

autumn..
...is in the air.

THE PINE CHRONICLE

News, Views and Creative Expressions

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EDITORIAL

Man's ability to transmit knowledge from one generation to another was the key to human progress. As a matter of fact, the very basis of every civilization has been the effectiveness of this knowledge transfer. Interestingly, though the spoken word must have evolved eons ago, the written form of communication appeared much later in time. In other words, the literate society is an infant in the scheme of human civilization. Thus, the question which arises is that if human civilization, as we are aware of, with our present knowledge levels, was a few centuries old and the written word emerged much later, how was knowledge transmitted in pre literate societies? Unbelievable as it may seem, it was done through an amazing variety of songs and dances, folk tales and fables, art and architecture as well as *mantras* and stories. For instance in India, for thousands of years, the Vedas, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata were memorised and passed on from one generation to the next through the oral form. The scroll of honour of how many Vedas did one knew by heart led to the gradation of the titles Veda for one Veda, Divedi for two Vedas, Trivedi for three and Chaturvedi for four. So, the function of memory in the emergence and continuation of civilizations through transmission of knowledge is well established. Interestingly, in the post literate learning process, individuals are sought to be categorised into groups that show a predisposition to either one or a combination of a few of the seven broad learning styles: Visual, Aural, Verbal, Physical, Logical, Social and Solitary. Scientists have also gone on to identify the different parts of the brain that are exercised in each of these. For instance in the Verbal learning mode the temporal and frontal lobes, especially two specialized areas in the left hemisphere of these two lobes are mostly activated while in the physical mode, the cerebellum and the motor cortex at the back of the frontal lobe is activated. This also handles much of our physical movement. In the logical mode of learning, it is seen that the parietal lobes, especially the left side, is mainly used. In the social mode of learning, the frontal and temporal lobes are seen to be active. While in the limbic system along with the hippocampus, greatly influences both the social and solitary modes of learning. Notably, the limbic system has a lot to do with emotions, moods and aggression. In the solitary mode, the frontal and parietal lobes, and the limbic system, are seen to be active. After identifying and focussing on different learning

modes, the modern education system has given an overwhelming importance to certain learning aspects especially the logical. This has been done at the cost of other modes especially the limbic system which includes moods and emotions. As a result, the education system may be producing highly logical individuals, but they are incapable of articulating emotions socialization and respectful interpersonal relationship. These skills were once considered essential for social harmony and personal well being. So, is it strange that the modern generation is grappling with the problems of loneliness, depression and social apathy that may explain the climate and economic crises that we face today! In contrast to this highly segmented teaching learning process, the pre literate societies made use of stories and other visual representations be it art, craft, song or drama to transmit knowledge. This was done both as a group activity as well as individual pursuits. As a result, socialisation was achieved much more easily and a shared empathy in individuals as a part of the larger group, ensured personal well being and social bonds that lead to greater happiness. Hence, there is little wonder that as a first step to realigning education for the purpose of promoting individual growth through social cohesion and harmony, the tool of storytelling constitutes the most potent tool. This is also considered the corner stone of what is called as Liberal Arts. Knowledge transmission through this mode has been proven to be effective in promoting both emotional health and logical thinking, both essential ingredients of proper education. The over emphasis on any one mode of learning has done immense harm and has to stop. Now!

ABOUT NUKSA

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

Editor Prof. Sanjeeb Kakoty
Advisor Prof. D.P.Goyal

Team Members

Dr. Sudhir Kumar Jena, Shri Hemango K Dutta,
Shri. Banteilang Syiemiong, Shri. Merivin Jude
Mukhim, Shri. W K Shylla

CONTENTS

Editorial	1
Timeline	2
Off Beat	2
Ode	5
Alum Speak	6



TIMELINE

'Operation Clean Up

A people movement to make Shillong clean and pristine once again is underway. Initiated as a part of the Platinum Jubilee celebration of The Shillong Times, it began with an effort to clean up its rivers. On 21st September, the Umkialiar River received some much needed help to rid it off its garbage and plastics choking it. The day had a lot of enthusiastic volunteers and was led from the front by Hon'ble Governor Tathagata Roy and the Editor of the daily, Patricia Mukhim. Volunteers from IIM Shillong took active part in this cleaning drive.

The drive started at 9:00 AM and extended till the afternoon. The teams were divided into four groups, each under a supervisor, cleaning different portions of the river Wah Umkrah. It was an eye-opening experience for the participants as it exposed the enormity of plastic generation and irresponsible dumping. The effects of plastic are far-reaching and are especially detrimental to marine and aquatic life forms. Thus, we should try to live plastic-free in order to ensure a better environment.



Governor Tathagata Roy addressing students

DRDO Chairman visits IIM Shillong

The excitement was palpable in the packed auditorium of the institute which awaited the arrival of the Chairman of DRDO, Dr. G. Satheesh Reddy. As he walked in and greeted the audience, his easy smile and extempore delivery left everyone spell bound. An emotional Dr. Satheesh mentioned his experiences with Dr APJ Abdul Kalam expressed his feelings on taking the same podium where Dr Kalam last spoke. A nostalgic Dr. Reddy talked about how Dr. Kalam was a visionary like none other and that he was not just a scientist but also a great manager and an amazing human being.



Recounting his days as a young scientist working under the supervision of Dr. Kalam, he talked about his experience of coming through various challenges and hindrances to make India's one of the most successful missile systems in the world.

Going further, he threw light on his work as the DRDO Chairman and how the organization plans and executes numerous projects of vital national importance. The lecture was also attended by Maj. Gen PK Saini, Chief of Staff, Army HQ 101, Shillong who also spoke on his experiences to the young minds of the country and emphasized the great responsibility the youth of the country had in making the country great.



OFF BEAT

Music as the Wind under your Wings!

The universe acknowledges that Music is the food for Love but Music can be so analogous to the art and quality of Leadership is something we were enlightened about in the Workshop on Leadership through Mindfulness and Music by Mrs. Sunita Bhuyan – Chief Mentor, S Prayas Foundation.

In all its uniqueness, the workshop unleashed the power of the *Sargam* to encompass the aspects of Leadership. Free from the intellectual discipline of a classroom, we tapped to the melodies of the violin of played by Mrs. Bhuyan and her accomplished team.

In the first phase of the session, our guest took our hearts and mind out of the general routine of imbibing and assimilating knowledge. The medium was the feel of the beautiful vibrations that went through our senses, touching the chords of our heart, refreshing the faculties of the brain, eventually making our souls dance to the tunes.

The shapes on the potter's lathe, in some aspect, melted back to the soft earth, ready to be shaped again.



Moreover, the tunes from one State of India transitioned smoothly into that of the other, and this process went on until entire India was re - united in the medley.

The second session commenced with the audience recalling the synergy of the team and the lead to render a symphony enchanting the entire auditorium. As Mrs. Bhuyan explained the reason for this success, the analogy of music and leadership gradually began to unfurl.

By the dint of the first session, she has demonstrated the role of the leader, the spirit of the team and the concepts of teamwork that should, actually, be the thread.

She made us visualize how the knowledge and adaptability of a leader towards Inclusion and Diversity is important for the deliverables to be qualitative.

How the team members picked the cue of the Lead and of each other, reflected the way the team should coordinate. Besides, the cue may not only be the tangible ones but also can be the intangible gestures such as a humble nod, a smile or a slight bend of the body towards the musician. This implies that a leader may not always be the lighthouse at a distance but like a mast which gives the direction yet being a part of the ship.

The workshop culminated with an exercise, innovatively designed by Mrs. Bhuyan to learn the cross-functional team ship through *sargam*.



Divided in teams, each team was supposed to pick on the notes assigned to it. The exercise highlighted the importance of each of the teams, each team member, resources on 'bench' and the overall effort in rendering of a qualitative deliverable.

The workshop, in all its melody, was one of its kind to induce the essence of a leader and had set the stepping stones to be one.

Ashutosh Jha
PGPEX 2018

Tolerate

Tolerate /'tɒləreɪt/ verb

1.allow the existence, occurrence, or practice of (something that one dislikes or disagrees with) without interference.

"a regime unwilling to tolerate dissent"

synonyms:allow, permit, authorize, sanction, condone, indulge, agree to, accede to, approve of;

2. be capable of continued subjection to (a drug, toxin, or environmental condition) without adverse reaction.

"lichens grow in conditions that no other plants tolerate"

This word has been used throughout history beside beautiful words denoting diversity of all forms. Phrases like gender tolerance, religious tolerance, racial tolerance. Tolerance is a very negative word for something so beautiful as diversity.

What it essentially implies is that existence of certain minorities in a society, regardless of the period of their emergence, is "tolerated" by the society. It's laughable and enraging at the same time.

The majoritarian view being held up high as the ideal version of man in a world full of minorities is what has led to the use of this terminology. White people "tolerating" persons of colour (PoCs). Hindu PoCs "tolerating" Muslim PoCs. Brahmins "tolerating" Dalits. Dalit men "tolerating" Dalit women. No wonder Dalit women are called the Dalits of the Dalits. Discrimination transcends through each level of the convoluted social hierarchy formed by humans.

The ones "tolerating" here are the minorities themselves. Tolerating the majoritarian views and their enforcement on them. They take the brunt of it and if they refuse, some, if they merely just exist, are subjected to atrocities ranging from humiliation to rape, abuse to lynching. In today's world, the term "tolerating" has become synonymous to "not harming".

It sounds more along the lines of a favour. Tolerating their namaaz, tolerating their colour, tolerating their sexual preferences. As if they are the peas in the bed, and the majority is just letting them be, as a favour.

Adhering to popular terminology, "intolerance" is on the rise as we speak. The following is a humble request to the ones privileged enough to walk the roads alone at night, to love freely, to worship without fear, ones falling under the narrow tenets of today's society. It is a beautiful world out there, only if you choose to see.

Do not "tolerate" the ones who are different, the ones who do not conform. Embrace them. The world is not black and white. Look beyond the binary. The amount of beauty abound across these differences is enough to bring one to their knees, in tears, only if they choose to broaden their vision. Only if they choose to really see.

It is a slow process, development. You may not want to "embrace" the ones who you consider different, you might have your reservations, granted. But that does not give you the liberty to deny them their rights. My only advice to you would be to live and let live. Because in the short term, "intolerance" might be the best option to shut them up. But there are, will be, and always have been voices of dissent, of non-cooperation, spanning across the minorities and the discriminated. And these voices in the long term, collectively, have historically been observed to have toppled structures as massive as the mighty British Empire.

So, if you belong to a privileged section of society, still sitting quiet, it's high time you take your pick, before you are part of the toppled pile.

Anwasha Das
PGP (2019-21)

IIM Shillong Alumnus initiates Brahmaputra Dialogue



To address the advent of emerging technologies like AI and robotics process automation, the changing scenario of jobs of the future, and the current education system which is felt to be grossly under-prepared to prepare professionals for this quantum change in the skillsets required *Alumnus of IIM Shillong Roshan Farhan has*

partnered with Gaurav Dasgupta, a lawyer by profession based in Delhi, to come up with the initiative as co-founders of the Brahmaputra Dialogue.

The second edition of the Brahmaputra Dialogue was organized on September 26th, 2019 in association with Assam Startup (Govt. of Assam), with a fireside Chat on "Accelerating the Startup Ecosystem in North East India and the Future of Business & Trade in the South East Asian region" at Assam Startup- The Nest centre in Guwahati.

Brahmaputra Dialogue, is an independent initiative to provide a platform for thought leaders across all sectors to discuss, deliberate and arrive at outcome-based solutions regarding key issues concerning India's North East and the greater South East Asia region, and intends to provide a platform to promote leadership and entrepreneurship and share inspirational stories from the North East India region, and engage young leaders from North East India with their global peers. The leadership initiative plans to scale up across New Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore and North East India with carefully curated events and networking opportunities for young leaders.

Unanswered Questions

Everywhere on may look there are questions galore... why is the sky blue, roses red and water colorless? What causes the rotation of the earth, the pull of gravity, the list is endless as long as we keep thinking of things and more importantly WHY they are things the way they are?

Though childish, this question of 'why is it the way it is?' is probably be the most challenging of questions posed by an individual. Perhaps no one knows or rather no one can explain to another exactly why and/or how of each of these questions. Perhaps science may hold the key to unlocking the answers to these mysteries or the most puzzling of riddles. If one asks "Why is the sky blue?" the scientific answer could be because of the dispersion of sunlight. Why are roses red can be explained by the fact that the petals absorb a colour complimentary to that of red and emit what our human eyes perceive as red! Science may possibly have the answer for every question. But, then again, science itself is a subject that man created, and thus, the basics of which can

themselves be challenged. It has an interesting way of explaining things, no matter how different or similar to something else, in a more or less unique way. These explanations are, again, based on several assumptions. The secret, perhaps lies with something or someone that created it all, perhaps a universal superpower!

Though, racking your brains on anything that puzzles you isn't a bad idea after all. As the meaning of man's life itself is imparted to the seeker by this struggle; struggle with words, with thoughts, with ideas of something, no matter how trivial or complex it may be. In the end, we are to accept things, in the most positive of ways. Whatever is, it might just be for the greater good. Howsoever it is, it might just be exactly how it is supposed to be.

If you ask me the reason for this conclusion, my honest answer would be "I do not know!" Probably the only advice would be stay inquisitive, curious and be ready to use our most vital organ, the brain, all the time. But what is the purpose of our being? What is the meaning of life? Why are we here?

Sometimes when I delve into deep contemplation, I often think about this. Think about what was, is and could be. I reflect on what happened, and what I could have done instead. I imagine as to what life holds in store for me. Whether it's going to be all uphill, or if it's going to be a path of gold, laid with thorns...

In the simplest of my thoughts, I think of where I would want myself to be and of what could be. I think life is plain and simple, the way it is meant to be. A peaceful existence spent in pursuit of what you want it to be and bliss when you have reached where you wanted to. Happiness to be cherished in the most childish of occurrences and a seriousness to wade through the toughest of times.

As I wrote this, I wished I could simply stop worrying, keep enjoying this life, stay happy each and every moment of it. Learn a lot, not just for valued degrees, but for so much more. To earn enough money in this world run by just that, to be able to fulfill any and all of my family's and my own desires. Hopefully fall in love with someone meant to really be made just for me.

To quote a few words from Steve Jobs, one of the most admired minds of our times, which got etched in my memory. "Stay hungry, stay foolish."

Hungry for the deepest of secrets from within, uncovering the answers to my curious queries about life as I know it, remain foolish until one attains attains Nirvana...

Nishant Naik
PGP 2019

The Yin and the Yang of Life.

In Chinese philosophy, Yin and Yang symbol '☯' is a Duality Concept (Not the Duality, I teach in O.R. Class :D), which primarily shows how Opposite forces may actually be complementary, interconnected, and interdependent in the Nature, and how they regenerate each other. It applies to all perspectives of life.

A tabular version of the various example of complementary and opposite forms is as follows:

Yin	Yang
Feminine	Masculine
Rational	Irrational
True	False
Right	Wrong
Black	White
Dark	Light
North	South
Water (Transformation)	Fire (Creativity)
Passive	Active
Moon (Symbol of Weakness and the Chinese Goddess Changxi)	Sun (Symbol of Strength and the Chinese God Xihe)
Earth	Sky (Space)
Cold	Warm
Old	Young
Evens	Odds
Valleys	Mountains
Poor	Rich
Pure	Impure
Soft	Hard
Soul/Spirit	Body
Culture	Structure

Now, Let us talk about Yin Yang and 'Teacher Student relationship'. The color white in the yin-yang symbol ☯ may also be seen as representing color of Knowledge or color of Light (also color for Goddess 'Saraswati' of knowledge in Hinduism). The color black may therefore represent Student or Learner which has some lack of Knowledge (Black is also symbolizing here the 'darkness' or 'Absence of Light'). Both of them (Student and Teacher) complete the Teaching-Learning System (System again, here represents more than sum of its parts).

Now let us talk of 'Black inside the White' and 'White inside the Black' in the Yin Yang ☯ symbol. As the color 'White' is representing 'Teacher' here, we can explain it as following way-

There is Student (Learner) in every Teacher. Unless he or she (Teacher) learn continuously, he or she cannot survive for the long run. In other words, while teaching the students, Teachers can (and they do) learn continuously for the students and from the students. Similarly, within every student, there lies a teacher which is represented as 'White circle within the Black' part of Yin Yang symbol ☯. Also, many students that learn from the teachers; help their peers (Classmates/ Juniors/ Brother or Sisters) by teaching their peers to understand the concepts. By bringing some new or out-of-the-box perspectives in the classroom the 'Students' teach their 'Teacher' also. Other than these, some of the students become academicians/trainers/group-leads; with various teaching roles for life long.

So in this 'Teacher Student' system of this Universe, not only literally exact 'Student' or exact 'Teacher' may count. But also, all those come to this system; whom we teach something and from whom we learn something. This list comprises of literally anyone such as friends, family, colleagues or even unknown people. A nice example, which I personally observed from my pet cat when I was in class 10. I used to play with it and teaching sign language and various command. But in its short lifespan of one and half year, it taught me several things. I learned to acknowledging others you love, patience, and discipline (in timeliness way). So Teacher-Learner system is ubiquitous. We need to keep our mind and senses open to learn and observe it.

In terms of 'Relation' concept of Mathematics, Teacher-Student Relation is obviously an 'Equivalence Relation'; which is also clearly pictured by this Yin Yang Symbol ☯.

Last but not the least, here is my favorite quote- **"We don't stop learning as Life doesn't stop teaching"**

Happy Learning to all!

Prof Arindum Mokhopadhyay

ODE

Migratory Birds



The Freedom of Movement lay incomplete
Financial independence still a dream...

For married women in villages, childhood friends often vanish.
And they get a complete new bunch of fellow married women as
neighbours slowly transforming into soulmates.

Such was the life of Prakaswati and Satyawati
From newly weds to becoming great grandmothers
From being the beauty queens to getting artificial teeth
From loosing their loved ones to choosing the spiritual path
together

Somewhere between early twenties and late eighties life
happened to them phenomenally
and the current feud between them is who will leave first.....

**Lokpriya
PGP 2019**

ALUM SPEAK

Moving up the Life Ladder

Greetings Shillongers!

It is yet another wonderful day that god has gifted us to cherish but how we cherish is upon us! While a great education from our great institute has already equipped us for a successful corporate life, something that would be required for sure to survive, sustain and excel but the subtle aspects of teachings and a little logical extension of the same can unlock a huge value of Happiness for all of us.

To begin with, our education has helped us to break the norm of accepting something as it is and ask the right questions and thereby leading to discovery of some wonderful insights and truths that were hidden since long but have we applied the same to other aspects of life?

With multibillion dollars of campaigns running to promote consumerism and “more is better”, have we made ourselves too busy to think beyond the material comforts and entering a rat race only for a better tomorrow at the cost of now? While this is all important and we are not planning to pack our bags and move into the woods for sure, can we re-establish a lost balance? Let me highlight some aspects of how do we do this:

2. We all make plans, wonderful plans, all of us and that is a must, **but being attached to those plans is where the problem begins**. While it may sound contradictory that if we make plans and if we do not attach to them, how can we ensure a successful tracking and achieving the plan? Trust me you can do that but if you are not just “attached” to the plan, it will help you re-evaluate your plans and make changes comfortably without any “Dukkha or sorrow”.
3. **Living in “Now”**: How many of us face the problem of forgetting keys, mobile phones or even to pick up your spouse sometimes? Human minds by design though can multitask at a speed unimagined but they were not made to do that else we

Contact

Email: nuksa@iimshillong.ac.in

Editor: Prof. Sanjeeb Kakoty

Phone No: +91 364 2308008 Email: sky@iimshillong.ac.in

would have had more than 2 hands or legs (so that we can focus on multiple tasks). While multitasking would still happen through a switch between voluntary and involuntary activities, can we live in the now and ensure we are doing the task with complete mindfulness. Try this – “find a quiet place, sit on a ground or mat with legs crossed (Indian posture while eating) and try to count your breaths – for each one in and out count one (no breathing postures etc. required). It would be difficult for us to count even till 20 before our mind has started wandering”. Try this for next few days, you can even try ideas of chanting mantras. The whole idea is to tame your mind to do what you want to focus and avoid dissonance.

1. We all know that - to focus on something we need to eliminate distractions. To focus on life, similar rule applies. We all need a mechanism to simplify our lives. **How many of us went to a supermarket with a list and come out with items on the same list not even one item extra?** Now you see how the consumerism and advertising campaigns are manipulating us in a very subtle way. The next time you go for shopping stick to a list. Even better – **Whenever you have an urge to buy something, put it in a list and hold for a month, just check back after a month if you still need it? 80% of the items would go off.** You can even make a rule like this – **“whenever you buy something, make rule to give away the item it is replacing”** – The lesser the clutter the more free you would be from managing the extra stuff. Most of times, people keep the clutter and keep themselves busy to not hear the inner voice and the tough questions that comes from within. It is always better to solve a problem before it is too late.

Why all this is important? It has been proved time and again that while money, material things, ability to buy and create stuff might me important but marginal utility curve applies here as well and one cannot have the proportionate increase in happiness with corresponding rise in wealth. We all need to answer the inner voice which wants us to move forward in the life ladder. But to do that, first we need to hear it right?

Name: Hardik Shah

Batch: 2013-2015

Current Work Details: Manager, Solutioning and Consulting - Indegene, Inc (www.indegene.com)



Nanyang Business School

भारतीय प्रबंध संस्थान शिल्लॉंग
Indian Institute of Management Shillong
Mayurbhanj Complex, Nongthymmai
Shillong-793014
Website: www.iimshillong.ac.in
Phone: 0364-2308000