



First Annual

**One-Month Celebration
of
Creating and Sharing Knowledge**

(A Report)

(Oct. 14-Nov. 14, 2011)

Central University of Haryana

(Jant-Pali Villages, Mahendergarh)

Temporary Campus: Govt. B.Ed. College Building
Railway Road, Narnaul-123001, (Distt.Mahendergarh), Haryana



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हरियाणा केन्द्रीय विश्वविद्यालय (महेन्द्रगढ़) **CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF HARYANA** (Mahendergarh)

(संसद अधिनियम 25 (2009) के तहत स्थापित)
(Established vide Act No. 25 (2009) of Parliament)

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प्रो. (डा.) मूलचंद शर्मा
कुलपति

Professor (Dr.) Mool Chand Sharma
Vice-Chancellor

NO. CUH/20

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Reflections from the Vice-Chancellor

21st century is being professed as the '**century of knowledge**' and India emerging as one of the riches '**knowledge society**.' The challenge for India in occupying place of primacy in the world of knowledge can come true only if universities known as the '**repository of knowledge**' discharge their primary and fundamental responsibility of perpetually and vigorously following the pursuit of knowledge seeking. Universities need to remain constantly and committedly engaged with creation, dissemination, sharing and celebrating knowledge, research and innovation. It is a tall order and cannot be met unless every member of '**education fraternity**' from education policy makers, academic leadership, faculty to scholars engages oneself in recognizing and realizing this pursuit. The pursuit has to be taken as a conviction by everyone be it an institution having a long history or is at nascent stage; whether it is located in metropolis having finest physical infrastructure or is seated in the remote backward location - none is immuned and none need to feel incapacitated in ushering into culture of knowledge seeking.

Firmly believing in foregoing, that the **Central University of Haryana** despite suffering from all kinds of deficits such as: difficult location, lack of physical infrastructure, dearth of human resources and absence of sound and robust academic environment decided last year to undertake a challenge as well as a risk and to do an experiment by organizing '**One Month Celebration of Partnership**' aimed at **creating, sharing and disseminating knowledge; dissecting and constructing ways to applying and connecting that knowledge to addressing needs and aspirations ranging from global, national to local**. The period from October 14 - November 14, 2011 dedicated to celebration turned out to be the most memorable one on the calender of

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university. The month long celebration witnessed generation of ideas, clashes of ideas, synthesis of ideas. It saw volume of courage exhibited by young scholars to think out of box; and commitment to remain engaged bot in '**creative deconstruction to reconstruct**' as well as creative new construction for finding solutions to issues and challenges. If seminars, symposia, round-tables, dialogues, debates and discussions constituted the festivities during these four weeks, activities build around art, culture and heritage, dept the entire fraternity equally engaged, excited and inspired providing a robust context for acquiring new learning and devising purposeful research agenda.

A brief report titles '***Celebrating A Month of Partnership in Creating and Sharing Knowledge***' prepared by my colleagues Dr. Sanjiv Kumar and Dr. Ravindra Singh in association with a team of dedicated faculty members provides some of the glimpses of the month long celebrations. '**Deeds are more convincing than the spoken words**' is a universally shared view. How true the view is, is so beautifully testified in this report. Dr. Sanjiv Kumar and Dr. Ravindra Singh deserve thanks in magnitude for the excellent job accomplished in preparing the report. My greater thanks are to Prof. DC Vashist, the Director of the Festival, members of the faculty, students body, administrative staff, support staff and other stake-holders especially resource persons who travelled from outside for m outside for making the month celebration a 'goal-post' for future.

Inspired by the success and the learning made last year as the **Report** in your hands brings out that the University decided to make the '**celebration**' and annual feature and is in full gear of making preparations for holding its '**Second Annual One-month Celebration of Partnership in Crating and Sharing Knowledge**' from October 22-November 21, 2012. Everyone is excited, eager and is committed to do better and learn more. Talking of my own - I am keenly looking forward to the **2nd Annual Month of Celebration** and sure of enjoying a tempting feast providing a rich menu of diverse and stimulating ideas, intellect and imagination. I wish everyone the best and hope that collectively we all will serve the cause of bringing peace, prosperity and welfare to every member of humanity by '**celebrating and generating purposeful knowledge.**'

With warm greetings,



Professor (Dr.) Mool Chand Sharma

Vice-Chancellor

Preface

The faculty meetings with the worthy vice-chancellor at Central University of Haryana are full of academic discussions led by the later. Depending upon circumstances, such meetings may involve the entire faculty or a group therefrom but the environment throughout remains democratic and encouraging, thanks to the benevolent-participatory leadership style of the hon'ble Vice-chancellor Prof Mool Chand Sharma who always believes in team-building. This leadership style is crucial to invoke partnership in the agenda of creating and sharing knowledge which further leads to building a knowledge society. Therefore, there is a long journey between the point of generation of an idea and its taking final shape because of the involvement of the students, faculty and University leadership in rigorous preparatory deliberations. The idea of month long festival “Celebrating Partnership in Creating and Sharing Knowledge” also germinated, emerged and got shape in the course of discussions during these meetings. The events included in the month long exercise were not the result of some instant decision rather were the result of intense discussion bogged by contestations and attestations, the discussion spreading over a long time.

The idea of having a Book Reading Club, for instance, which was the brainchild of worthy vice-chancellor who floated it in one such meeting towards the end of August 2011, took almost a month before it was finalised. Another initiative, again suggested by worthy vice-chancellor, that we should organise some event around newspaper reading, took even longer duration in getting structured. Both the ideas somehow were the result of a discussion in one of the earlier faculty meetings wherein it was lamented that the habit of reading is declining.

During last academic year, seminars were delivered on every Thursday by the faculty members, which were attended by the entire student body and the faculty. This multi-disciplinary exercise was found extremely beneficial for dissemination of knowledge. With a view to give a formal shape to this exercise, worthy vice-chancellor in one of the faculty meetings suggested the idea of having a Discussion Group.

Civil society movement against corruption caught the attention in several such meetings and its various nuances were discussed. In one such meeting it was suggested to have a debate on some aspects of the issue. At least three such themes which could generate debate were suggested: 'Civil Society versus State', 'Democracy versus Anarchy', 'Who Supreme: People or Parliament?' After several rounds of discussions, it was decided to choose the last theme and organise a debate on 'Who Supreme: Parliament or People? It was also decided that it would be a student centric activity in the form of contest of ideas among five students. Perhaps it was this one exercise which was most debated and discussed and needed lot of preparation involving both the faculty and the participating scholars/ students.

Similarly, Department of Education proposed to celebrate National Education Day (November 11) to commemorate the birth anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, a great educationist and the first Education Minister of India. It was decided to organise a discussion on the theme 'Social, Political and Economic Dynamics of Higher Education in India’ on that day as a part of month long Celebration. Likewise, the Department of Hindi proposed to celebrate the birth centenary of the great Hindi poet Baba Nagarjuna in the month long Celebration.

The concluding day for the month-long Celebration (November 14) coincided with the Children's Day. It was, therefore, proposed to hold some event on the issues of children on that day. Several ideas were floated including inviting students from the schools in Narnaul town on the university campus and organise some debate or declamation. However, the idea had to be dropped in view of

the apprehension that the school students may not feel at ease in the university environment. It was then proposed that the university fraternity may go to some school and such an event may be organised thereat. But after careful consideration this idea also had to be dropped lest the university should have faced the charge of patronisation. Finally, after a series of discussions with the worthy vice-chancellor wherein at least half a dozen faculty members were involved, it was decided to organise a discussion by the faculty on the theme “Missing Childhood: Social, Political and Economic Dynamics”.

There was great enthusiasm amongst the students and faculty about each of the events organised during the month-long Celebration and there was a great passion for participation both amongst the departments and the faculty to organise some events during the Celebration. In fact, decision as to what event should be included in the Celebration was really a challenge and the decision about each event to be included was taken after considerable discussion. No doubt, seemingly vague idea of One Month Celebration got so nicely structured that by the time we progressed with the idea each student and faculty got highly motivated to participate and contribute in the pious agenda of creating and sharing knowledge, The event proved to be an appetiser for the learners in developing more passionate quest for learning through partnership and team-building. The bouquet of events organised in the month instilled among us the culture of multidisciplinary approach to learning, more profusely.

Dr. Ravindra Singh

Dr. Sanjiv Kumar

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3	Book Reading on The Argumentative Indian authored by Amartya Sen <i>Dr. Ravindra Singh (Book Reading)</i> <i>Dr. Sanjay Tiwari & Mr. Ashwani (Discussants)</i>	Oct. 19, 2011
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6	Discussion on Sovereign Debt Crisis: Causes, Consequences and Remedial Measures <i>Mr. Ashwani (Initiator)</i>	Nov. 3, 2011
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8	Book Reading on Postcolonial Ecocriticism authored by Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin <i>Dr. Bir Singh Yadav (Book Reading)</i> <i>Mr. Vijay Kumar & Mr. Pardeep Singh (Discussants)</i>	Nov. 9, 2011
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10	Education Day Sumposium: Economic, Political and Social Dynamics of Higher Education <i>Dr. Anand Sharma, Dr. Sanjiv Kumar and Dr. P.K. Sahu (Panellists)</i>	Nov. 11, 2011
11	Big Contest on People and Parliament: Who Supreme? <i>Mr. Tarun Verma, Mr. Shatrughan, Ms. Snehlata, Mr. Bajrang and Mr. Arvind (Panellists)</i>	Nov. 12, 2011
12	Missing Childhood; Social, Political and Economic Dynamics <i>Dr. Ravindra Singh, Ms. Renu Yadav, Ms. Shobhna Jeet & Mr. Pardeep Singh (Panellists)</i>	Nov. 14, 2011

Lead Actors/ Actors in Lead

1. (Dr.) Singh, Ravindra, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science: Coordinator of One Month Celebration
2. (Dr.) Vashist, D.C., Professor, Department of Economics
3. (Dr.) Jha, K.N., Associate Professor, Department of Hindi
4. (Dr.) Sharma, Anand, Associate Professor, Department of Management Studies
5. (Dr.) Sharma, Yogender, Associate Professor, Department of Hindi
6. (Dr.) Tiwari, Sanjay, Associate Professor, Department of Management Studies
7. (Dr. Yadav, B.S., Associate Professor, Department of English
8. (Dr.) Ashwani, Assistant Professor, Department of Economics
9. (Ms.) Jeet, Shobhna, Assistant Professor, Department of Law
10. (Dr.) Kumar, Sanjiv, Assistant Professor, Department of English
11. (Dr.) Kumar, Satish, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science
12. (Mr.) Kumar, Vijay, Assistant Professor, Department of Education
13. (Dr.) Sahu, P.K., Assistant Professor, Department of Education
14. (Dr.) Sharma, A.P., Assistant Professor, Department of Management Studies
15. (Mr.) Singh, Pardeep, Assistant Professor, Department of Law
16. (Dr.), Tomer Rathee, Ritu, Assistant Professor, Department of English
17. (Ms.) Yadav, Renu, Assistant Professor, Department of Education

Inauguration October 14, 2011

The ceremony started with the Coordinator of the month long Celebration, Dr. Ravindra Singh, apprising the gathering of the events to be organised during the Celebration. Dr. Ravindra presented a brief sketch of activities in the form of book reading sessions, discussions, lectures, colloquia, panel discussions, contests of ideas etc., that have been planned for this month-long Celebration.

This was followed by lighting of lamp and recital of *saraswati vandana* by Deepika, Lalita (both students of MA Economics First Semester) and Nidhi (student of M.Com. First Semester). The Hon'ble Vice Chancellor Prof. Mool Chand Sharma was then requested to deliver the inaugural address.

In his inaugural address, the Vice-Chancellor spelled out the main objective behind the month of 'Celebration of Partnership of Creating and Sharing of Knowledge'. The Celebration comprises a number of events dedicated to and designed aiming at creating, disseminating and leveraging knowledge to be a part of national endeavour for India to secure a place of pride on the map of global knowledge society. The purpose of celebration is also to enhance research capabilities, building new skills, building the culture of applying acquired knowledge and information for social causes.

Prof. Sharma explained that there are three components of knowledge viz. Knowledge creation, dissemination and transfer of knowledge, and leveraging of knowledge. Delineating the importance of knowledge, he held that there is deficit of nothing else except that of knowledge; thus actually instead of governance deficit it is knowledge deficit. He highlighted that creation of knowledge takes place only through two questions; one, 'how and why something is happening?' This means that a sensitive, inquisitive and enquiring heart is a pre-requisite for all knowledge generation. If we lack sensitivity, we cannot even sustain the existing knowledge let alone growing and thriving.

Secondly, the generated knowledge should be transferred and disseminated to wider sections of society; it should not be the preserve of a few because should it be so, we will have islands of knowledge and oceans of ignorance. This means that the created knowledge should not be confined to an elite group, rather it should be spread among the people vastly. Then, the acquired knowledge should be used for the benefit of the society at large; for its happiness and growth and for creating harmony in the society. He held that societies face crisis because of absence of leveraging of knowledge.

Prof. Sharma held that the centre of gravity of economic activity is shifting to Asia from the US and the West and the continent is facing a great challenge challenge that it does not possess knowledge and ideas and skills. Thus, he said that institutions like Central University of Haryana have an important obligation to the society and thus they should contribute not only to creation of knowledge but should also discharge the important functions of creation of knowledge. They should also engage in dissemination and leveraging of created knowledge so that the chasm between the haves and have-nots of knowledge could be minimised and the prosperity and harmony of societies could be achieved.

In the end of his speech, the worthy Vice-Chancellor thanked the university fraternity for deciding to organise the month of Celebration and conveyed his best wishes for the grand success of the exercise.

During his presidential remarks, Prof D.C. Vashist highlighted the importance of 'idea' in the path of development and remarked that the main cause of difference between the developed and developing countries is that while the former have recognised its significance, the latter are yet to. He further noted that the moment a developing country starts recognising its importance nothing can stop its speedy development.

While expressing his gratitude and thankfulness to the hon'ble Vice-Chancellor for initiating this month-long Celebration of Creating and Sharing of Knowledge in the university, Prof. Vashist claimed that even though the efforts being undertaken by the university under the Socratic guidance of Prof. Mool Chand Sharma may not be visible in the initial stages but the result would definitely be felt widely once the thought process takes roots. He called upon the faculty and the scholars and the students to participate enthusiastically in the events being organised in the month-long Celebration.

Discussion on
Relevance of Gandhian Satyagraha and the
Role of Civil Society in the Present Context
(October 14, 2011)
Initiator: Dr. Satish Kumar

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The topic for discussion was chosen in the background of the on-going civil society movement led by the prominent Gandhian social activist Anna Hazare who along with some other activists started his crusade against corruption towards the beginning of 2010. While Anna Hazare was observing satyagraha to press the demand for creation of an institution of Lok Pal to combat the problem of corruption, several issues cropped up. While the Team Anna prepared a Jan Lok Pal bill and demanded that Parliament should take up and enact that as an Act, several issues cropped up. It was being debated 'how could it be ascertained that the Team Anna was representing the entire country', 'whether the authority of Parliament to enact laws could be bypassed', 'who is supreme: people or parliament' etc. At the same time it was also contested that Anna was following the path of Mahatma Gandhi. All these issues were raised and discussed during several faculty meetings and in one such meeting, the worthy vice-chancellor, Prof. Mool Chand Sharma suggested that someone from the faculty should come forward to discuss any of the issues involved in the on-going debate and it was Dr. Satish Kumar who immediately offered to deliver a talk on "Relevance of Gandhian Satyagraha and the Role of Civil Society in the Present Context."

During his discussion, Dr. Satish Kumar tried to figure out certain accepted parameters of Gandhian Satyagraha and logically weighed and compared the present Civil Society movement on those principles. He came out with his own explanations and comparisons to judge the present movement of Team Anna. He first highlighted the some of the prominent parameters/ characteristics of Satyagraha as delineated by Mahatma Gandhi and then weighed the present civil society movement on those parameters.

- ⌚ Satyagraha is the weapon of last resort. When all the weapons have been used and exhausted to change the mindset of the opponent then the ultimate weapon viz. *Satyagraha* is practiced.

But Anna's *Satyagraha* was not the last resort. It was like a multi barrel gun; on the one side Team Anna was speaking to the different ministers, some of them were playing pressure tactics while Anna was observing fast. This proved that Team Anna was engaged overtly and covertly in political bargaining with the government. Having done so, this kind of practices can't be accorded as a Gandhian *Satyagraha*.

- ⌚ Gandhi's concept of *Satyagraha* is an integrated concept and it includes truth, non-violence, and tolerance. He said that *Satyagraha* was like a banyan tree which had innumerable branches. He explained that "to be a satyagrahi is like walking on the blade of sword." According to Gandhi a satyagrahi needs certain qualifications, if he does not have requisite qualifications he may not serve but disserve and then *Satyagraha* will turn into *duragraha*.

Team Anna had shown comical show on Ramleela Ground while Anna was sitting on fast. The whimsical acts of some members of the Team derailed the true motive of the movement and Gandhian practices.

- ⌚ Winning the trust of the opponent by himself remaining truthful and trustworthy is a necessary condition for a *satyagrihi*. According to Mahatma Gandhi, the opponent may distrust a *satyagrihi*, but if the latter is truthful and honest, the former will have to bow and will ultimately win the trust of the opponent.

But what appeared during the movement was that Team Anna did not have faith in the government. Team Anna mistrusted the government and remained rigid and uncompromising in its approach.

- ⌚ There was another condition of Gandhian *Satyagraha*; not to force the opponents. *Satyagraha* is about self-sacrifice. Also, the basic content of *Satyagraha* is self-purification and is bereft of any ill against any individual.

But in the name of the people's uprising, Team Anna forced the government to take certain decisions under pressure. In true sense it is not *Satyagraha*. Anna movement fostered animosity against selected ministers and commented which amply goes against the Gandhian way.

- ⌚ Gandhi did not use his fasting and penance to blackmail anyone. According to him respect for the opponent should not decline.

During Anna movement it was just reverse. Team Anna was lampooning the government and political leaders. Some of them targeted the institution of Parliament. Blackmailing and threatening the government with another fast is not Gandhian *Satyagraha*.

- ⌚ Mahatma Gandhi never counted the heads for a successful *Satyagraha*. The reasons and methods should be impeccable and genuine. It must encompass the complete hog of citizens. The cause was more important than the numbers.

But Team Anna boasted about the large crowds assembled at Ramleela Grounds. In fact, the success of any movement should not be measured by gatherings alone.

Dr. Kumar also tried to explain how the voluntary action has been grabbed by voluntary associations and created a pitch battle between people and government. He emphatically raised a question: Do the spontaneous reactions of urban people represent the whole hog of the civil society? The civil society still is an abstract idea. Moreover, according to Dr. Kumar, the movement has created more controversies and raised many conflicts than solutions of the existing problems. When J.P. Movement turned to be a fiasco, it brought negative fallouts for many years. The whole country underwent a severe political crisis and it was apprehended that the civil society movement might cause another upheaval.

Dr. Kumar highlighted as to how Anna's *Satyagraha* has attempted to change the existing contours of our political system and has raised some fundamental issues which need to be debated and understood. Some of these are as follows:

- Conflict between parliament and people; where does the sovereignty lie?
- Conflict between the state and the Civil Society
- Legitimacy and authenticity of the Government
- The Process of Deinstitutionalization

Subsequent to the presentation by Dr. Satish Kumar, there was a very vibrant open house discussion in which both the faculty and students participated enthusiastically and raised some of the very pertinent issues, queries and observations concerning the topic. Some of the issues raised

include:

- Can any movement organized in accordance with the Gandhian ideology succeed given the present day unscrupulous political leadership;
- Why such agitation is not organized to address issues of women, children, downtrodden and other deprived sections of society;
- Can there be any solution to the ongoing debate about the 'superiority' of the institutions;
- Is existing political theory capable to address the issues and challenges raised by the current civil society movement
- While discussing such a contentious issue, extraneous considerations and contextual relevance within the given timeframe need to be taken care of.

In his concluding remarks, the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor Prof. Mool Chand Sharma complimented Dr. Satish Kumar for generating the debate on an issue attracting the attention of one and all in the country. He exhorted the participants to recall and ponder carefully the words, terminology and the ideas that have been shared during the discussion. He found the reflections of the students quite encouraging as they displayed their understanding of the present context and political developments in relation to Gandhian struggle for independence.

While explaining that 'Gandhian' is a process, phenomenon and identity, Prof. Sharma remarked that it is quite difficult to compare Anna with Gandhi as both are located in different timeframes one in the colonial setting when there was no civil society and another at a time when we are the citizens of a vibrant democracy. He referred to Martin Luther King, Gandhi and Anna in different contexts and timeframes.

He concluded with the remarks that we all at least agree upon two things: that as advocated by Mahatma Gandhi, *Satyagraha* has to be used as the *brahmastra* and that one should not expect a 'Gandhian' to be a replica of 'Gandhi'; a Gandhian is obviously expected to be as dispassionate as Gandhi himself. The event literally enthused and charged the students and faculty to participate in the forthcoming events more engagingly.

**Book Reading Session on
The Argumentative Indian
(Amartya Sen; Penguin, 2005)
(October 20, 2011)**

**Book Reader: Dr. Ravindra Singh
Discussants: Dr. Sanjay Tiwari & Mr. Ashwani**

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With the object to stimulate and reinforce intellectual growth and reading habit; to share, debate and question different perspectives of a text; to share new researches; to present case-studies; to present the analysis of reports; to narrate the real-life experiences; and to develop inter-disciplinary reading environment, Book Reading Club was started. Even though the idea was initially mooted in August 2011, it was given final shape during one of the faculty meetings held on September 13, 2011. Dr. Sanjiv Kumar, Assistant Professor, Department of English was designated as Convener of the Club.

In response to the notification, inviting entries for membership of the Club, all the faculty members and 17 scholars and students expressed their interest. It was decided to keep the first book reading session open only to the faculty. It was purposely decided because it was agreed that the technique of book reading needs to be acquired and mastered. Thus, the book readers should first acquire at least certain rudiments of that technique and then present the book reading before the larger audience.

After the first book reading session presented by Dr. Bir Singh Yadav, Associate Professor, Department of English on Sept 8, 2011, it was discussed whether the second book reading should be confined to the registered members of the Book Reading Club or it should be an open house exercise. After deliberations and also consultations with the presenter of second book reading, it was finally decided that the second book reading session would be an open house affair. Only after it was decided that the second book reading session would be an open house exercise, it was decided to make it a part of the month-long Celebration.

Starting from the bibliographical details of the book, the initiator of the session Dr. Ravindra Singh made an enriching presentation on the basis of his reading of the first chapter of the book. While introducing the book, he admitted that he found it as one of the most inter-disciplinary texts with allusions and references across various disciplines. So, keeping in view the richness of the contents, he decided to confine the reading to the first chapter viz. *The Argumentative Indian* of the book. He could arouse the interest of the audience by picking certain key lines from the text. Following are some of the excerpts from his presentation of the book reading:

All through, we encounter masses of arguments and counterarguments spread over incessant debates and disputations and the arguments are quite often substantive as well. To supplement his point, Amartya Sen cites the debate between Lord Krishna doing one's duty and Arjuna avoiding bad consequences on the eve of the great battle *Mahabharata*. The author asserts that despite the fact that Lord Krishna's philosophy prevailed over Arjuna and has accolade worldwide, Arjuna's contrary argument is not really vanquished. This gets highlighted in the case of Oppenheimer, the leader of the American team that

developed the atom bomb during Second World War, who on seeing the death and destruction the weapon caused on July 16, 1945, lamented “I am become death, the destroyer the worlds”. (p. 5)

The author also explains that argumentation is not a male-preserve; he cites many examples from the history where the women and people from the disadvantaged sections of the society have argued vigorously. While relating public reasoning and democracy, the author emphasises that “Persistent arguments are in an important part of our public life. It deeply influences Indian politics, and is particularly relevant, I would argue, to the development of democracy in India and the emergence of its secular priorities.” The author explains that this argumentative nature is indicative of the strength of democratic tradition in India and highlights that the tradition of discourse and discussion goes back to the time of Ashoka “who had a great commitment to discussion as a means of social progress” (p. 15). He also writes that “Ashoka tried to codify and propagate what must have been among the earliest formulations of rules for public discussion” (p. 16). The author also writes that this tradition was further carried forward by the Mughal emperor Akbar.

Further, Amartya Sen tries to place the position of India as a country with democratic tradition in right perspective when he rejects both the extremes i.e. (i) taking democracy to be just a gift of the Western world that India simply accepted when it became independent, and (ii) there is something unique in Indian history that makes the country singularly suited to democracy.

Similarly, author also emphasises India's heterodoxy and the secular character when he asserts the “Heterodoxical character of Indian society since ages. Yet each religious community managed to retain its own identity within India's multi-religious spectrum” (p. 17). The author highlights the relevance and richness of the ideas and policies of the two grandest of Indian emperors Ashoka and Akbar in the context of Indian secularism, which he explains as emphasising *neutrality* between different religions rather than *prohibition* of religious associations in state activities.

The author also emphasises that religion and theology are also not devoid of argumentativeness as a result of which not only the religious philosophy and the existence of God is challenged but even within those who accept His existence, there prevail different strands of religiosity in this country. And there is still another philosophy propounded by Mahatama Budha who relates good behaviour completely independent of any God real or imagined.

The author also asserts that heterodoxy gives way to scientific discoveries “since new ideas and discoveries have to emerge initially as heterodox views, which differ from and may be in conflict with, established understanding” (p. 26). He, therefore, relates the “flowering of Indian science and mathematics that began in the Gupta period benefitted from the tradition of scepticism and questioning which had been flourishing in India at that time”. (p. 26)

The author also observes that there is “... reason to celebrate and to defend” our argumentativeness but “the point ... is not so much to elevate the role of tradition in the development of India but to seek a fuller reading of Indian traditions, which have interacted with other factors in the dynamism of Indian society and culture.”

As one of the discussants, Mr. Ashwani highlighted the discourse between Arjuna and Lord Krishna as mentioned in the book. He generated a great debate while underlining the two approaches i.e. Arjuna's consequential analysis vis-à-vis Krishna's argument of performing one's

duty. It was held that the argumentative nature of Indian persisted irrespective of caste, class and religion. Referring to the book, he contended that public reasoning includes the opportunity for citizens to participate in the political discussions and to influence public choice, and it is closely related to the roots of democracy. He elaborated Amartya Sen's mention of India being fortunate in having long tradition of public arguments with toleration of intellectual heterodoxy. India's non-western democracy consists of the comprehensive acceptance by armed forces as well as by the political parties. The book, according to Mr. Ashwani, has generated a hot debate on secularism which is defined as neutrality between religious groups and prohibiting the religious associations in state activities. Author cites two examples; one of French decision on women scarves and another, the Indian legal approach towards polygamy to enrich the debate.

At the same time he also discussed the Indian identity as mentioned in this book. On the economic front, author highlighted the identity of India and the Indians since the era of colonialism. This identity travelled towards nationalism and promoted the production, Export, investment and other economic activities in tune with the competitive market. Further the self-realisation among Indians led to the emergence of India as the potential shareholder in the globalized world by sharing the promising opportunities at economic front. Accordingly the domestic policies were designed to strengthen the economy at global level. Taking clues from Amartya Sen's portrayal of the journey of economic system of India since colonial period, Mr. Ashwani provided economic dimension to the Book Reading Session.

Dr. Sanjay Tiwari, the second discussant, stated that the book is an attempt to glorify one of the traditions of Indian mythology viz. argumentativeness. He discussed as to how in the very first chapter of the book the author has illustrated the historical events and chronology that put arguments as a quality of Indians whether it were the sages and hermits of ancient India or the kings of medieval India. The practice of arguments and questioning was widely used in intellectual discourses which furthered the development of various beliefs, thoughts and viewpoints. He referred to Hindu mythology, Indian scriptures, Vedas, Upanishadas and Puranas to understand the context of the book by Nobel Laureate which lays emphasis on argument as the essential attribute of Indians since ages.

The author while seeking the evidences from the most ancient text on Indian Philosophy i.e. *Rigveda* observes “the Vedas may be full of hymns and religious invocations, but they also tell stories, speculate about the world and true to the argumentative propensity already in view ask difficult questions. He discussed the basic doubt concerning the very creation of the world Did someone make it?, Was it a spontaneous emergence?, and Is there a God who knows what really happened?” (Preface page xi). The tradition of arguments and dialogue continued and grew in the age of post Vedic era i.e. about eighth century BCE when *Upanishadas* the dialectical treatises. He established correlation between the ancient texts and *The Argumentative Indian* which dwells largely upon the foundational knowledge derived from the earlier. The dialogue between learned Gargi and Yajnavalkya surely proves the importance of dialogue in developing theories of Economics. Maitreyi's rhetorical question ('what should I do with that by which I do not become immortal?') illustrates both the nature of human predicament and the limitations of the material world (p. 8).

Touching upon the crucial issues of the text, Dr. Tiwari further upheld the relevance of Public Choice Theory and Social Choice Theory. Raising so many questions regarding religion, science, economy, history, theology, ethics, sociology and philosophy, at the end Dr. Tiwari highlighted as to how according to Amartya Sen arguments are important for developing intellectual discourses, theories, science, ideas, thoughts and viewpoints.

The second half of the Book-Reading session was all the more engaging as the students and faculty dissected and contested the issues raised in the Book-Reading Session. Starting from the debate on the proper connotation of the words like 'argument', prolixity, dialogue, discussion, dilemma, discourse and loquacious as used by the discussants while discussing *The Argumentative Indian*, the participants raised some pertinent questions of present day relevance including tolerance in multicultural and multi-ethnic Indian society; representation of women, marginal and dalits; partial portrayal of Indian history picking only soothing instances; great argumentative tradition vis-à-vis idolising western ideology by the Indians; argument for the sake of argument, argument as a gossip or argument as a form of conviction; religion as uniting or dividing force; democratic tradition of India through 'samitis' and 'sabhas'; theories and approaches to Indian tradition; the essence of Hinduism as a religion; social change in modern India and rich argumentative tradition; arguments as the driver of inclusive growth; and democratic governance vis-à-vis argumentative nature of Indian etc.

Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor Prof. Mool Chand Sharma complimented the actors of Book Reading session and found the relevance of the book in the present context as for him, the healthy argumentative tradition worked as a shock absorber and established harmonious coexistence, peace, tolerance and goodwill among the Indians in spite of the inherent plurality and diversity marking Indian culture since ages. Prof. Sharma emphasised on the format as well as the content part of the Book Reading exercise. He illustrated as to how the exercises like book reading, book review, analysis, critique and summary cannot be generalised as one because each exercise is designed with a different set of objectives. Impressed by the encouraging participation of the students and faculty in the dialogue and discussion of quite substantial nature through the events like this, Prof. Sharma showed his optimism regarding the success of the month long Celebration.

How to/ Not to Read (Print Media): A Game of 100 Questions
(October 21, 2011)

Conveners: Mr. Ashwani & Dr. P.K. Sahu

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In some of the faculty meetings, it was felt that the habit of newspaper reading is declining even though newspapers constitute an important source of information and are also crucial for research purpose. To develop the habit of newspaper reading among the scholars and students of the University, it cropped up that some activity should be designed. After several rounds of discussions spanning over a period of more than three weeks, the exercise of Newspaper Reading was finally given the above name in one of the faculty meetings held on September 13, 2011. Mr. Ashwani & Dr. P.K. Sahu were jointly designated the Conveners of the activity.

The broad objectives of this initiative were to inculcate among the scholars and students the habit of reading newspapers, research reports, articles, magazines and thereby to enrich the knowledge of students in the area of their interest and in other disciplines; to update the scholars and students with recent events/ happenings in and outside India; to generate new ideas for pursuing research; to enhance writing and speaking skills.

It was decided that the scholars and students would be registered for this activity and based on their reading of newspapers for one month (from September 15 to October 14, 2011), they would be administered a test shortly after the expiry of one month period. After careful consideration, two 'more usually read' newspapers viz. The Hindustan Times (English) and Dainik Bhasker (Hindi) were identified. In response to the notification issued for registration for this activity, twenty-six scholars and students showed their inclination. It was decided to hold the 'Game' on October 21, 2011 as part of month-long Celebration.

As the name suggests, the test administered to the students comprised of 100 questions/ items. The items framed for the knowledge game were the outcome of one month efforts of the conveners of the event. The questions were related to all the disciplines such as Education, Economics, Management, Commerce, Law, Literature and Political Science. The questions were arranged in different formats such as multiple choices; fill in the blanks, matching type, true or false and sentence completion type. The test was of two hours duration and administered to the registered twenty-six scholars/ students on October 21, 2011.

After the administration of test, the event was dissected in the presence of the students, faculty and the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor Prof. Mool Chand Sharma who benefitted the participants with his constructive and incisive remarks. The Conveners Dr. P.K. Sahu and Mr. Aswani shared their views on the exercise and the objectives thereof. Dr. P.K. Sahu discussed in detail regarding what one is expected to read and what not while it comes to the reading of newspaper. Similarly, Mr. Aswani pondered over certain tips regarding newspaper reading and the objectives of the test administered to the participants.

After giving his best complements to the students for their active participation in the knowledge game, Prof. Sharma inspired the students to develop the habit of newspaper reading. Dissecting the event, Prof. M.C. Sharma defined as to how the word 'game' in the title of the event "Game of 100 Questions" is relevant in the scheme of sharing and creating knowledge. He maintained the

correlation among various events being organised during one month and observed that no event can be celebrated in isolation as all are based upon the common objective i.e. dissemination of knowledge and that too in inter-disciplinary fashion. For him, if the Discussion on “Gandhian Satyagraha and Civil Society” was relevant, equally relevant were the Book Reading Sessions on *Yajnaseni* or *The Argumentative Indian* and so would be other round table discussions, talks, colloquia and contests scheduled in one-month celebrations.

Hon'ble Vice Chancellor exhorted the students and faculty not to miss any opportunity to create and share knowledge and newspaper is one of the media from where one can have ample information. He also made an appeal not to have a superfluous reading of newspapers; rather, one needs to keep his eyes wide open and to develop the taste for accumulating newer and newer information. He cited the examples of passionate readers of newspaper for whom newspaper is as integral to their lives as food, water and other needs.

He guided the students regarding the art of reading the newspapers with particular focus on different columns and sections of the newspapers and informed them regarding the kind of information available on respective pages/ sections. One having the knowledge of these things can acquire more knowledge and get himself/ herself updated even in the limited time. His emphasis was more on the production of knowledge through newspapers and so he emphasized that for the newspaper reader it would not be suffice to browse through the headlines but the reader should penetrate deeper to connect to the background of the news, articles, editorials, special features and also with the management of the newspaper, chief editor and the editorial team.

He made it a point that for a serious newspaper reader, it is crucial to know as to which special feature appears on which date in a particular newspaper. Without knowing the schedule and location of features/ sections like international, national and regional news, editorial section, oped, book reviews, sports, cinema, business and finance, careers etc., one can hardly appreciate the newspaper in its entirety.

Citing the examples of various newspapers and Editors-in-Chief, Prof. Sharma conveyed that the knowledge of editors of certain newspapers is crucial to understand the reflections given by him/ her on different issues through the editorial which is considered the heart and soul of any newspaper. He also encouraged the students to apply the information they received in that session while approaching other newspapers in future.

Concluding his speech, Prof. M.C. Sharma maintained that knowledge knows no bounds and so this exercise should not be taken as an end because, for him, every end marks a beginning.

Book Reading Session on
The Story of English in India
(N. Krishnaswamy & Lalitha Krishnaswamy; Foundation Books, 2006)
(November 2, 2011)

Book Reader: Dr. Sanjiv Kumar
Discussants: Ms. Renu Yadav & Dr. Satish Kumar

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During the first two book reading sessions it was realised that the reading of the book should take place in its context, i.e., while reading a book, we need to understand the following: background of the author/s; timing of the book, i.e., some special events, if any, in the context of which the book might have been written; the background of publisher; social, political, religious, ethnic, cultural or like affiliations of the author as also of the publisher; the preface of the book etc. Unless we understand all these, the reading of the book cannot be complete.

Keeping this fact in view, Dr. Sanjiv Kumar while presenting the third book reading, which constituted an event in the month-long Celebration, highlighted the above facts about the book as a part of the above book reading session. Further, taking clues from the earlier two book reading sessions, even though the book was not very voluminous, he preferred not to present reading of the entire book, he rather confined himself to second part of the book.

At the time when English language is considered the language enabling one towards upward mobility and claims the status of global lingua franca, discussion on this particular book invited the attention of all the students and faculty. Introducing the book, Dr. Sanjiv familiarised the students and faculty with the background, important sections and context of the book. He observed that the book deals with the historical, political, economic and educational factors contributing to the growth of English speakers in India. He found the authors justified when they declared this book as “a fascinating story of power and resistance, of invasion and absorption, and of authority and subversion; it is as absorbing as any historical novel.” Referring to the entire history of English in India as discussed in the book, Dr. Sanjiv elaborated the five important phases in the development of English in India i.e. the Exploration and Transportation Phase; the Consolidation Phase; the Dissemination Phase; the Identity Phase; and the Globalisation Phase. Keeping in view the wide scope of the book and certain constraints before the presenter, the present book-reading session was restricted primarily to only two chapters of the book viz. Identity Phase and Globalisation Phase. The book reading largely deals with various landmarks which established the popularity of English in India and touched upon almost every historical development mentioned in the book that helped English hold its sway over Indians for purposes as varied as trade, commerce, growth & development, governance, polity, lingua-franca and education in general. The presentation highlighted the initial motives behind introducing English education, role of English in struggle for India's independence, its uses for purposes different from what Britishers aspired, its impact on Indian languages and immense career opportunities for English-knowing youth in the age of ICT and globalisation, besides discussing the recommendations made by various committees and commissions regarding the medium of instruction at different levels, as discussed methodically in the book.

It was discussed as to how the chapter titled “Identity Phase” of the book largely deals with the post-independence scenario of English education in India by referring to some of the most crucial

recommendations and reports submitted by different committees or commissions. The colonial legacy that India inherited from the Britishers was discussed by referring to the lines in the book:

The White rulers left but the English-educated brown 'Sahibs', creations of Macaulay, took over; the Republic of India, to a large extent, used English. The Indian Constitution was written in English; the administration and the judiciary used English. The British left a network of railways, post and telecommunication and a formidable bureaucracy, all transacting their business mostly in English. (109)

Talking about the love-hate relationship with English, the book presents the two contradictory viewpoints prevalent among Indians i.e. one advocating English as “Goddess Saraswati's gift to India, a blessing which Indians were privileged to receive” (110) and another cursing English considering it as the symbol of 'eternal slavery' and called the English-educated Indians as 'brown sahibs' or 'Macaulay's Children'. To validate the argument, some important lines from the text highlighting the assertion of the pioneers of '*Angrezi Hatao*' campaign were read out. This campaign was discussed in the light of the description:

After Independence, the language issue became an emotional one; hatred of the British got mixed up with dislike for the English language; and hatred of the British and their language became a symbol of nationalism for some... They argued that English was the root cause of all the woes of India and they wanted to throw the baby out of the bathwater. (109)

Thereafter, Dr. Sanjiv Kumar discussed various commissions and reports as listed and mentioned in the book. The commissions and their recommendations discussed in the session include University Education Commission, 1948-49 (popularly known as Radhakrishnan Commission); Mudaliar Commission, 1952-53; the Official Language Commission, 1956; All India Language Conference, 1958; Chief Ministers' Conference, Aug. 1961; National Integration Conference, Oct. 1961; Official Language Act 1963 (amended in 1967); Kothari Commission, 1964; National Policy on Education, 1968; Gokak Committee Report, 1969-71; the Draft National Policy on Education, 1979; National Education Policy & Programme of Action (1986); CDC Report: Report of the Curriculum Development Centre; and Acharya Ramamurti Commission, 1990.

Dr. Sanjiv picked out the lines highlighting the ever-increasing number of Indian speakers of English whose “sounds range from pukka Oxbridge in communication to the obscure pidgins of the street... A country has re-made English with many voices” (142). He found it quite interesting that the English language not found even in the list of scheduled languages, is the Associate Official Language of the country with more users than many of the recognised Indian languages like Assamese, Oriya, or Punjabi.

Thereafter, the discussion led to the analysis of the chapter titled “Globalisation Phase” which presents an overview of users of English in the age of globalisation under the set of compulsions entirely different from the past. Here, the authors trace the shift from agrarian life to IT revolution as the most compelling boost to English language throughout the country. It was widely discussed as to how:

... the English language has become a part of the IT revolution. English, a language that came from nowhere, is set to conquer the world... today, it is used, spoken or written in some form or the other, by perhaps 1.5 billion people around the world; of the English users, three hundred and fifty million use it as the mother tongue, and the rest as a foreign

or second language... it is estimated that there are even more users of English than of the Chinese language, a language spoken in eight different varieties but written in the same way by 1.1 billion people. (150)

At the time when the role of English is changing (as it is now used for global economy, ICT, & as global lingua franca), India seems to be at peace with English. The recent trend of English in India is discussed in the book as:

English for communication is the mantra everywhere. Outsourcing centres, call centres, medical transcription centres, bookkeeping for various multinational companies in different parts of the world, software development etc. thousands and thousands of jobs are created all over India... in a city like Bangalore alone, it is said there are about 75,000 persons employed in call centres... outsourcing, it is said, is going to create millions of jobs in the near future for English-knowing educated Indians. (159)

The focus has now shifted from traditional practices in English studies (when British literature was given more prominence) to the pragmatic approach to English language teaching (with the resolution of lang-lit controversy):

English teaching in India is becoming a big business. Every street corner has institutes for spoken English and grammar; many call centres are appointing English trainers to train people in the appropriate use of English, style polishing, accent sensitising, accent neutralising, English fluency, and cross-cultural communication... people who are good at spoken and written English are absorbed in the media and journalism. (160)

The interaction between English and Indian languages has had its impact on both. The fascination of Europeans with India its people and culture resulted in a substantial adaptation of number of Indian words and phrases into English (169). "The Oxford English Dictionary lists about 1000 words of Indian origin and some dictionaries list more than 2000 words in their supplements. The concepts like 'India' going international and economic globalisation have also added to the liberal borrowing of words." (169)

However, at the end, it was observed that the reading of the book would take the reader to the historical past where he/she might correlate various milestones achieved so far to understand the journey of English language in India with its political, economic and socio-cultural dimensions. It was also observed that the reading of the book is bound to enrich the historians, educationists and ELT experts alike. The book was appreciated by the presenter for its precision, accuracy and most importantly the chronology of events furnished at the end of each chapter.

Similarly, Ms. Renu Yadav, one of the discussants, found *The story of English in India* as a fascinating story about journey of English language from Exploration and Transportation phase to Globalization phase. For her, the book is rightly the story of power and resistance, of invasion and absorption and of authority and subversion. She remarked that this story truly depicts how English became the voice of 'masses' and not just for 'classes'. After travelling through many phases, English has ultimately entered into the globalization phase. For her, the journey of English in India corresponds to socio-political and economic changes leading to the change from agrarian society to the present day 'great Indian middle class' of Info-age. The change in attitude does not mean that Indians have become less patriotic; it only shows that they have become more pragmatic. Nowadays English was established as essential requirement for job market. She referred to the text to justify the ideas that Indians in general have changed their perception towards the language

of the colonial masters. She even read out the lines highlighting the remarks made by a politician (belonging to a so-called nationalist party) showing his appreciation for British for introducing English in India. She emphasised that there is nothing wrong in English language as far as it doesn't threaten other Indian languages as it would further display the Indian culture at global level.

Dr. Satish Kumar, the second discussant, observed that the relevance of this book is not confined to a particular discipline of English Literature but to all disciplines of social sciences alike, including common readers who desire to know the history of English in India. According to Dr. Kumar, the content of the book makes it quite relevant at the time when language policies are being revised under the compulsions at global, national and regional level. Besides, it refreshes the major debate of Hindi vs. English in the past. In fact, the reading of the book gives complete picture of the English ascendancy in India. According to Dr. Satish, the sequence of development of English as a language in India, as shown in the book, has many layers. This book presents them well. Dr. Kumar was of the opinion that after reading this book from cover to cover, a reader will certainly have fair idea as to how English has become a dominant language of governance, academia and elite classes. The author also takes the pain to club all the relevant debates within the British regime and eminent personalities of India. According to Dr. Kumar, this is a must read book for the one who wants to be updated of major debates related to controversy of English Language from the British regime to the beginning of globalisation in India. After going through this book one can take the stock of losses and benefits of the use of English as a language in India.

In the open house discussion, students and faculty dissected the reading of the book threadbare and debated certain core and multidisciplinary issues concerning English language in India. The participants discussed the political, economic, social, cultural and academic dimensions of growth of English speakers in India. Some of the important questions discussed in the session include English language as a colonial legacy; English language as the tool to capture the minds of the Indians; Raja Ram Mohan Roy's controversial in defence of western education; English as a second language and foreign language; economic globalisation and English; Macaulay's minute on Education and English; Three-Language Formulae and English; Circumstances enabling English get the status of Associate Official Language for the indefinite period; Constitutional provisions; Linguistic debates in post-independence India; market needs and English; career avenues in English; English for specific purposes etc. All the students and members of faculty participated in the discussion to dissect the reading of the book. For example, adding to the discussion on the book, Prof. D.C. Vashist raised a pertinent question whether the spread of English language can be attributed to some linguistic aspect as an intrinsic property of this language as compared to other modern languages or it is popular only for its association with imperial power structure and needs of the market only.

In his remarks, the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor expressed his satisfaction over the standard of presentation, discussion and debate that took place while organising the event. He felt delighted to observe that the students and faculty are taking a step ahead towards perfection each day. Prof. Sharma traced the growing tendency among the participants by reflecting upon the initial Book Reading Session where students and faculty had to struggle hard to develop an understanding regarding the difference between Book Review and Book Reading. Similarly, he was happy to see that now the presenters and discussants have started realising the importance of Preface and Introduction of a book. Expecting more from the students and faculty, Prof. Sharma further highlighted the importance of the publisher as it is the identity, ideology and the policy of the publisher that generally defines the nature and scope of the book.

**Discussion on
FDI in Retail: Issues and Challenges
(November 4, 2011)**

Initiator: Dr. Ajai Pal Sharma

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Liberalisation and privatisation of Indian economy has ever remained a contentious issue. Every time the government proposed opening of any sector to private investment, considerable debate got generated. The debate became more ferocious in case the some sector is being opened up for foreign investment; it was in every case be it banking sector, insurance sector, power sector. The proposal to open the retail sector for foreign direct investment (FDI) has met the same fate and is marred by claims and counterclaims, arguments and counterarguments, attestations and contestations.

The matter cropped up in at least two-three faculty meetings and a need was felt to explore and discuss the main issues involved in FDI in retail sector. Dr. A.P. Sharma, Assistant Professor, Department of Management Studies, readily offered to educate on the issue.

Dr. Ajai Pal Sharma discussed the retailing scenario and its various formats presently operating in India and pointed out the difference between unorganized and organized retailing. He discussed some relevant facts and figures about retailing and FDI in retail in India. He explained that retailing is the largest private sector industry in the world economy with the global size exceeding 6.6 trillion dollars. More than 70% of the retailing in developed countries is organized whereas it is merely 5% in India. The Indian retail industry is of enormous size (around 400 billion dollars) and accounts for nearly 22% of GDP employing 21 million people which is almost 8% of the country's employment. The Indian Retail sector has witnessed a gradual though steady transformation over the last decade or so. Despite numerous advances over the years, the sector continues to remain highly fragmented, non-networked and dominated by the unorganized segment the typical traditional family run stores. According to the Global Retail Development Index (GRDI) report published in June 2010 by the leading US based consulting group, AT Kearney, India is the third most attractive retail market for global retailers among the 30 largest emerging markets.

Dr. Sharma elaborated that Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in retail sector has always been a debatable issue, courtesy the well documented inclination of our policy makers to hesitate and delay decision making on key aspects. Presently, India allows 51% FDI in single-brand retail and 100% for cash-and-carry outlets that are permitted to sell only to other retailers and businesses.

Now the government is seriously re-considering to attract and permit 100 per cent and 51 per cent foreign direct investment, in single brand and in multi-brand retail, respectively in order to supplement domestic capital, technology and skills, for accelerated economic growth after it was forced to put its plans of letting foreign retailers invest in multi brand outlets on the backburner due to lack of political consensus during 2007-08.

Highlighting the importance of Indian retail market for investors, Dr. Sharma stated that it was estimated that India and China together are likely to consume 45-50 per cent of the world's largest transportation of goods and services with more than 25 per cent share. Hence no marketer would like to ignore the second largest growing economy of the world which has emerged as top destination for FDI.

He also discussed some key issues and challenges ahead of FDI in retail in India like its impact on *kiryana* and mop-pop stores, supply chain infrastructure, employment opportunities and job reservation for rural youth, farmer margins, inflation control and many more. Indian retail industry is facing a huge crisis of infrastructure for better supply chain because of inadequate shortage capacity, hence allowing FDI may improve the supply chain and logistics leading to reduction in wastage of farm produce which accounts for nearly 1 trillion rupees.

On the issue of farmers he revealed that presently Indian farmers get only one-third of the actual prices in stores, compared with two-third in other countries having organized retail. There is no doubt that entry of FDI will decrease the numbers of intermediaries by building a proper supply chain and can help contain inflation. On the issue of job opportunities for rural youths in India, he stated that there is a need to create an adequate system for formal retail education so that local youth can be trained to be employable in modern retail stores directly and indirectly based on the set of skills acquired by them.

Towards the end of the discourse, Dr. Ajai Pal discussed certain advantages of FDI including **expected benefits; contribution of** FDI in enhancing technology; quality standards and marketing leading to new economic opportunities; benefits in terms of price and availability of products; better financial processes due to benchmarking; check on evasion of taxes ensuring more tax collection; more value to the customers; foreign investors' tendency to look at a horizon of 15-20 years as no Indian retailer would look beyond 5 years etc.

Discussing the expected disadvantages of FDI, Dr. Sharma argued that global players come with deep pockets which is believed to be unfair to the domestic retail industry. It is feared that foreign retailers will do business at the cost of neighbourhood stores. Also, there are apprehensions in certain quarters that FDI in retail would lead to unfair competition and ultimately result in large scale exit of domestic retailers, especially small family owned businesses. He further apprehended that global chain may use India as a dumping ground for sub-standard or outdated products as it is amongst the least saturated of all major global markets in terms of modern retailing formats.

During the open house discussion, the issue of Foreign Direct Investment was further discussed and deliberated by the students and faculty with some focussed concerns including the reasons behind government taking a shift towards allowing FDI from single brand to multi-brand retailing; land issue in case FDI is permitted; the ability and sensitivity to understand Indian consumers and the retail eco-system among international players; trend of excessive FDI in retail and the possibility of grooming 'Mafia Raj'; FDI as a tool to get rid of the middle men; impact of FDI in retail on unorganised sector and small retailers; extent to which FDI has influenced consumer behaviour etc.

There also emerged a view that there exists a huge difference between farm prices and retail prices of agricultural products particularly vegetables which is pocketed entirely by the middlemen. Allowing FDI in organized retail is expected to benefit the farmers by way of creation of storage facilities, removal of uncertainties regarding the price of their produce and by removing the middlemen.

Hon'ble Vice Chancellor Prof. Mool Chand Sharma appreciated the rigorous presentation made by Dr. Ajai Pal Sharma at the time when Indian Government is planning to introduce a bill on FDI in retail in the Winter Session of Parliament. Prof. Sharma motivated the students and faculty to keep themselves well-versed with the emerging trends in different disciplines at various levels regional, national and global. He also provided certain valuable inputs on FDI and elaborated its multifaceted dynamics.

Book Reading Session on
Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals and Environment
(Graham Huggan & Helen Tiffin; Routledge, 2010)
(November 9, 2011)

Book Reader: Dr. Bir Singh Yadav
Discussants: Mr. Pardeep Singh & Mr. Vijay Kumar

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While planning the month-long Celebration, it was observed that the Book Reading Sessions should be given enough space in the scheme of the event, therefore taking forward the agenda of the Club, fourth Book Reading Session was conducted on Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals and Environment .

Introducing the book, authors and the background, Dr. Bir Singh mentioned that the book primarily presents an analytic view of the relationship between humans, animals and the environment in the light of the critical survey of the major works of some distinguished postcolonial ecocritical thinkers. For him, the focus of the book centres around the forceful argument that “Human liberation will never be fully achieved without challenging the historical conditions under which human societies have constructed themselves in hierarchical relation to other societies, both human and non-human....” (22)

He emphasised that taking a more inclusive view from the ethical stand point, the problem becomes more crucial and complicated, as “the *righting* of imperialist wrongs necessarily involves our *writing* of the wrongs that have been done and are still being done to animals” (22). Therefore, in order to 'save the planet', the main objective of the authors is to warn man against the modern materialistic civilization that makes him 'the butcher of the earth'. The bright future of the world can only be ensured by inventing new ways of relationship between humans, animals and environment imparting social and environmental justice with sustainable development.

The book has been divided into two parts where the focus of the first part “Postcolonialism and the Environment” is on the narratives of development in postcolonial writing as well as the issues of entitlement and belonging in the pastoral mode, while the thrust of the second part is on the issues as colonialist asset stripping and the Christian mission, the politics of (meat) eating and representation of cannibalism, animality and spirituality, sentimentality and anthropomorphism as well as the place of human and the animal in a post human world. In his presentation, Dr. Bir Singh drew the attention of the students and faculty towards “Introduction” to first and second part of the book along with “Postscript” as they constitute the matrix of the book to which all other chapters are deconstructive literary illustrations making various contours of the world understandable.

The authors observe that “the proper subject of postcolonialism is colonialism, and to look accordingly for the colonial/ imperial underpinnings of environmental practices in both 'colonising' and 'colonised' societies of the present and the past” is a must (3). Dr. Singh discussed that the Postcolonial Theory has its origin in European Modernity which dates back to 15th and 16th century, which was characterized by organization of time, space and labour. European Modernity emphasized rational and optimal use of resources in order to achieve maximum profits, hence it led to the economic system of capitalism. Consequently, colonialism emerged out of this process of industrial modernity and its capitalist modes of production, therefore, it can be described as the process of settlement by Europeans in Asia, Africa and South American territories.

Dr. Bir Singh referred to the text presenting a lucid account of exploitative mechanisms economic exploitation of resources, the use of native peoples, the conquest of territories and markets based on the difference in race, culture, forms of knowledge, technological advancement and political system between the Europeans and the natives. In this way the European masters possessed the power to govern not merely by military and economic powers but through a complex dynamic of representation and discourse which became a process of cultural domination. The critique of colonial racialized acts of representation in law, history writing, literature, religion, educational practices marked the beginning what has come to be known as postcolonial theory.

Huggan and Tiffin, according to Dr. Bir Singh, assert that the ideology of colonization anthropocentrism and Eurocentrism are inseparable and a 'non-criminal putting to death', as Derrida puts it, not only of animals but of humans as well by marking them as animals and getting ethical acceptability became the institutionalized killing of others. Killing of animals was also accepted as divinely sanctioned ascendancy of humankind over animals. Taking the discussion forward, it was discussed as to how Ecocriticism is a literary and cultural criticism from an environmentalist viewpoint. It originates in a bio-social context of unrestrained capitalism, excessive exploitation of nature, worrying definitions, and shapes of development and environmental hazard. Ecocriticism looks into the politics of the development and the construction of nature with its special focus on the material contexts of industrialization, economic and techno-science development, pollution and ecocide.

It was also discussed that these critical theories are not empty textual readings but they equip us with critical tools for analytical practices that show us various contours of the real world. Both Postcolonial and Ecocritical studies show their commitment to social and environmental justice. Postcolonial field is inherently anthropocentric (human-centred) whereas eco/ environmental studies privileges 'a white male western subject' and as in authors quoting Anthony Vital suggests that "the best way to reconcile post-colonial criticism and eco/ environmental criticism might be to take into account the complex interplay of social history with the natural world" (15). The authors observe that in the western world and especially in the Northern countries development is usually taken as "unfettered enthusiasm for economic growth" (28) with the help of modern science and technology, but the radical critics of development do not see a panacea for social and economic ills in it as it is "characterized by a 'top-down, ethnocentric, and technocratic approach' in which people and cultures are treated as 'abstract concepts, statistical figures to be moved up and down [at will] in the charts of "progress" (29). Regarding sustainability it was discussed that 'No development without sustainability; no sustainability without development'. Development should be saved from destructive tendencies as postcolonial ecocriticism appreciates the enduring non-instrumentality of the environment.

He observed that the book also deals with the competing claims to belonging and entitlement the dilemma the world has been facing since the dawn of life on this planet Father's land. Entitlement does not bring emotional attachment that turns 'house and land' into home. Its assertion is "possession, not belonging, and dwelling that implies an at-homeness with the place" (82), hence entitlement operates as a legislative mechanism for the recognition of affective ties to land and place that are confirmed by historical continuity of association. The global capitalist ideology of "possessive individualism" is reflected through the conflict between 'full-belly' and 'empty-stomach' in the human societies at present and in the long history of exploitative white attitudes.

It was highlighted as to how in the introduction of the second part of the book the authors explicitly make clear the implicit meaning of the western concept of civilization by stating that "Throughout

western intellectual history civilization has consistently been constructed by or against the wild, savage and animalistic”, hence western civilization is no more than “a veneer over a still savage European 'inner man'” (135). Under the label of civilization humanity has destroyed vast area of wilderness and many other animals hence it has become 'spiritually hollow'. The imperial civilizing mission and other authoritarian regimes and systems consciously or unconsciously have “abused humanity in humanity's name” (22). Domination of the dominant European discourses over both people and animals by constructing them as 'others' have exploited and destroyed them through marginalization as they compromised with the animals and animalistic in four ways. Firstly, that human individuals and cultures at various times have been and are still treated 'like animals which results into human genocide and human slavery as some people have considered humans whereas some have been dubbed 'animals'. The representation through the use of derogatory animal metaphors depicting the 'other', leads to justify exploitation, objectification, slaughter and enslavement. Dr. Bir Singh referred to the book to underline the fact that the history of human oppression is replete with instances of animal metaphors and animal categorization frequently deployed to justify exploitation and objectification, slaughter and enslavement. It is thus not surprising that human individuals and societies reject animal similitudes and analogies and insist instead on a separate subjectivity. (135-136)

The second way of exploitation, as mentioned in the text, arises out of the representation where “humans are pitted against animals in a competition over decreasing resources. Peoples forced off their lands to provide game parks for foreign tourists (or sometimes more insidiously included in 'native' displays as part of the local flora and fauna) understandably resent not just the implicit 'animal' comparisons, but also the physical presence of animals themselves (136). The third way is the 'species boundary in postcolonial contexts' through vilification, incrimination or marginalization as is seen in case of immigrants in western societies and animal-linked racialisation. Authors argue that “Such racialisations are both inappropriate and hypocritical in a society with abattoirs, scientific experiments and commercial exploitation” (137). It was discussed at length that these “savage practices” towards animals as well as towards all those who are 'othered' under the sign of animal require a profound rethinking. The fourth is the way of “ethical acceptability” of the killing of the 'designated non-human others' based on the argument as to “why worry about animals when children are starving, or when other people are still being killed, raped and abused?” (137). Lastly the authors attract our concentration towards 'the contradictory attitudes to animals that most human societies harbour' as in the contemporary western world a fundamental disjunction often occurs between our eating habits and our objection to cruelty to animals'. In the anthropocentric world of modern cultures it seems difficult for the animals to save their skin. Moreover, our reading habits from the very childhood train our minds in such a way that we interpret our texts of all kinds about animals in anthropocentric standpoint that radically demands fresh reflection with creative imagination to invent a new way of relationship.

In the “Postscript” the authors deliberating on 'after nature' the mimetic relationship to nature and 'post nature' or 'historical phase 'with rational assertion of human beings over and against nature perceive the predominance of a new mechanical order over an earlier organic one of the 'pre-civilised period' and give an inkling that “the technologies developed and endorsed by modernity have the potential to emancipate, but also to eliminate, the world” (204). The scientific revolution, the rise of industrial capitalism, colonial expansion with the ideologies of possession, the global management of material assets and economically motivated conversion of labour into natural resources may lead to the death of nature. But end of nature does not mean the end of the world but it should be taken as “synonymous with scientific methodologies for manipulating nature, with

deliberate choices to bring about lasting changes to for example the genetic make-up of humans and other animals that exhibit a kind of power thought in the past to be divine”(204). Taking into account Europe's atrocities against its advancement, the devastating consequences in the colonial construction of the western civilization, the authors show the “unwanted evidence of the inhumanity done to humanity in the name of Man “(208) hence, the authors dwell upon the philosophy of Pan-humanism which is beyond the western boundaries of the humanist philosophy and accommodates the non-human within humanistic thought.

Lastly, Dr. Bir Singh concluded that the authors show unanimity almost with eminent postcolonial and ecocritical thinkers of the day when they assert that to stop, “the worst excesses of the human, what is probably most needed is not the capacity to think beyond the human, but the courage to imagine new ways in which human and non-human societies, understood as being ecologically connected, can be creatively transformed” (215). He stressed upon the ending of the book which passes a holistic note of the highest kind of creativity impelling the minds of the readers to mark the beginning of a new text inventing harmonious relationship between humans, animals and the environment which will be the greatest boon to make the earth safe for the bright future of the 21st century inhabitants.

Pardeep Singh, one of the discussants, started with the deep sense of gratitude towards the efforts of Dr. Bir Singh, for choosing such a complex but relevant book, reading of which, according to him, was not a cakewalk. He was of the view that this book is an effort of the authors to put together multifaceted dimensions of a single issue at one platform. According to him, the very title of the book suggests that there is a close relationship amongst human being, animals and environment. For him, the book *Postcolonial Ecocriticism* highlights the mutual relationship among human beings, animals and environment and the appreciation of their harmonious co-existence. He emphasized that in the postcolonial world, human beings have been blindly running towards the economic growth and development while ignoring the environment and animals. He observed that in the pursuit of the advancement of human civilization, which is a social construction, human beings have made a difference between 'Humanistic' and 'Animalistic' practices and are indulging in all kinds of practices adverse to the animals. These practices, according to him, pose a threat to the life of the animals. He was of the view that authors of this book, while discussing Zoo criticism, Ivory business and Elephant, exemplify the brutal face of the humans by taking the example of the elephant and ivory trade. He elaborated as to how, to prove their point, authors have cited Joseph Conrad's novella *Heart of Darkness* and Barbara Gowdy's novel *The White Bone* to further analyse the fundamental dichotomy between humans and animals and also between Europeans and Africans. He exposed the hypocritical human behaviour which makes the human beings enjoy the stories or fables like “Thirsty Crow” and *The Animal Farm* to socialise the children while on the other hand, they use animal as an object, for the betterment of man's life style. He referred to text to explain as to how animals are being used as an object and are being sacrificed particularly for medical purposes or for the sake of so called development.

Concluding his presentation, Mr. Pardeep Singh remarked that after going through the book, one can very well conclude that we are in dire need to deconstruct the entire concept of 'civilization' and 'development'. He was of the view that development is required to be sustainable i.e. development ensuring the advantageous prospects for the future generation. Taking the example of the Zoo situated at city of Lusaka in Zambia, he said that there is a question written on a signboard over there, “DO YOU KNOW WHICH IS THE MOST DANGEROUS ANIMAL IN THE ZOO?” and also a small arrow pointed to a small curtain behind which there is mirror reflecting the human face of the visitor. He also cited the wordings of V.R. Krishna Iyer that man's greed attacks Nature,

Environment and Ecology and in response wounded nature backlashes on the human future.

Mr Vijay Kumar, the second discussant, discussed the dark side of development as presented in this book. He said that one of the central tasks of postcolonial ecocriticism as an emergent field has been to contest and also to provide viable alternatives to Western ideologies of development. These contestations have mostly been in alignment with radical Third-Worldist critiques that tend to see development as little more than a disguised form of neo-colonialism a vast technocratic apparatus designed primarily to serve the economic and political interests of the West.

Several fundamental questions discussed by Mr. Vijay include the definition of development as given in the text; whose interests does it serve?; historical relationship of development to colonialism and imperialism; whether development in an increasingly globalised postcolonial world!; sustainability of development; contribution of postcolonial ecocriticism to current and/or historical debates on development; success of postcolonial writers and thinkers as cultural and environmental activists etc. He found these questions as quite complex, more so because the word 'development' is taxed with considerable semantic difficulties of its own. Development is generally recognised to be a strategically ambiguous and vague term, adapted to the different needs of those who use it and also on the enormous cultural assumptions and presumptions of the West. (Black 1999: 3)

In the open house discussion, the students and faculty reflected upon the presentations made by the presenter and the discussants of the book reading session. The question of 'postcolonial ecocriticism' was largely debated on the basis of proper definition of development; difference between growth and development; Eurocentric and Indocentric approaches to environment; difference between ecology and environment; nature and culture dichotomy; civilisation and culture; recent developments in India towards sustainable development; postcolonialism vis-à-vis ecocritical issues; Kyoto Protocol and international agreement on Carbon emissions and the controversies thereof etc. Lastly, the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor Prof. Mool Chand Sharma complimented the actors of the event and supplemented the discussion with his insightful remarks on the issue under consideration and expressed his considered opinion that the dichotomous relationship between nature and culture; growth and development; and East and West should be viewed in the light of the progress maintaining sanctity of traditions allowing worshipping of nature and animals while thinking of human development. He made it point that while advancing towards the desired transformations at global level, the nations should be guided by the notions of inclusivity and sustainability. Prof. Sharma showed his concern towards the lopsided view of the development whereas the essential attributes of humanity are generally ignored.

Baba Nagarjuna: Relevance in Multicultural Context (सांस्कृतिक बहुलता और नागार्जुन का योगदान)

हरियाणा केंद्रीय विश्वविद्यालय, नारनाल द्वारा गत माह आयोजित ज्ञानार्जन का साझेदारीपूर्ण माह (सेलिब्रेटिंग ए मान्थ आफ पार्टनरशिप एंड शेयरिंग नालेज) अपने आप में एक विलक्षण प्रयोग रहा। छात्र-छात्राओं के लिए ही नहीं बल्कि शिक्षकों के लिए भी इस माह को यादगार माह के रूप में जाना जाएगा, क्योंकि सभी ने महसूस किया कि उनके ज्ञान का विस्तार हुआ है। 9 नवम्बर 2011 को हिंदी विभाग की ओर से रोचक, रचनात्मक साहित्यिक कार्यक्रम प्रस्तुत किया गया। दरअसल यह वर्ष 2010-11 हिंदी के चार दिग्गज साहित्यकारों (अज्ञेय, केदारनाथ अग्रवाल, शमशेर बहादुर सिंह तथा नागार्जुन) का जन्मशताब्दी वर्ष है। हिंदी विभाग की ओर से इन सभी कवियों का स्मरण करते हुए जनकवि नागार्जुन पर विस्तृत और रोचक कार्यक्रम प्रस्तुत किए गए। परिसर में लगे बड़े-बड़े सूचना पट पर इन चारों कवियों के आकर्षक तस्वीर एवं उनका विस्तृत परिचय प्रसारित किया गया, इसके अतिरिक्त नागार्जुन साहित्य की प्रदर्शनी भी लगाई गई।

एनसीईआरटी द्वारा अनवर जमाल के निर्देशन में बनी डक्यूमेंटरी फिल्म " बाबा नागार्जुन " तथा नागार्जुन की मंत्र कविता का दृश्यात्मक प्रस्तुति ने सभी अनुशासनों के विद्यार्थियों को अभिभूत कर दिया। नागार्जुन की चारों भाषाओं की एक-एक कविता का पाठ उनकी बहुभाषिक रचनाधर्मिता को उभारने में सफल रहा। उनकी बंगला कविता आमि मिलिटरी घुड़ो का पाठ शोधार्थी सैकत बनर्जी ने किया। हिंदी कविता अकाल और उसके बाद का पाठ हिंदी की शोधार्थी प्रीति यादव ने किया तथा उनकी मैथिली कविता बूढ़ वर और संस्कृत कविता काश्मीर तथा मिजोरम का पाठ क्रमशः डा० कमलानंद झा एवं डा० योगेन्द्र शर्मा ने किया। इन दोनों शिक्षकों ने ' सांस्कृतिक बहुलता और नागार्जुन का योगदान ' विषय पर गंभीर आलेख प्रस्तुत किया।

विषय प्रवर्तन करते हुए डा० योगेन्द्र शर्मा ने नागार्जुन की चार भाषाओं में रचना करने को उनकी सांस्कृतिक बहुलतावादी दृष्टि का परिचायक माना। उन्होंने कहा कि हिंदी में इतने बड़े बहुभाषिक रचनाकार दूसरे नहीं हैं। आगे उन्होंने विषय को विस्तार देते हुए कहा कि नागार्जुन की कविताओं में सचमुच गहरी सांस्कृतिक बहुलता है। यह बहुलता विषय के मामले भी है और अभिव्यक्ति करने के तरीकों में भी। यह बहुलता वास्तव में लोकअनुभव की बहुलता है—विविधता है। अपने अनेक रूपों में प्रेम है, प्रकृति है, राजनीति है, अत्याचार है तथा आत्म सत्य है। नागार्जुन की कविता विभिन्न मुद्राओं में हमारे सामने ठीक नागार्जुन की तरह घूमती फिरती रहती है। डा० शर्मा ने नागार्जुन के एक वक्तव्य को उद्धृत करते हुए कहा कि क्रांति लोकतांत्रिक हो तथा लोकतंत्र क्रांतिकारी।

वक्ता के रूप में कमलानंद झा ने विस्तार से नागार्जुन की रचनाओं में सांस्कृतिक बहुलताओं को रेखांकित किया। इन्होंने नागार्जुन की कविता और कथा साहित्य के अतिरिक्त उनके विस्तृत यात्रा साहित्य के माध्यम से उनकी सांस्कृतिक बहुलता पर रोशनी डाली। डा० झा ने कहा कि उनकी सांस्कृतिक बहुलता उनकी विचारधारा से भिन्न नहीं है। सभी संस्कृतियों में उपेक्षितों और हाशिये पर डाल दिए आम जनता की इच्छाएं, आकांक्षाएं, सपने तथा उनके कभी न खत्म होने वाले संघर्षों को बहुत करीब से नागार्जुन ने देखा है और उसे अपनी रचनाधर्मिता का हिस्सा बनाया है।

कार्यक्रम के अंत में कार्यक्रम की अध्यक्षता कर रहे विश्वविद्यालय के विद्वान माननीय कुलपति प्रो० मूलचंद शर्मा ने कार्यक्रम की तारीफ करते हुए समाज में उपेक्षितों की दशा और दिशा पर विद्वतापूर्ण अध्यक्षीय भाषण दिया। कार्यक्रम का सफल संचालन जहां हिंदी शोधार्थी रीना यादव ने किया वही भावपूर्ण आभार पीएचडी शोधार्थी कृष्णा ने किया। सभी अनुशासनों के विद्यार्थियों ने इस कार्यक्रम की भूरि- भूरि प्रशंसा की।

***Symposium on
Economic, Political and Social Dynamics of Higher Education
(on National Education Day)
(November 11, 2011)***

Moderator: Dr. Bir Singh Yadav

Panellists: Dr. P.K. Sahu, Dr. Sanjiv Kumar & Dr. Anand Sharma

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The birth anniversary (November 11) of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, a great educationist, freedom fighter and the first Education Minister of India, is being observed as 'National Education Day' every year in recognition of his contribution in the field of Education and welfare of the society. Department of Education proposed to commemorate the National Education Day by holding a Symposium on the theme 'Economic, Political and Social Dynamics of Higher Education' as part of one month Celebration of Partnership for Creating and Sharing knowledge.

Selection of the above theme for the symposium was the outcome of a lengthy discussion. During deliberations, several themes cropped up including 'Great Educational Thinkers and their Contribution in Indian Education', 'Equity and Equal Opportunity in Higher Education', 'PPP in Higher Education', 'Quality and Inclusive Growth in Higher Education'. But finally consensus was built on the selected theme viz. 'Economic, Political and Social Dynamics of Higher Education' as it was regarded to be more vibrant and challenging.

Introducing the event, Mr Vijay Kumar paid tributes to the great son of India, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and highlighted his contribution in the Indian education system. A small documentary on Abul Kalam's life was also shown on the occasion.

Discussing the topic, Dr Sahu explained that growth and prosperity of a nation depends upon the utilization of the best brains in different sectors with requisite skills and proficiency and that is possible only through Education of substantial quality. He expressed that in order to write the real success story of the Indian economy, there is an urgent need to pay heed to the promotion of education at different levels including tertiary education. Highlighting the status of higher education, Dr. Sahu said that India has the third largest higher education system in the world, next only to China and the United States. He stated that at the time of independence there were only 20 universities and 500 colleges in India with the enrolment of less than a million students. As on December 31, 2010 there were 544 universities and university-level institutions including 42 central universities, 261 state universities and 130 deemed universities. Similarly, there are 31,324 colleges including 3,432 women colleges (*MHRD Annual Report 2010-11*) in the country. At the beginning of the session 2010-11, the number of students enrolled in the higher education institutions were 146.25 lakhs including 19.19 lakhs from university departments and 127.06 lakhs from the affiliated colleges.

Dr Sahu was of the view that though there has been a consistent growth in enrolment in higher education over the last few years, this is not enough when compared to other countries. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for higher education (the number of students between the ages of 18 and 24 who go for higher education) in India is about 12.9 per cent, which is very low as compared to the world average of 26 per cent, 57.7 per cent for the developed countries, and 13 per cent for developing countries (*Yojana, June 2011, P6*). Thus, the Government of India has made a target to

achieve 30 per cent GER by the year 2020, for which thousands of colleges and universities are required, said Dr Sahu. He suggested that in order to establish such a huge number of institutions, the government should increase the expenditure of GDP up to 6 per cent (presently it is around 3.5 per cent) for education. The alternative sources to establish more institutions are to increase more private institutions, to invite foreign universities to establish institutions in the country and to take financial assistance from the philanthropists, suggested Dr Sahu.

Another significant issue that Dr Sahu highlighted was the student-teacher ratio in higher education. Student-teacher ratio, at present, is 21:1 with 146.25 lakh and 6.99 lakh students and teachers respectively. Though there is an urgent need to increase the number of faculty but, student absenteeism has become a serious concern and recruitment of more teachers will be of no use if the students show apathy towards higher education, said Dr Sahu. He concluded his presentation by making an appeal to educationists and policy makers to come forward and contemplate more rigorously to provide high quality education suiting to the local and global needs of the Indian youth.

While discussing “Socio-Cultural Dynamics of Higher Education”, Dr. Sanjiv Kumar explained as to how under the compulsions of changing global scenario, higher education in India is at crossroads and has to undergo comprehensive transformations to ensure quality, equity of access, employability of skilled youth, inclusivity and competence at global level in every field including science and technology, IT, management, agriculture, trade and commerce and what not, to garner the benefits of robust economy, demographic dividend and awakening among the masses. For him, the expansion of higher education has been quite significant in the last decade in terms of enrolment ratio, number of colleges, deemed universities, private universities and state or central universities, and also engineering and management institutes. The trend of expansion is further accelerated by the proposal of the government to introduce Foreign Universities Bill along with the initiatives taken in the direction of public-private partnership.

He observed that the entire set of recommendations given by Yashpal Committee or National Knowledge Commission further set the ball rolling towards sensitising the government to sense the need of the time and to give a fresh look to prevailing system of higher education. Perhaps, in tune with the recommendations of certain committees or commissions, MHRD is planning to open 50,000 colleges and 1000 universities in near future. Again, it is an effort in the direction of adding to the existing statistics. Dr. Sanjiv remarked that it is only the expansion of the base of higher education; while the important question is can it be a panacea to all the ills of the system?, perhaps not, because higher education in India is more debatable today on the socio-cultural issues like gap between aspirations and achievements (i.e. we aspire to achieve inclusive growth while remaining insensitive to different sections of society), rural-urban divide, gender discrimination, linguistic minorities, regional disparities and obsolete curriculum in most of the institutions.

He supplemented the argument through power point presentation displaying the various initiatives taken by the government towards ensuring equity and inclusivity in higher education. Higher education in India needs to have a fresh look on the priorities of society at large while determining the objectives as no nation can take pride in growth unless it has a sound human capital well-versed with professional skills, life skills and global trends without discrimination on the basis of caste, religion, sex, region or language.

In his presentation, Dr. Sanjiv underlined the socio-cultural dynamics of higher education by taking clues from present scenario reflecting upon the existing socio-culture fissure caused thereby. Dr. Sanjiv Kumar presented an overview of constitutional provisions providing equal opportunities for education to women and minorities (linguistic or otherwise) through Articles 29, 30, 15(3) to be read with Article 19(1); Sachchar Committee recommendations regarding education of Muslims; recommendations of National Knowledge Commission (NKC) for equitable society, inclusion, expansion and excellence; scenario of Women education; special government initiatives to sustain access to higher education; initiatives to ensure equity in higher education; various schemes launched by the government for women, SC/ST, minorities and budget allocation for each scheme; government initiatives to bridge regional gaps; Centre for Studies in Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy; National Council of Rural Institutes; aspirations of corporates and leaders in global economy and existing scenario of higher education in India; employability and higher education; skills and higher education etc.

Dr Anand Sharma made his presentation on the theme “Quality and Governance in Higher Education” where he explained as to how the quality and standard of higher education in India has deteriorated drastically over the period of time. The end product is not accepted by the industry and society because the degree holders come out with a hollow perspective of life devoid of holistic approach to real life, said Dr Sharma. Thus HR Department of government as well as private sector is spending millions and billions to bring them to desired level through on the job and off the job training. Dr Sharma said that mushrooming growth of higher education institutions/ universities to merely increase number of professionally qualified persons (to improve higher education ratio at national statistics level) has deteriorated the situation. He was of the view that setting up of new central universities, upgrading NITs to IITs and more IIMs will not serve the purpose until each of them are asked to create brand in local context with global vision. He suggested the institutions to understand deeply the local flora and fauna and sincerely engross themselves in taking opportunities and challenges of that region to emerge as a global brand.

Dr. Sharma suggested that higher education should change the mentality of society striving for degrees without any practical skill. We need to produce skilled plumbers, carpenters, masons, designers, chefs and artisans who can write the success story of India. He also expressed that social sciences have been badly ignored in this market based higher education. Social sciences need to be evolved in new format serving cause of the society. In order to improve the quality of education, Dr. Sharma suggested that there should be professional counselling after schooling so that students choose the right stream based on their interest, passion and demand of the market which is lacking in India. Students should pass through vigorous curriculum based on multidisciplinary approach to make them more valuable resource for the nation and the society. Creativity, innovation and glocal (local +global) approach are the key to quality of higher education, said Dr. Sharma.

Dr. Sharma further highlighted that good governance of higher education is crucial to quality of education. Good governance strikes a balance between interests of different stakeholders in higher education. It ensures transparency, sustainability and growth with values and ethos. Recently, fiasco at AICTE like regulatory bodies has alarmed us to strengthen good governance which is also connected with political and corporate governance. Our regulatory bodies need to be transparent, accountable and vibrant in present scenario. NBA and NAAC certifications

should be reviewed as these are based on paper compliance rather judging creativity and innovation at institutional level. Therefore, present governance structure is suffocating creativity and innovation. Value based, flexible, transparent and vibrant system will serve the cause of higher education, said Dr. Sharma.

After the presentations, the moderator of the event Dr. B S Yadav highlighted the nature and importance of higher education. He stated that higher education is a long-term value based investment with certain ideals and ideas. He emphasised upon the idealistic as well as pragmatic values which ultimately lead to the progress, peace and prosperity of society, nation and the world as a whole. It was followed by the open house discussion where the participants discussed the diverse issues concerning the topic. These include: concern over Quality education in the country; problem of employability in the streams of arts, social sciences and other traditional disciplines; relevance of educational institutions in collaboration with foreign universities in the given context; poor infrastructure in schools despite the implementation of Right to Education Act (2009); higher education through open universities or distance education; e-learning and digital divide; public-private partnership in higher education; inclusive approach to education; and good governance in education sector.

In his remarks, the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor Prof. Mool Chand Sharma paid tributes to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad who made vigorous efforts and worked with great commitment and dedication to take the country to new heights in the field of education. Prof. Sharma gave his best compliments to the panellists and the scholars and students. He exhorted the young scholars to shoulder the responsibility of taking the nation to new heights. The success story of India can be written only by the educated and skilled human resources and the Central University of Haryana is determined to recognize and uplift the potential young and enthusiast scholars, said Prof. Sharma. He said that the word Multi-disciplinary, in this University, is not applied superfluously; rather, the Multi-disciplinary approach has been reflected in various academic activities organized here at different points of time. Besides concentrating on the core disciplines, the students and faculty showed equal interest in other disciplines and participated actively in the form of discussants, panelists and contestants in several of activities organized in the “One month Partnership of Celebrating and Creating Knowledge”.

About the system of education in India, Prof. Sharma stated that there is nothing wrong in the planning and policy making in the country but strenuous efforts are to be made to implement the plan successfully to provide need based and quality education for the aspirant learners. Besides, he also emphasized on the vital role played by the students in the higher education system. He assured the students and scholars of CUH to hold different kinds of programme in the coming days and motivated them, especially the students who could not get opportunity to participate in the previous activities, to come forward with great zeal and enthusiasm that ultimately will enhance requisite skills and confidence to cope with the age of globalization.

Discussion on
Missing Childhood: Social, Political and Economic Dynamics
(November 14, 2011)

Panellists: Dr. Ravindra Singh, Mr. Pardeep Singh
Ms. Renu Yadav & Ms. Shobhna Jeet

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To celebrate 'Childhood' on the occasion of Children's Day, there could be nothing more meaningful than to contemplate the social, political and economic dynamics affecting the child. The child who is historically worshipped as 'father of man' seems to have lost its grace for various reasons. With the changing times, the celebration of innocence is being replaced by celebration of wisdom. Therefore, university decided to hold this event to discuss various nuances of 'missing childhood' and the forces affecting the celestial grace of the child.

Talking about the problem of socialisation of children, Dr. Ravindra Singh started his discussion by explaining childhood. He explained that childhood is time devoid of worries, and full of curiosities, confidence and innocence; a time of playing, exploring and enjoying and relishing even the smallest things and the experiences gained therefrom. According to Jean Jacques Rousseau, childhood is a period of sanctuary before people encounter the perils and hardships of adulthood. He stated that anything that curbed or encroached upon and deprived the children of those moments of pleasures, joys, relish, delight, jests of experiencing and learning, playing, quarrelling and jostling, accommodating among the peer group, leads to 'Missing Childhood'.

He discussed as to how childhood among humans is different from childhood in other species *at least* in one respect. The young ones in other species are born with certain basic skills necessary for their survival and thus, they can survive independently, if need arises. The young ones of humans, on the other hand, are virtually bereft of any skills at the time of their birth; they learn all the skills with the passage of time. That means the process of 'learning' is an integral part of childhood in humans. While some of the 'learnings' are independent and take place with the passage of time, some others are facilitated and expedited in the company of other humans but there are some still others that are dependent and cannot take place independently.

Dr. Ravindra remarked that the dependency of child is primarily to be taken care of by the parents. However, since a child is the future of a country and society, it is not merely the responsibility of the parents; it goes beyond and spreads to the society and the State as well. Thus besides the parents, the community, the society and the State are all squarely accountable to create and provide an environment conducive where the child can enjoy its childhood. He, however, claimed that in most of the cases, it is observed that the childhood is not respected.

He was of the view that a child would derive pleasure and jest in the company of a child or in the company of such an adult who can relish its childish activities. Such adults can be the parents and the grandparents. But in the present day circumstances, in urban areas, in most of the cases, nuclear family system with one-child norm is prevalent. Further, in vast majority of the cases, both the parents are working. Thus, the sole child is alone at home without any other human being to engage with and to react to. The parents after being back from work are exhausted and fatigued and even though relish the childish activities, are not able to enjoy the moments due to paucity of time whereas the grandparents are not there to relish the moments. Under the circumstances, the child is left in the company of non-responding objects like the television, computer, toys, games etc. He however, clarified that he did not wish to espouse the cause of joint family system or to decry the

nuclear family system or for that matter one-child norm; this has been done with the intent to explain the consequences of prevailing family system in urban areas in majority of the cases for the children.

Dr. Singh further explained that the bondages in the communities are becoming feeble thanks to the prevailing life-style, materialisation and technological advancements. All these have led to alienation and aloofness of individuals and the children are the biggest victims thereof. These have left fewer opportunities of interaction between the children in the neighbourhood. Besides, due to growing urbanisation, places for assembling of the children like playgrounds, parks etc. are also shrinking leading to lesser opportunities for socialisation of the children.

He also explained that in the present system of education, the Crime against children has created a sense of insecurity among the parents. It has compelling the parents to instruct their children to prefer to confine to their homes. Further, the unnatural and faulty system of teaching-learning and evaluation in schools result into creation of a competitive spirit among the children from the very beginning. Thus, at the tender age when the children would have been otherwise assimilating, they have become competitors. Thus the children are not able to enjoy and relish the company of their classmates as well. Concluding his presentation, Dr. Ravindra stated that we adults are snatching childhood from the children while we ourselves long and crave for childhood.

Speaking on “Legal Aspects of the Missing Childhood”, Mr. Pardeep Singh highlighted that life of human being has to pass through various stages like infancy, childhood, youth, middle age and old age. Amongst all, childhood is of paramount importance in order to shape the entire life. He emphasized that childhood is like a potter's clay but unfortunately, in the contemporary era of L.P.G. (Liberalization, Privatization & Globalization) even the childhood is not spared from being a product of consumerism. He was of the view that in this age of cut-throat competition, childhood is being ruined socially, economically and politically.

He made a point that since we live in a dynamic society which keeps on changing, law is also bound to be changed accordingly. He also emphasized that even though the legal policy towards childhood has undergone a sea change from the position of neglecting childhood to the position of sustaining human dignity assuring the subsistence, fair access to food, right to education and health, 40 per cent of children in India are still in difficult vulnerable and circumstances. The dark side of the picture includes children without family support, increasing infant mortality, children forced into labour, children on streets, abused children, vulnerable children (children of prisoners, HIV patients, women in prostitution, migrant families). He highlighted that as per the presentation given by Working Group on Child Rights, 42.5 per cent children (0-5 years) in India are under weight, 79 per cent children (6-35 month) are anaemic, only 44 per cent infants are fully immunized, which makes us to think and to deconstruct the real problem behind the missing childhood.

He discussed the legal and statutory provisions relating to the protection of children, right from our constitutional mandate of Directive Principles of State Policies as inserted in Articles 39(e), (f), 45 to Fundamental Rights (Articles 15, 21-A, 23, 24) and Fundamental Duties read with judicial interpretation. He also highlighted a lot of other statutory provisions (national and international) which have been incorporated in order to preserve childhood. Citing the wordings of the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor Prof. Mool Chand Sharma, he remarked that there is no dearth of legal provisions in India but evil devil resides in the implementation.

Ms. Renu Yadav focussed on the “Role of Media and Missing Childhood”. She started with the comment that childhood signifies innocence, sensitivity and pious heart i.e. one who is not indulged in any showbiz, who is like the aroma of fresh flowers, fragrance of soil, chirruping of birds, for whom the parents are the ultimate source of epistemology, and for whom parents and especially lap of the mother is most luxurious place of the world. This is the sanctity of childhood.

She cited the examples from media where a four years old child is singing a romantic song in front of five professional singers; a three years old child is performing dance before large audience and skilled dancers and a 5 months old baby is smiling for some food product other than mother milk. Even at the time of civil society movement children could be seen with candles on roads, having a cap which have slogan of '*Mai Anna Hun*' and campaigning for anti-corruption movement. It may perhaps make one realise that society has awakened but are these innocent kids really aware of the structure of democracy or the evil of corruption. She raised a fundamental question regarding use of children to popularise a TV show or a social movement.

She referred to Justice Markandey Katju, Chairman, Press Council of India, who argues that the media has a very important role to play in helping the country make the transition from an old feudal society to a modern industrial one quickly, and without much pain¹. But, nowadays media is exhibiting glamorous childhood. She regretted that though India has witnessed many a movements against corruption, bad governance or discrimination against women but there is hardly any social awakening or movement towards protecting childhood by condemning child labour or other crimes against children. Mentioning the sorry state of affairs, she highlighted that society itself encourages digitalized childhood, because most of the parents aspire to have a celebrity child. She concluded her presentation with the remarks that media is robbing the fun and fragile of childhood and raised the questions are we really sensitive towards preserving the sanctity of childhood?

Ms. Shobhna Jeet presented her views on “Growth Story and Missing Childhood in India”. She introduced the topic with the statement that the growth performance of Indian economy has been impressive since the adoption of economic reforms of 1991 and we are claiming to be one of the fastest growing economies of the world. The economy has been able to secure the growth rate of more than 7 percent for last decade that confirms its robustness. The per-capita income of the people has increased substantially which indicates improvement in the living standard of the people. Improved living condition has multidimensional effects in the form of better health, education, prosperous life, etc. The fruits of improved growth can be visible in the improvement in living conditions of child vis-à-vis individuals. But the economic growth may have adverse effect on the child as they lose their childhood due to the evils like child labour etc. Childhood is considered the age of development and growth of brain while social conditions and ecology develop the personality of child.

She referred to the economic globalisation and observed that in the globalized world, competitiveness plays a vital role in an economy either at national or international level. Every country in the world targets to maintain its competitiveness by identifying potential sectors and to attain higher economic growth. The incentive of attaining higher growth trajectory requires producing the things at optimum level. This optimum level gives benefits to the entrepreneurs in the form of gaining profit whereas for the consumers the fruits are shared by purchasing better quality goods and services at reasonable cost. Technology has played a very important role in the minimization of cost for production but at the same time the involvement of the child in economic

¹ THE HINDU, 5 NOV.2011, [HTTP://WWW.THEHINDU.COM/NEWS/NATIONAL/2300319.ace](http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/2300319.ace)

activities may have facilitated not fully, but partially in lowering the cost. Child labour is available at relatively less wages and economic players seek to engage them more and more in order to maximise profits. Statistics show that the number of child workers has gone up from 11.28 million in 1991 to 12.66 million in 2001. The pull factors of economic agents for making the active participation of child in the production process might have led to the missing childhood. Today, sensitive period of childhood is adversely influenced by the external consumerist environment.

Ms. Shobhna further argued that young children in low-income neighborhoods are more likely to experience behavioural problems than children living in moderate or affluent neighborhoods². Young children from households with lower levels of family income are more likely to experience behavioral problems that negatively impact their development³. Here poverty is considered another factor to affect the child in celebrating his childhood. There are varying levels of poverty line as Planning Commission reports 27 percent, Tendulkar Committee says 37.2 percent and World Bank marks higher than these two estimates. Indian economy is progressing very well but the unequal distribution of income has remained a serious concern. Generally, the development model assumes the presence of equality in income and in that condition economic growth may lead to the promotion of childhood. But in Indian context, the growth pattern has remained unequal. Every human being aspires to furnish fundamental requirement of his life. In this situation the poor people are forced to involve their children in the economic activities to earn some income for their survival. Parents send their child for work not out of choice but for reasons of economic expediency. The number of children in the economic activities is growing day by day. On this front, the poverty and income inequality become the push factors to engage more and more children in the economic system. This process accompanies the missing childhood in our economy. In the recent past, human capital is considered as one of the most important peripheral factors along-with the primitive inputs such as labor, capital, etc. for economic growth. The skilled manpower can generate innovative ideas and thus can convert the worldwide challenges into opportunities. Here it may lead to the emergence of things which, not necessarily all the time, are in the wishes of the children. They are forced to secure better position in their performance and as a result of this the childhood may be badly affected.

She further elaborated her discussion by presenting an analysis given by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) regarding allocations and expenditures on children since 2002-03. Child Budgeting got a significant attention in the Eleventh Plan as this exercise was monitored and the importance is given to 'outlays to outcome'. It is found that the share of health, nutrition, water supply and sanitation spending out of the total government expenditure stood at 5.48 percent on an average during 2005-2009. She made it a point that India spends less than 2 percent of GDP on health while out-of-pocket spending on health is 73 percent. Government expenditure as a share of the total health expenditure in India is less than what Asian countries such as China and Indonesia spend on health care⁴. The country is facing the hurdles of children underweight, infant mortality, HIV aids, hunger, etc. and consequently this environment is lacking in efficiently handling of the promotion of childhood.

² Duncan G. J, Brooks-Gunn. J and Klebanov, P. K, "Economic deprivation and early childhood development" *Child Development* 65: 296-318. (1994).

³ Knapp, P. E.; Ammen, S.; Arstein-Kerslake, C.; Poulsen, M. K.; Mastergeorge, A. (2007). Feasibility of expanding services for very young children in the public mental setting. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* 46(2): 152-161

⁴ Himanshi Dhawan, TNN (2011). 'This Budget, children health needs attention'. Times of India, February 28.

In the second half of the programme, students came out with their creative expressions dealing with the theme of 'missing childhood'. Ms. Rashmi, recited a self-composed poem narrating her experiences of one month celebration of 'Partnership in Creating and Sharing Knowledge'. Her poem summed up the entire one-month celebration in the poetic fashion. Thereafter, Mr. Manjit, Ph.D (Pol. Science) performed mimicry to capture the essence of the linguistic mannerism and focus of individual faculty members. Rashmi (M.A. Economics) and Savan Kumar (MBA) recited the gazal composed by Gazal maestro Jagjit Singh titled "*Wo Kagaz ki Kasti wo Barish ka Pani*" to underline the importance of preserving innocence and the essence of childhood.

In his Presidential remarks, Prof. D.C. Vashist remarked that while analysing the factors responsible for missing childhood most of the time we face paradoxical situation. For example, education of woman is desirable for looking after the child but at the same time education of a woman raises her opportunity cost which increases her propensity to join the labour force in comparison to an illiterate woman. If she joins the labour force, it amounts to ignoring the childcare entailing the phenomena of missing childhood but at the same time mother's earning contributes to meet the sanitation, education and nutrition requirements of a child which are crucial for the wellbeing of a child.

At the end, Prof. Sharma regretted the undesired loss of innocence among the children nowadays. There are the market forces, media and certain other political, legal and economic compulsions snatching the essence of childhood from the children today. Preserving, protecting, promoting and forcing innocence among the children is quite crucial at the time when innocence among children is the most vulnerable. Prof. Sharma cited sociological and literary (Rabindranath Tagore, Premchand and Wordsworth) references to highlight the fact that there are numerous onslaughts on the innocence of the child today. How long the innocence be retained and how less it is dissipated should be the concern of each and everybody. Like the right to health and education, the right to innocence during childhood should be made the political agenda to further mobilise the issue at national level. He regretted that perhaps child is deprived of voice and representation because he has no right to vote. The worthy Vice Chancellor reflected upon the presentation made by the panellists and remarked that considering the child as a commodity is the most unfortunate. The child pornography is one of the disastrous developments in the age of ICT, globalisation and cyber space. The economic growth at the cost of child health is perhaps most ill-gotten trend today. In his concluding remarks, Prof. Sharma stressed upon the sanctity and piousness of the childhood. The Children's Day was ceremonially concluded with the cutting of a cake by the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor Prof. Mool Chand Sharma and his message of greetings to the students and faculty for celebrating the cause of 'missing childhood'. At the end, the organising team acknowledged the exceptional readiness of Ms. Pawan Sharma to guide, cooperate and support the university fraternity at every point of time especially during the organisation of certain events concerning social issues, particularly women and child. The team also acknowledged Hon'ble Vice Chancellor for his untiring commitment to instil among the students and faculty the spirit of sensitivity towards the human issues, and also for his undying dedication towards developing the spirit to grow, learn, share and create knowledge.

