gazed at the sprawling desert of sand
 Wondering about the castles sculpted during the day
 And about all those faces drawn on sand, now washed away,
 Alas! Even my footsteps,
 Imprinted just moments ago, got washed off by waves
 In my stubbornness, I reprinted my footsteps running back,
 But the impressions were wiped yet again by vicious waves

Dejected, I sat crestfallen, blankly staring at the horizon
 My gaze fell on a streak of light—
 Breaking free from the cage of darkness—
 And I smiled with **euphoria** witnessing a miracle with naked eyes
 For Hues of enlightenment were now shadowing the sky

Ever wondered how the moon sets and the sun rises...
 Even nature changes in a snap
 Hence, even on the beach
 There'll be new strollers, new castles every day
 So, what's to worry about? Nothing's permanent anyway
 We're all so tensed about immortalizing our existence
 Unaware that we're just worthlessly scribbling on sand
 That shall inevitably be erased in the end
 So why not enjoy the moment we breathe in

But breaking this soothing silence was one faint whisper from inside
 And as I removed the pile of trampled expectations
 Beneath the ruins of ambitions, I found my forgotten heart
 And I ran like wildfire following its roaring voice
 While sunshine glimmered on my face, as the new morning shined!

Divyaraj Chandwaskar
 2020PGP202

Grey

There are innumerable shades of grey between absolute white and pitch black. All media houses, so-called influencers, politicians, and leaders, mix and match them to render a shade suited to their needs. Naturally, we end-users and consumers are no different and have our own biases, and for sure only can see when it's neither pitch dark nor blinding bright. So, there's no point in debating unless one can understand their limited ken and understand that opposing views are as narrow and as magnificent as their own. Too much criticism, too much praise both render us blind and the doer untrustworthy. Having an open mind is the only solution.

It's all grey. I see grey. I am grey.

At yonder monochrome horizon of reason, there was black, and there was white.
 Subjected to torque, twist, and treason, one chose day, and the other became night.
 But I can't see with my maimed vision when it's either too dark or blindingly bright.
 It was all grey.

As they mixed with different seasons, they built up the blocks of coal.
 Sparks emitted upon their collision; I saw them when lit; else, it was kohl.
 Not one, not two, but there were legions, legions of profuse shades of charcoal.
 I saw all grey.

So, I took my sword to dissect the truth, brute force in the hands of youth.
 Brandished and blitzed my blade onto the rock, only to get smeared in soot.
 Piqued busted and insulted by the boulder; was my fifteen-minute fame of untruth.
 I was all grey.

No blames will satiate this quench,
 No baptism will purge this stench,
 For we have nourished our thoughts with grey.
 Great grand lives yet primal for prey.

At another yonder horizon where we never stayed,
 Two opposites apart, truth shines its light.
 As fixed as the sun, as free as the sprite,
 And there's no soot on my razor blade.

Nisarg Shrivats
 2021PGX108

OFFBEAT

मां की चिट्ठी।

आज इस 5जी के जमाने में भी अरसे बाद मा का चिट्ठी मिला, जिस मां से कभी घंटो बातें हुआ करती थी, जो सुबह में सब्जी में जीरा से छौंक लगाई है या पंचफोरन से शुरू कर शाम को आखिरी बर्तन धुलने तक बताती थीं, कहती थी कि आलू का भुजिया जीरा का फोरन डाल कर बनाए थे, तुम घर से दूर ना होती तो तुम भी खा लेती, तुम्हे बहुत पसंद है न तिकोने पराठा के साथ। सब्जी में सरसो का तेल नहीं होने से अचार का तेल डालने तक की बात किया करती थीं, कहती थी जानती हो आज तेल खत्म हो गया था तो अचार वाला तेल ही डाल कर सब्जी बना दी, तुम्हारी दादी को अच्छा नहीं लग रहा था लेकिन तुम्हारे पापा खूब तारीफ कर रहे थे। उनका जाने कितने प्रकाश वर्ष बाद चिट्ठी आया। पढ़कर खुशी भी थी और गुस्सा भी, खुशी ये की चिट्ठी ही सही बात तो हो पाई, गुस्सा इस बात का की हम मां कि बातों को मान लिए होते, मना लिए होते खुद को, लेकिन कैसे मनाती खुद को, कैसे ना तोड़ती उन रूढ़ियों को जिसकी जड़ें मजबूत तो है लेकिन हमारे किसी काम की नहीं, हमारे मतलब कि नहीं। नानी डॉक्टर थी, मां भी डॉक्टर है हमारी, उनकी दिल की इच्छा थी कि हम भी डॉक्टर बने, लेकिन हमारा मन कभी नहीं रहा, हमें शिक्षिका बनना पसंद था और हम बने भी। सौभाग्यवश उस स्कूल में जिसमें हमने खुद को सींचते हुए देखा। कैसे बताऊं कि मैं कितनी खुश हूं अपने काम से, खुद से....

ये हमारे जिंदगी के सबसे खूबसूरत अनुभवों में एक है। खुद को बहुत ही सौभाग्यशाली मानती हूं कि जिसे यह मौका मिला, अपने सारे पुरानी यादों को जीवंत करने का, उस बचपन के बचपना को फिर से जीने का, उस सारी कवायदों को जिसे कभी खुद किया हो और अब उन चीजों को फिर से स्लो मोशन सिनेमा के भांति अपने आंखों से रूबरू करने का। उन सारी यादों को अगर हम अपनी आंखों से थोड़ा भी लिख पाएं तो क्लास के गेट पर पहुंचती हूं तो बच्चों के उन सुरीली आवाजों कि चहचहाट और क्लास के अंदर जाते ही उनका मौन, जब बोर्ड के बस पड़े पोडियम पर खड़ा हो हम क्लास को देखते है तो बाएं तरफ लड़कियां और दाहिने तरफ लड़के मानो हमसे ये पूछ रहे होते है की मैम, आप किधर बैठती थीं, जब हम पिछले क्लास के होमवर्क के बारे में पूछते हैं तब कुछ बच्चे जो कर के आए होते है, हमसे नजर मिला रहे होते है, जो कर के नहीं आया होता है वह बच्चा नज़र चुरा रहा होता है और इस तरह हम उनको समझ पाते है की कौन कर के आया कौन नहीं। हमें खुद को इनके चेहरे छिपाने के हरकतों से कभी खुद ना करके जाने वाला

दिन तुरंत आंखों के आगे छा जाता है। जब हम किसी बच्चे से पूछते हैं अरे!! कलम है क्या तुम्हारे पास और वह बच्चा मानो किसी सेलेब्रिटी की भांति हमें कलम देने आता है कि मैम ने हमसे कलम मांगा है, जब हम कहते हैं की अरे!! कोई साथ अा जाओ स्टाफ रूम तक, कॉपी चेक हो चुका है लेते आओ, तब बच्चे मानो किसी मंत्रालय के होड़ में दौड़ रहे होते हैं कि हम जाएं तो हम जाएं, तब हमें अपने दिनों के लड़के - लड़कियों का चेहरा याद आता है कि ये था जो हमेशा कूद कर जाता था, क्लास रूम के बाहर जब हम किसी बच्चे को बाहर कॉरिडोर में खड़ा करते हैं तब मुझे अपने समय के कुख्यातों की याद आती है, जब कॉरिडोर से चलते हुए कहीं जा रही होती हूं और दूसरे क्लास का हमरा कोई फेवरेट बच्चा क्लास के बाहर पनिशमेंट के तौर पर बाहर खड़ा रहता है तब हमें देख अपनी शकल चुराता है की कहीं मैम देख न लें वरना सारा इंप्रेसन का बेड़ा गरक हो जाएगा, और ये देख हम उस खूबसूरत पल को परिभाषित करने की कोशिश करते हैं लेकिन ये खूबसूरती परिभाषा के परे हो जाता है, जब हम किसी बच्चे को कहते हैं की हाथ बाहर करो और डस्टर मारने के लिए ऊपर उठाती हूं तब उसके आंखों के पुतलियों का कम्पन और चेहरे का सिकुड़न एक बार जरूर ही मोहित करता है कि छोड़ देते हैं लेकिन अपने कर्तव्यनिष्ठा का पालन करते हुए मजबूरी बस खुद को मजबूत करके मारना ही पड़ता है, कॉरिडोर की रेलिंग से जब हम बाहर कैम्पस में देखते हैं की कोई बच्चा एकदम मस्ताना चाल चलते हुए अा रहा है फिर हम सोचते हैं की ये जब बड़ा हो तो इसकी चाल ऐसे ही बनी रहें जो शायद हो नहीं पाता है, कभी यह भी खयाल आता है कि यार, ये सारी चीजें यही रुक जाती। कभी खुद के बारे में सोचती हूं की पीछे जा कर ये वाली हरकत फिर से कर आते, ये तो हम किए ही नहीं, जब हम अपने समय की किसी हरकत को किसी बच्चे के द्वारा करते देखती हूं तो हमारे चेहरे पर एक अप्रतिम मुस्कान छा जाता है। और भी कितने अनगिनत संस्मरणों की साक्षी बन खुद को खुद से जीवंत करती हूं। और ये सारे संस्मरण को परिभाषित कर पाना अभी आसान नहीं हो पा रहा है।

खुश हूं खुद से फैसला लेकर साथ ही दुःखी भी हूं मां के फैसलों को ना मानने से हुए घाटे को लेकर। बस इतना ही है कहना और कहूं भी क्या!!!

-अनुराग।

Himalayan Yatra

A Himalayan Yatra is always a unique experience. Sharing with you the travelling experience to Madhmaheshwar which is about 180 kms from Rishikesh. As I landed in Dehradun along with my team, the very next thing was to breathe the fresh clean air. The DevBhoomi, Uttarakhand is so enchanting that one tends to get engrossed in the nature. From Dehradun we travelled to Rishikesh and took a holy dip in the Sacred Ganges to refresh myself. Who would say no to have such a dip? Having had an overnight stay in Rishikesh, we took a cab to a place called Ukhimath near Guptkasi which is about 155 kms from Rishikesh. Enroute to Ukhimath, one enjoys the sceneries and the Nature at its best.

On reaching Ukhimath, one could feel the state of serenity. Having had a peaceful sleep, woke up early in the morning at 4 am, packed the things and started to Ransi village to the base camp. I was prepared for the long trek to Madhmaheshwar. As you start the 16kms trek, one walks along the lush green forests hearing the chirping of the birds. One couldn't resist to play in the waterfalls at a distance of 2.5 kms from the base camp. The drinking water is so pure and fresh, it tends to refresh one's mind and soul. As we move ahead, the Sun glances in slowly and as we tread for about 5kms, one could see a few huts where one could get Maggi and

biscuits which seem to be so tasty. After a short break, we try to move up. The terrain is so steep and its on the rise. For about next 5kms the steep is very high as you cross the mountains, one could get a bit exhausted. At that junction, one tends to take a break and have some nuts and water and then resume the journey. In the mid of the day, one tends to feel the heat as you walk and after a couple of hours, the weather can change drastically. By 2pm you experience the rains and one wishes to get drenched completely. The rain coats were helpful to an extent and the walk continues. By 4pm we could reach the place which had a small bunk where one gets black coffee and chai. It was divine to have that black coffee with biscuits. The last 2 kms were again so steep and we tried our best to move up so that we could reach Madhmaheshwar on the same day.



Finally by 6 pm, we got the sight of the Temple's Vimana from a distance of 500mts. It was so divine. The song Namō Namō Shankara echoes in your mind. The long trek to reach Madhmaheshwar which is at an altitude of about 11,000 feet was so beautiful that one always longs to have such trips frequently. We had the darshan from outside following the covid guidelines set by Govt. The temperature was about less than 6 degrees and we decided to use the sleeping bags in the huts. There was no network and that was the best part. Free from hustle-bustle of the urban environment, one tends to realize the importance of self in the beautiful terrain. An attempt for the mind to envisage in the direction of self-realization was at its best. The next morning one gets up as if it was a new birth and feels so refreshed. With a heartfelt thanks to God for taking us to such a divine location, we started to pack-off things back to base camp. The walk felt long and by mid-day were able to reach Ransi village loaded with memories. The next day was a complete rest day in Ukhimath. Then the next trek to Tungnath began... And the saga continues..

Vivek Dhandapani
2021PHDWP019

Artificial Intelligence and changing skill requirements at the workplace

The world has witnessed an exponential rise in automation over the past decade across jobs and sectors. From Alexa for home automation to Tesla cars with self-driving features, artificial intelligence oozes into our daily lives. Artificial intelligence has made it uniquely possible to automate many tasks which previously could only be done by humans. It is most likely to alter the way jobs are performed and results are achieved. The present apparent gap between employability skills and personnel skills is already very large and artificial intelligence is only going to propel it further. It is high time we thought soberingly the skill sets required for jobs to thrive in this highly automated world. We address here the competencies in terms of soft skills that will essentially shape the works in the future. There is a rising importance of social skills when technology takes over jobs, companies are more likely to emphasize soft skills such as creative application, problem-solving and interpersonal and cognitive skills.

There is no area of business, where the technology is not upending. Elon Musk, CEO of SpaceX and Tesla warned earlier that "With AI, we are summoning the devil". A study by academics at oxford university (The future of employment) on how susceptible the jobs are to technological developments says that artificial intelligence will affect the workers in transportation and logistics occupation along with administrative and office support workers. The study also states that for workers to have the edge in this race between rapid automation and declining jobs, they will need to instigate creative and social skills. Rhonda Scharf in her book 'Alexa is stealing your job: the impact of artificial intelligence on your future' mentioned that "it's not the time we resist AI or refuse to adapt to these technologies". The World Economic Forum study conducted in 2018 estimates that automation will displace 75 million jobs but generate 133 million new ones worldwide by 2022, the robots and algorithm will improve the productivity of existing jobs and will create several new ones in the future. In the book 'The second machine age', MIT scholars Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee have addressed the probable impact of automation on employment: "Rapid and accelerating digitalization is likely to bring economic rather than environmental disruption, stemming from the fact that as computers get more and more powerful, companies have less need for some kinds of workers. Technological progress is going to leave behind some people, perhaps even a lot of people, as it races ahead. As we'll demonstrate, there's never been a better time to be a worker with special skills or the right education, because these people can use technology to create and capture value. However, there's never been a worse time to be a worker with only 'ordinary' skills and abilities to offer, because computers, robots, and other digital technologies are acquiring these skills and abilities at an extraordinary rate".

The research consultancy Opimas, states that by 2030 around 400'000 full-time jobs in the capital markets that too in the fields of asset management, brokerage and investment banking will be lost as AI and automation supersede humans. A very interesting point is made by Abhijit V. Banerjee and Esther Duflo in their Nobel

prize-winning book "Good Economics for hard times" that the existing bias in the US tax code, which taxes labor at a higher rate than the capital. Employers in the US have to bear the financial security and medical care on labor in the form of payroll taxes but not on robots and also get an immediate tax rebate when they invest in robots. There are also many frictions in the labour market which incentivizes them to employ robots like they won't demand a medical leave or even protest a wage cut in the recession.

Certainly, many jobs are under threat abreast of this automation. But 'The Economist' compares it with the concerns when Industrialization took place in Britain two centuries ago. Four fundamentals of workplace automation by Michael Chui, James Manyika, and Mehdi Miremadi pointed "as the automation of physical and knowledge work advances, many jobs will be redefined rather than eliminated, at least in the short term". So instead of being a cogitator on this 4th industrial revolution, we should reinforce the new skill sets of job seekers and working people to thrive and exist.

There is a rise in the lookout for computer programming languages or skill sets especially in financial institutions where they are actively scouting for skills in R, Python and other programming languages. Soft skills in the job also known as the people/interpersonal skills, social intelligence or emotional intelligence quotient define work relationships and a positive flexible attitude at work. It enables people to work well with others and achieve their goals when complemented with hard skills. As per 'The Economist', (Emotion and cognition in the age of AI) "skills centered in the interpersonal, empathic and creative realms could become the key human differential in the labor market of tomorrow, and those with strengths in these domains, innate or acquired, will be best placed to prosper". According to the 'Financial times', "as machines become better at many cognitive tasks, it is likely that the skills they are relatively bad at will become more valuable. These skill-sets include creative problem solving, empathy, persuasion, critical thinking, negotiation and leadership".

No matter how specialized the industry is and how automated and digitalized the system is people need human mates to satisfy their social needs. A sudden exclusion of humans from the workplace is an illusion. Computers, at present, cannot replicate unique human characteristics which make them different from other natural and man-made creatures. Imagine the repercussions of working among or with a set of machines. Workers would be stymied from achieving their psychological cravings. Artificial Intelligence may help people to make significant decisions based on certain algorithms, but only human would peruse their emotional side. Being flexible and inquisitive will retain you in the field. To outperform AI, continuous learning should be the ploy. Skills perceived through socializing, actively observing, critically evaluating, and interacting with the environment could be the attributes that are difficult to exceed and reserves you a superior stand over AI.

**Muhammad Vasil M
Ph.D. Scholar (Batch 2021)**

In light of his recent article published in Labour Economics, Nuxsa caught up with Alumnus Swapnil Motghare of PGP 08 for a conversation. We are delighted that *you* could spare your valuable time to answer our questions:

1. The batch of PGP you belong to, and any special memories or anecdotes from your Life @IIM Shillong?

I was in the inaugural PGP batch (2008-10). I have so many memories from those days! One of the fond memories involves my post-dinner walks inside the (Mayurbhanj) campus with Sunil, Gulshan, and Kantha. It was a stressful time especially in the first semester, I was almost losing track of time! Those post-dinner walks were very stress-relieving. Some of the other ones include Prof. Ashutosh Dash and his generosity in working extra hard for students struggling with his course in Managerial Accounting in the first semester. I do remember the mess food. The bread-omelet, laccha parantha, and chili chicken were probably the best I have ever had! And lastly, the weather. Shillong is like this dreamy place and I still claim it had the best weather of all the places I have lived (Tucson has the best sunsets though!)

2. Describe for us your journey since leaving IIM Shillong? The factors that helped you take life decisions, leading to your joining Pulte Institute for Global Development?

After graduating from IIM Shillong, I got a job at Tata Hitachi Construction Equipment Company Ltd. (then Telco) at Jamshedpur, Jharkhand. I worked there as a Manager in the Supply Chain Management department for three years.

I worked with great supervisors and colleagues from whom I learned a great deal. A couple of years into the job, I got in touch with someone, who ended up being my mentor, who introduced to me the option of doing a PhD in Economics from the United States. It sounded really exciting and I decided to pursue it. So, I got a Master's degree in Economics from the University of Texas at Austin, followed by a PhD in Economics from the University of Arizona.

After completing my PhD, I decided to continue my research by working as a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the University of Notre Dame where I am currently working.

Factors that helped me in my life decisions: I was young, did not had any personal responsibilities (lower opportunity cost), and am fortunate enough to be blessed with extremely supportive parents, an excellent mentor, and a wife that helps preserve my sanity when things get tough.

3. What according to you has been the driving force behind your choice for a career path? Did your career plans change during the course of your PhD?

A guiding principle that I followed throughout these years was not to be too attached to the past. I have made decisions that I feel are best for my future given current information, irrespective of what has happened in the past. (I later learned this is similar to what Economics call the concept of sunk cost) This has helped me not feel guilty about changing fields from Engineering to Management and Economics. I remember when I gave my resignation to my supervisor, he asked me

what my career plans were. To that I said: I don't know! But whatever I do, it can only be at least as good as what I am doing currently and hopefully better. I feel like asking an engineer to work as an engineer is a form of casteism. People should do what they enjoy and are more productive without hurting society.

Except in the last year, I wasn't thinking much about a career during PhD. So, I cannot say if my plans changed. I had applied to a good mix of jobs in India and other countries, academic and non-academic. The eventual decision to take a position at Notre Dame was guided by my experience during the interviews.

4. Can you tell us about something you learned at IIM Shillong that is particularly useful in your current profession?

The coursework during the PGDM program at IIM Shillong gave a good exposure to different fields of Business Management which I still find helpful. But more importantly, the experience of interacting with students, faculty, and staff from different parts of India helped me in my professional development.

5. Kindly share a brief of some of your other publications and research-related work, and why you feel the studies you undertake are important.

I am a labor economist interested in understanding the effects of labor market policies. I am currently working on a research project to study the labor market impacts of COVID-19. This research project aims to document the job losses in the state of Indiana, specifically focusing on identifying the variation in job losses by gender and racial groups. I also intend to study if there is any evidence that extra Unemployment Insurance benefits during COVID-19 caused workers to become unemployed and/or stay unemployed longer (work disincentive effect of UI). These are important issues that help to understand the unequal effects of COVID-19 induced job loss and potentially help to design policies that help these groups. The work disincentive effect is important to understand and goes into the design of an optimal level of benefits.

In Motghare (2021), I study how New York City Taxicab drivers change their work hours in response to a permanent wage change. I find that drivers for drivers decrease work hours by half amount of wage increase. This is consistent with rising wages and declining work hours per worker over many decades and is useful evidence for policymakers to improve tax/ transfer systems. I show that the data limitations may have biased the estimates in a previous study that also uses data for New York City Taxicab drivers. I have also worked on the affirmative action policy of electoral gender quotas in India. I find gender quotas in Jharkhand village councils help women win elections even after they are no longer binding. It is important to understand these lasting effects of quota since it allows to test an implicit assumption of quotas: that they will be unnecessary after a point. I find that they do seem to have an effect after they are withdrawn suggesting that they are effective in breaking down barriers and gender stereotypes.

6. Please tell us about some of your major achievements.

The biggest achievement has to be able to convince my wife to marry me! I cannot imagine any other decision that was as

