

The Social Science Perspective

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Chancellor's Message - Dr. Chenraj Roychand



Fostering a comprehensive mindset

As the world is emerging from exceptional challenges, critical thinking and analysis will need to be observed through a woven prism with developments deeply rooted in liberal education morals. In today's multifaceted global setting, technology is not the only major criteria to create a better world. Although technology increasingly comes to the forefront of shaping the future of the world, humanities must step in to meet the emotional and personal needs of society. Promoting the growth of flexible, agile, creative, empathetic, and analytical thinkers is imperative for success in a constantly evolving environment.

Social sciences, being the bedrock of a nation's sustainable development is essential to establish a foundation for educational planning and to evaluate its results. As a discipline, humanities and social science are effective in developing an atmosphere where learners can occupy themselves with the human experience and situation, which offers to be a workshop in itself. Today's education is not only responsible for building brilliant academicians but also for creating a skilled pool of free intellectuals who are capable of making meaningful contributions with their knowledge to the community. This study should aim at functioning as a milieu of interactions and realities the students have encountered, not just thematically but as a whole. Thus the educator's focus should be on the holistic growth of the learners in preparation for a secure future. Let's together foster tomorrow's thought leaders who can connect with a wide spectrum of thoughts, identities, and a comprehensive mindset. I wish great success to the CERSSE Newsletter editorial team.

Pro Chancellor's Message - *Dr. N. Sundararajan*



The Centre for Research in Social Sciences and Education has been instrumental in conducting research, consultancy and training in social sciences for many years now at JAIN. Each faculty member has contributed immensely to the understanding of society, politics, gender, issues of governance, education and pedagogy. As they embark on this new journey with their newsletter, I would like to wish them all the very best in their endeavour. We hope that this newsletter will help us build upon each other's expertise and connect the whole University with the Social Science perspective. Wishing the team great success on this occasion!

Vice Chancellor's Message - *Prof. Raj Singh*



The importance of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education need not be overemphasized in the world that we are live in. The interactions and relationships among people, cultures, communities and societies are extremely important for survival given the human nature. In a world impacted by the pandemic, human beings the world over were forced to stay in lockdown mode for a long time, though technology provided some respite. The human aspect of scientific and technological advancement has been underlined as never before in the human history. Research in Social Sciences aims to improve, the processes and institutions that impact the human lives, by studying social sciences and the way real world operates. It is this world within which citizens make informed choices for their private and public good within a democratic society. It is the research and studies in social sciences that enable scholars to connect with cultures and communities the world over. It is thus extremely important for us to bring in spotlight, the disciplines of Social Sciences and Education.

CERSSE Newsletter aims to bring to its readers the importance of Social Sciences and Education. The Centre has been involved in Research, Training and Consultancy activities for over 15 years and it has provided support to governments nationally and internationally, to research organisations and academics through their extension activities focusing on transformation and empowerment. The Centre has worked to carry forward research in domains of politics, public policy, political institutions, education and gender. It has also served as a resource centre for research in Social Sciences and Education and has undertaken surveys in many areas. The faculty members have undertaken research and training on new teaching methodologies, and have offered courses, training programmes and workshops for audience from diverse fields. I am sure you will find the newsletter useful and insightful.

I wish the best to the editorial team.



From the Editors' Lens



CERSSE's 'The Social Science Perspective' (TSSP) Newsletter aims to deliver exactly what its name promises – articles, writeups and information that forward the cause of the disciplines that make up the Humanities and the Social Sciences. In a world that is dangerously sucked into an automated and virtual reality, in our opinion it is imperative to pause and go back to the root of why people behave the way they do in society. The Social Sciences talks to us about human relationships and we cannot deny that we, the human race need humans more than we need machines.

Let us briefly take you through the contents of this newsletter. As part of the Certificate Course in Public Policy that the CERSSE has now been conducting for the past three years, our participant students write a field-based project report. Our first article in TSSP is an extract from one of the expert interviews they conducted, called '*Expert View*'.

Yes, reading books is still important and so following this is a Book Review section '*What the Reader Thinks*', which we hope will you get inspired to read more books, and also carve out your thoughts on the same.

At TSSP we hope to cover international, national and local 'Social Science' related news and analyse them. So in our subsequent two sections titled '*The World View*', and '*Pulse of the Nation*', we bring to you reports on Panel Discussions that we, at CERSSE, hosted on the American Presidential Elections, and a Review of the Union Budget.

We have devoted one page titled '*Gender-Wise*' to gender news and analysis. This time, the article for this section is a short report on one of our webinars on '*Women in Research*', written by one of the respective webinar's panel member.

We encourage our Social Science and Humanities' students and Ph.D Research Scholars to write about issues which they think are significant, and also highlight research being undertaken in those areas at JAIN in our section '*View from the Field*'. This section will also include reports on activities conducted by our social sciences and humanities departments and research centre.

We round up the newsletter with '*The Rising Researchers*' which informs you of the achievements of our Faculty members and Ph.D Research Scholars, and any other upcoming event.

We hope that with this quarterly publication we can all engage, discuss and debate the happenings around us, through the social science lens.

Expert View



Barriers such as dropouts and lack of access to Education impede on our progress as a nation. As a part of the **Certificate Course on Public Policy** organised by CERSSE, some participating students interviewed **Dr. R.S. Deshpande, Former-Director, Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore**, and sought his views on the issues of dropouts and accessibility of education at the primary and upper-primary levels, mainly in rural India. They also sought his expert opinion on whether the National Policy of Education 2020, addresses these issues. Here are the excerpts of the interview.

Students: *The Right to Education Act 2009 mentions Universal Access to Education, but India still faces a huge challenge of dealing with increasing number of dropout students, especially in rural areas. What according to you are the challenges faced by the Indian government in curtailing dropouts and ensuring universal access to education to all the children in India?*

RSD: There are four reasons for dropouts which the government has not been able to address till now: a) inadequate infrastructure in schools, b) poverty in rural areas and the number of hands needed to sustain the household/ livelihood system, c) schooling methodology, where we teach the children, and not make them learn, d) there is no change in textbooks, and information is outdated.

Students: *As per the National Sample Survey study in 2017-2018, the dropout rates at the primary education level are 10.6 percent in rural areas and 7.8 percent in urban areas. At the upper primary education level, the dropout rates are 18.2 percent in rural areas and 15.2 percent in urban areas. Why do you think there is a difference between the urban and rural dropout rates?*

RSD: Poverty in rural areas is more dense than in urban areas. Secondly, school infrastructure is slightly better in urban areas, in comparison. Bad roads, no connectivity and low school density mark rural area schools. Harassment towards girls and lack of infrastructure add to the dropout gap between primary and upper primary levels, whether it is rural or urban. Needless to say that lack of good teaching and learning methodologies only furthers this gap, no matter at what level.

Students: *There have been various schemes introduced earlier by the government like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan and Midday Meal Schemes. However, they haven't been satisfying in curtailing dropouts. What according to you are the reasons for this?*

RSD: The philosophy of both these schemes is not to ensure retention of children in the schools. They focus only on making children visit schools. The child will visit the school in order to eat, but does not have an interest in learning. The same is for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The child is told that 'you come to school, and you will get the things'. What is not told is 'you come to school, you learn, and then you will get these things'. The schemes are designed in a way which is not conducive to learning, that is what I feel.

Students: NEP 2020 has a separate section to address drop outs and various measures have been proposed. How do you think NEP 2020 is different from the rest of the schemes introduced by the government in this direction?

RSD: The NEP proposes the concept of learning which is British in its design. Montessori design says that the child should be in school at three years of age. In ancient India, and according to our scriptures, a child is supposed to play at the age of three years. If they come to school and play, that becomes an institutional set up where the teacher teaches the rules of the game to play. That is not the concept of playing. Age 3 to 6 is the formation age and children should be encouraged to play, whether it is with numbers or alphabets or addition and subtraction. Only then children will have interest to attend school. The problem is that enrolment is done forcefully in rural areas and hence the rates are high. Due to the various schemes in place, teacher also says that children will get food in school, so the children attend only for the sake of meals and if an interest for learning is not developed, the attendance rates are bound to decline.

Students: Various measures are undertaken to ensure access to education to socio economically disadvantaged groups earlier and a special mention of this has been made in the NEP 2020. Do you think the NEP will be the ray of hope that the socio economically disadvantaged groups have been looking for since ages?

RSD: My viewpoint of the NEP is quite critical. I think they should have had teachers of all different levels come together to draft the NEP. Teaching and learning for the deprived classes requires a different skill set. It requires identification with the students. Teachers have to be like parents. For them all should be children, irrespective of religious or economic background. Education is not schooling, but learning.

Students: According to you, what does the NEP miss out on in the direction of curtailing dropouts? Do you have any suggestions with respect to this?

RSD: Just like I said earlier, the dichotomy between a teacher and learner must be bridged. The give-and-take between teachers and students should be turned around to “we learn”, “we make mistakes”. This is where the NEP has missed, because the dichotomy between ‘learners and the learned’ remains. More individuals who are directly involved in schools and education systems and have a field level first- hand experience should have been a part of the policy making committee.

Students: Do you have any final thoughts on the issue of dropouts in India?

RSD: We need to give scholarships for good performances, 100 percent attendance, good behaviour etc. Being a voluntary teacher at a government school, I give cash prizes like this twice a year. If the government gives these prizes, the children’s parents will also be willing to send the children to school. You need to incentivise through monetary methods. Secondly, the dichotomy between teachers and students should go. Play and learn should be introduced.

This interview was conducted by:

**Aishwarya Ganesh and Arun- M.A. Economics 1st Year, and
Md. Zeeshan- B.A. OPJ, 2nd Year**



What the Reader Thinks

Hegemony of the Fourth Industrial Revolution

Beware of the Bot: A Critical Perspective on the 4th Industrial Revolution
Centre for Integrated Post-School Education
Nelson Mandela University
Port Elizabeth 2020

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is gaining national and global attention as the ‘new phase’ of development that will address a wide range of social and economic issues in societies. Like its predecessors, the 4IR is portrayed as the new era that offers opportunities to improve human lives, lead the world out of crises and toward a better future for humankind. The 4IR is associated with disruptive technologies including robotics, the internet, nanotechnologies, genomics, artificial intelligence, virtual reality and many other technologies. Collectively, these technologies will combine as a transformative force that addresses a wide range of socio-economic problems. This is the thundering and dominant message about the 4IR that is echoed by those with power, global economic institutions, as well as the political leadership.

The ideological dominance of the 4IR is evident. We know very well that when a particular model of social policy becomes hegemonic, it tends to negate any rival alternative that might imply a threat to its conceptual dominance. In the case of the 4IR, its implementation implies a particular vision of the world which rules out differing, viable and efficient alternatives. At present, the 4IR is presented as the new development that operates like a force of Nature. We cannot argue with it any more than we can argue with the inexorable laws of gravity. We are made to believe that we must accept it and adapt to it.

4IR is portrayed as the new era that offers opportunities to improve human lives

The hegemony of the 4IR is also beginning to shape new educational frameworks from schooling through vocational training to higher education. In the case of schooling, large scale interventions are already underway to alter the curricula in ways that respond to the needs of the 4IR. Children in kindergarten and primary schools in the West are already users of a variety of robots including pet, humanoid and social robots, whilst older children are encouraged to learn coding as part of new Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) curricula.

The new terminology in education associated with the 4IR now includes ‘Learning Management Systems’ (LMS); ‘Technology Enhanced Learning’ (TEL); ‘Intelligent Learning Environments’ (ILE); ‘Tactical Training Systems’ (TTS); ‘Intelligent Tutoring Systems’ (ITS); and the more well-known Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and Small Private Open Courses (SPOCs). These concepts are also strongly associated with educational reforms geared towards job-preparation, upskilling and reskilling of workers for Working World 4.0. This 4IR-driven skills formation is described as essential to redirect 65 per cent of our children into the 4IR.

Many activists, scholars and critics have raised critical questions about the promises of the 4IR. Is the 4IR simply the next phase of capitalist production or an epochal shift? Can it address the triadic problems of inequality, unemployment and poverty? How can it deal with the issues of race, class and gender? How will it address Climate Change and the ecological crisis? These are some of the key questions raised. According to Ivor Baatjes, Director, Centre for Integrated Post-School Education and Training, Nelson Mandela University, this booklet has been written to encourage debate amongst students and communities and to inspire much greater public debate about the 4IR, its meaning and value in contributing to a better society.

The booklet is divided into three parts. Part One is about the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR); Part Two is about workers and precarious work; and Part Three is about technology and its purpose/s.

Part One, Section A looks at the 4IR and all it entails. According to Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairperson of the World Economic Forum, it is the fusing of boundaries between the physical, digital and biological worlds which is changing the way people live, work and relate to one another. The dominant discourse view is critiqued and the reader challenged to think critically about the 4IR. Section B describes the four Industrial Revolutions and asks whether this 'revolution' will continue to serve the interests of those who hold political and economic power (as the first three 'revolutions' did) or whether the technologies will instead serve a socially-useful purpose in the interests of the 'social majority'. Section C continues with a critique of the 4IR.

Part Two is made up of stories as told by three workers. The role of precarious workers and their future in an increasing digital age are dealt with in Sections A and B of Part Two.

Part Three looks at technology, including socially-useful technology. Who owns and controls it and for what purpose/s, and how is it being used and why?

This booklet, written during the COVID-19 pandemic, has fast-tracked a so-called 'new' world. The booklet examines whether the pandemic has been a convenient excuse for capitalists to do just what they always intended - shift us to an online, remote, touchless, 'Zoom' society. And while so doing, continuing to have little to no regard for the majority of people who remain 'on the margins', despite which 'Industrial Revolution' we find ourselves in.

The booklet also serves as a warning to not uncritically embrace the 4IR, as if not embracing it will render us 'backward'. The 4IR should be examined, scrutinised and analysed with as much scepticism as one should apply to terms like 'development', 'progress' and 'modernization', all of which proved to be Trojan Horses, with vested interests, and with neither social nor ecological conscience. A thought-provoking booklet, indeed.

Prof. D. Jeevan Kumar
Hon. Professor,
Karnataka State Rural Development and Panchayati Raj
University, Gadag Karnataka.



(This book review was first published in the Southern Economist, Vol. 59, No.20, 15th February 2021)

The World View

Future Trajectories of Indo-U.S. Relations

It is often said that when America catches a cold the whole world sneezes. The swearing in of Joseph R Biden Jr. as the 46th American President and that of Kamala Harris as the first Women Vice President signaled a new wave in the realm of power dynamics in the world the ripples of which will be felt in every nook and corner of this world. To deliberate on this CERSSE, JAIN organised a Panel Discussion on January 21st, 2021 on '*Future Trajectories and Trends of Indo-U.S. Relations: Impact on South Asia*'. The panelists were **Prof. M.J. Vinod**, Professor, Department of International Studies, Political Science and History, School of Social Sciences, CHRIST (Deemed-to-be University), Bengaluru, **Prof. D. Suba Chandran**, Professor and Dean, School of Conflict and Security Studies, National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru and **Prof. Rahul Tripathi**, Professor, Department of Political Science, Goa University, Goa. Dr. Reetika Syal, Assistant Professor, CERSSE welcomed everyone and introduced the panelists. Dr. Priyanca Mathur, Associate Professor, CERSSE, JAIN chaired the session and gave her introductory comments of highlighting the watershed moment in world history that the Biden-Harris American Government was poised to embark on. The panelists reflected on all dimensions of this grand event in international relations, through the lens of its impact on South Asia at large and Indo-U.S. Relations in particular. Dr. Mythili P. Rao, Research Coordinator delivered the vote of thanks. It was held online and was attended by academics, research scholars and students.

The aim of the webinar was to reflect on this transfer of power with the departure of former President Donald Trump from his office. This shift was marred by the violent insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, Washington D.C. which resembled a police siege to ensure this peaceful transfer of power when President Joe Biden took oath on January 6th 2021. Trump remained out of public view in his last week of power. He also violated tradition by not attending his successor's swearing-in and was unrepentant for the violence he incited and he was unwilling to abandon the false election claims that have been riled up by his supporters. Biden, on the other hand, has been trying to get Americans focused on the future as his team outlined the first steps that his office would be taking towards aiding the struggling Americans amid this pandemic and fulfil all the campaign promises he made like climate change, criminal justice and immigration. He is now emerging as the climate hero for reversing Trump's decision to be a part of

The aim of the webinar was to reflect on this transfer of power with the departure of former President Donald Trump from his office.



the Paris Accord and he has done it in the first few hours of his presidency. The bottom-line of this new power dynamic is for an "United" States of America. A promise of a President and a Presidency which speaks even for those who acted against them! There is a sense of mutuality of interest with the United States of America.

We are going to see a change in the outlook and a change in the approach and that definitely matters how to deal with a person and with leaderships of other countries. We are going to see a shakeup of Trump's Foreign Policy, partly indicated in terms of Biden signing the Paris Accord to be a part of it.

Biden would perceive the largest scenario in terms of the policies that he would have to come up with the challenges that come across in the U.S.—Pakistan relations reflecting their understanding of issues raised by India in the context of Cross-Border Terrorism. The way the US looks at the world, a kind of isolationism- let's do it alone attitude which had become the hallmark of Trump's administration will not be there. One would see the United States engaging more and more with the multilateral regimes, whether it is climate change, WTO, G20 we will see a greater oration of each other's interests. We may see a U.S. which is now more and more engaged across the world. Biden's expectation from South- Asia would be the manner in which South Asia on its own is able to project a picture of the region which is in some way or the other able to converge with a larger U.S. policy of democracy and human rights.



Concluding Remarks

Ultimately, international relations and political leaderships do matter. The manner in which signals emerge from top leaderships sets the tone. Trumpism will take a while to go, but it depends on the rest of the world to let go of it. There is a growing concept of a phrase called 'Browning of America'. What this would mean for the larger social equation in the U.S. is that the Right Wing is no more a fringe element in the U.S. The more America becomes Brown, the more the Right Wing comes to the forefront. This is going to be a great sociological question in the U.S. What happens in the U.S. doesn't stay in the U.S. Many of us are looking towards the U.S. as the greatest democracy, as a model nation.

Dr. Sandeep Shastri, Former Pro-VC, JAIN and currently Vice Chancellor, Jagran Lakecity University, Bhopal joined the webinar and pointed out that the type of appointments that the Biden administration has done and proposes to do is that most of those he has appointed are people who served in the second level positions during the Obama administration are now in the top positions in the Biden administration. This is a signal of the fact that there will be a continuity in the Biden administration



from the Obama administration in many senses. What Biden was a part of as Vice President will now continue as the President. He will be a President for even those who voted against him and it would be seen that Biden, as is his nature, would be accommodating in his approach. It will be interesting to see that in the last four years how this approach would make these any different. The Indo-U.S. relations has very little to do whether a Democrat or a Republican is at the power. This notion that either one of those parties is good for India is something that has never been empirically proved.

Pulse of the Nation

Union Budget

CERSSE, JAIN hosted a Panel Discussion to analyse the *Union Budget 2021-22* on February 4, 2021. The panel comprised of **Prof. R. S. Deshpande**, Former Director, Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC), Bengaluru, **Dr. S. R. Keshava**, Professor in Economics, Bangalore University, Bengaluru and **Dr. Xavier V.K.**, Professor and Head of Department, Economics, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, (SHSS) JAIN. It was hosted and moderated by Dr. Priyanka Mathur, Associate Professor in Political Science and Public Policy, Centre for Research in Social Sciences and Education (CERSSE), and School of Humanities and Social Sciences (SHSS), JAIN. The discussion was attended by over 100 participants from the field of academia.

Prof. Deshpande started the discussion by saying that there has been an effort by the NDA Government to give an overview of what is in the Budget, what is to be expected by the people, how to counter the enemies that confronted the Indian Economy during the last year viz,

Fruits of the Budget should trickle down to all the sections of the society and only then inclusive development will see the light of the day

infrastructural fragility, growth, lurking inflation, the industrial sector, and unemployment. Dr. Keshava pointed out that international institutions like the IMF and World Bank had predicted India's GDP to decline and gave a lot of numerical data about the inflation rate, GDP, economic factors,

and more. He also mentioned about the major aspiration of the people to recover back from the pandemic and how poverty and unemployment are the biggest challenge. He said that the budget was a good one but not as extra-ordinary as it claims to be. Dr. Xavier said that the Budget is "Taxing Peter to Pay Paul". The middle-class earners' Marginal Propensity to Consume is quite high and they contribute the tax revenue to the government. They should be compensated when income and livelihood were lost during the pandemic. He also mentioned that disposable personal income is the main contributor to aggregate demand. Customs, at 3 per cent, are the least contributor to the government revenue, and therefore, Dr. Xavier believes that increasing the import duty will not have much effect on the revenue side of the economy.

After the discussion, the Panelists addressed the questions asked by the audience and hoped that the implementation of all the good points of this budget takes place in the current fiscal year so that the fruits could be trickled down to all the sections of the society and only then inclusive development will see the light of the day. The panel discussion was highly intriguing and insightful.



Gender-Wise

Women in Research: Possibilities and Perplexities

The very title, stated above, of the Webinar that CERSSE, JAIN organised evokes two immediate responses: Do we need to discuss women in research? Are we still discussing women in research? When read quickly, both questions sound almost the same. Almost, because the first is tethered to the assumption that gender is unimportant/insignificant and hence, questioning the need for it to be discussed. The second question is tied to the assumption that it “should” be understood that women in research is a pertinent topic and hence, a discussion on it reveals why it is not considered important. The starkly contrasting assumptions informing the two questions reflect how the topic of gender is usually approached. Such assumptions create the need for the academia and research community to introspect and therefore his webinar held on February 18th, 2021, became an engaging space where attempts to unpack such assumptions were rigorously exercised.

The facts pertaining to gender based representations were discussed by the three panelists and the uniqueness came with each panelist and the host, reflecting on our personal journeys as researchers and this journey’s intersection with the construct of gender. Testing the tenacity of the first assumption, **Prof. Ellora Puri**, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Jammu, expressed the pressing need for women in research to build networks which not only welcomed women but, actively promoted their research. She also acknowledged the hurdles to accessing the field, gaining grants and recognition- all familiar tropes of gendered spaces and stereotypes that pose significant challenges for women researchers. Turning the discussion towards women as subjects of research, **Dr. Suparana Katyaini**, Assistant Professor, School of Livelihoods and Development, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Hyderabad dealt with how women are approached as subjects of research by other women. Such researchers carry the burdens of gender carry while grappling with the lived experiences of gendered subjects. Such a consciousness results in unique points of view and research which otherwise would be missed.

Straddling both the assumptions, I tried to approach the perplexity of the topic by introspecting on how the subject matter of research can be gendered. Working on civil-military relations opens up newer masculinities which would not be encountered in the quotidian experience. Here is where I’ll throw in a third assumption— contingent on my gender, the prevailing assumption was that I would work on women in conflict zones and their lived realities in the civil-military domain. Overcoming this assumption my research studies the masculinity on the military for what it is within authoritarian states. Such an assumption implores the research community (even the social sciences which statistically has more women) to actively engage with gender. Place these three assumptions side-by-side, what will emerge is a rich picture of complexities of how women in research perceive themselves, perceive their research and how the research perceives women. It’s interesting that perception comes to the forefront on the discussion when research in its pragmatic sense is driven by positivist traditions. Such assumptions push not only women but all genders across the spectrum to build new narratives within research. After all, the fundamental task of research is to answer questions. In order to fulfill this task, the researcher must have a critical bent of mind. Such criticality must seep into how researchers (whichever gender they identify with) approach their research puzzles by testing the strength of such assumptions. Such critical researchers will create new possibilities for research and over the perplexities.

Dr. P.S. Ramya
Assistant Professor, School of Law, Presidency University, Bangalore

(Also a Panelist at the Webinar)



View from the Field

Putting Indian High-Speed Rail on the Fast Track: Challenges and Opportunities

5th April 2020 marked the fourth anniversary of India's first 'superfast' train by global standards. As India progresses in establishing a high-speed rail network and competing with the railway systems of first world countries, it is also forging technical and diplomatic relations with countries such as Russia, Germany, Japan, France and South Korea to help develop its capabilities and, simultaneously, familiarise itself with the pre-requisites of a high-speed rail nation. More than three decades after tasting success with high-speed long-distance and intercity travel, the conquest to achieve speeds best suited to domestic conditions is an ongoing process which sees no end with the constant rapid developments in technology. In 2017, India embarked on a new mission, christened 'Mission Raftaar', with the golden quadrilateral taking centre stage, intended to run trains at a speed of 160km/h. The underlying objectives are no doubt far-sighted. This should, however, be taken with a pinch of salt given the challenges in infrastructure and technology yet to be addressed on the policy front, which will be addressed in this article.

Infrastructure bottlenecks

India's railway system is saddled with a two-pronged infrastructure deficit – ageing infrastructure, and the pace of new project execution struck by unforeseen circumstances related to socio-economic issues on land acquisition for new projects and escalating project costs. India's haphazard planning of development post-independence has further complicated the infrastructure upgrade. Gauge conversion and signal upgrades are the major obstacles to the strengthening of infrastructure. The mission to promote a unigauge system was first announced in 1992 by Jaffer Sharief. Twenty-eight years after the proposal was first presented, the report of the Standing Committee on Railways points to 2,526km of metre/ narrow gauge awaiting conversion to broad gauge. The absence of modern automated signaling across the network further adds to the complication of the matter.

India's railway system is saddled with a two-pronged infrastructure deficit – ageing infrastructure, and the pace of new project execution

Projects such as electrification, vital to achieving high speeds, are under progress. The question, therefore, arises – how can we afford to execute a policy with an intent to serve specific, and not all, regions of the network? Some restrictions are also a result of the nature of the landscape, such as the ghats and hill sections which dictate restrictions to an extent.

What are the arrangements in place by railways to overcome challenges in such sections? This question can best be answered by the experts proposing faster railway operation. The points raised are technical yet minute nuances of the railway network which need to be introspected before any further announcements are made in the interest of India's quest for speed.

Decongesting India's existing network

The determinants for proposing railway projects over years post-independence were driven greatly by vested interests rather than rationale justifications behind the projects. On the other hand, projects such as Dedicated Freight Corridors – envisioned first in 2004 at a time when Australia was already operating a Dedicated Freight Corridor – were clouded by apprehensions, delaying its execution further. It was only after 2009 that the Dedicated Freight Corridor was taken up on a priority basis with the participation of the World Bank. However, certain quarters of railway bureaucrats still carry apprehension over the long-term economic viability of the project, overlooking the fact that the project can be a game changer to the declining freight sector in the larger context of its contribution to the transport sector. India's ambitious high-speed project no doubt is progressive, yet the costs and risks that accompany it are high. By contrast, the objective behind high-speed operations can well be achieved by eliminating the current bottlenecks in the existing infrastructure.

The foremost step is speeding up construction of Rail Over Bridges and Rail Under Bridges to remove the level crossings. Second, it is important to prioritise signal automation based on the identification of high-capacity routes with 96 per cent of the traffic focused on 3,400km, of which 3,000km of rail network covers the Delhi–Mumbai and Delhi–Kolkata section – an important section of the golden quadrilateral, being the biggest contributor to rail traffic. The possible commissioning of the Dedicated Freight Corridor by 2021 can be seen as a long-term solution to the network’s existing problems arising from speed differentials, and emerging issues of punctuality due to speed differentials and the dilemma of precedence. As we await the first high-speed rail corridor experience, we must find opportunities within the existing system itself and bank on the possible ways to strengthen our current freight and passenger base, with an increased focus on safety.

Unlocking our technical capabilities

India is an emerging hub of technical innovation across sectors. India’s growing foothold in the international railway community is a strong reminder of our inability to fully exploit our technical capabilities. The Alstom LHB coaches and the stagnation of Vande Bharat Express, also known as Train 18, projects are examples of our incompetency in identifying our technical strongholds. Twenty-five years of successful induction of Alstom’s technically advanced coaches and subsequent proposal to implement them on a broader scale are a testimony to our reluctance to accept the changing equations of technology in a 167-year-old rail network that is stopping us from achieving our potential. The ‘Alstomisation’ case has two situations, both of which hold valid. We have scores of Alstom rakes waiting on the sidings for allocation, but they have not yet been allocated. The flip side of the situation is the slow increase in the number of LHB coaches being produced. At the time of providing this article there are a total of 9,932 LHB coaches have been produced, signaling the need to further ramp up the production process.

On the other hand, the Vande Bharat Express trainsets impressed upon as India leaps into the future of high-speed rail travel have been operating on only two routes for a year, while many more await in the fray. Unfortunately, the politics of Rail Bhavan and an unwillingness to accept the need for change have derailed the project by and large, with occasional bouts of Vande Bharat Express trainsets finding their way into the speeches of the honourable Prime Minister and an exaggerated vision of export without implementing the conditions within one’s network. The succession to the membership of the International Union of Railways (UIC) has brought no difference in the outlook of policymakers towards technical capabilities and effective networking between countries through diplomatic channels to help railways move forward. Unlocking technology capabilities, for now, remains a distant dream, hence posing a threat to Mission Raf-taar.

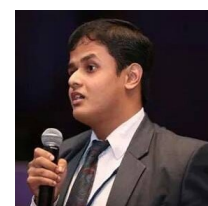
The path ahead: An uncertain future of India’s quest for speed

The misfortune with India and its railway system has been for two reasons: Political, and the Policy approach to the railways. While, on occasion, politics and policy have been in sync in the need for railway modernisation, they have failed to sustain in the long run. The rigid approach to determining the course of development and outdated experiences dominating over contemporary proposals have been a recipe for stagnation. This has led to inadequate space for competition with global railway systems in the face of congested networks and the poorly utilised technology available at hand.

India’s dream to a fast-track journey, therefore, remains unfulfilled without addressing the issues that shadow India’s ambition for high-speed, irrespective of the services offered with the assurance of speed and comfort.

Chitresh Shrivastva

Ph.D Scholar in Public Policy, JAIN

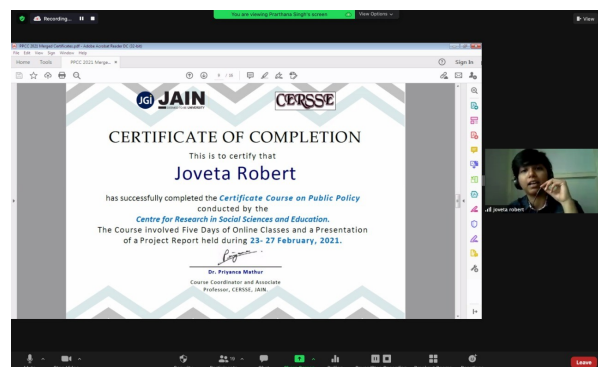
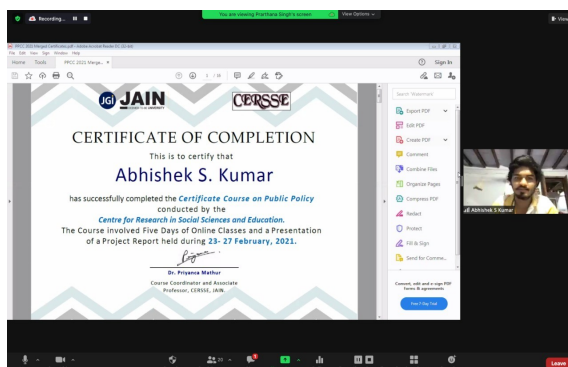
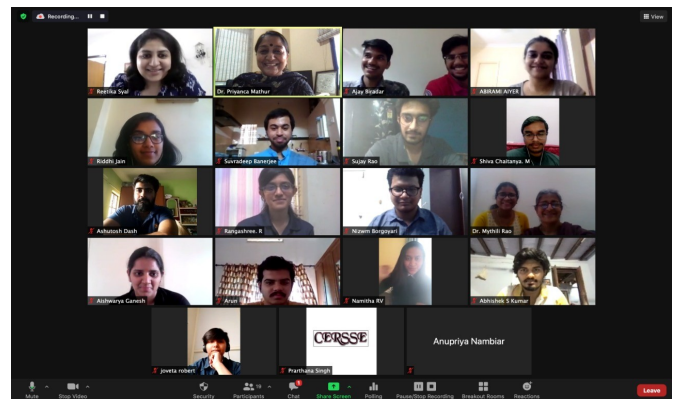
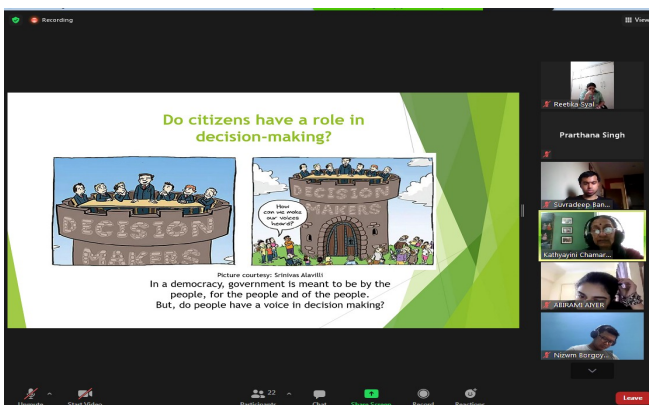


(This article was first published here: <https://www.globalrailwayreview.com/article/118701/indian-high-speed-rail-challenges/>)

Importance of Public Policy– PPCC 2021

The third edition of the **Certificate Course in Public Policy** was conducted during 23-27 February, 2021 for the post-graduate and undergraduate students of JAIN. The sessions were conducted by eminent resource persons: such as ‘Introducing Public Policy and the Certificate Course and Contextualizing Public Policy’ by **Dr. Sandeep Shastri**, Vice Chancellor, Jagran Lakecity University, Bhopal, ‘Public Policy in a Global Context’ by **Dr. Priyanka Mathur**, Associate Professor, CERSSE, JAIN, ‘Public Policy in an Indian Context’ by **Prof. D. Jeevan Kumar**, Hon. Professor, Panchayati Raj University, Gadag, ‘Making Policy in Economics and Agriculture in India’ by **Dr. R. S. Deshpande**, Former Director, ISEC, ‘Public Policy and the Study of CSOs’ by **Dr. Reetika Syal**, Assistant Professor, CERSSE, JAIN, ‘Implementing Public Policy – Role of Media and Public Engagement’ by **Dr. Annapoorna Ravichander**, Executive Director, Public Affairs (PAF), Bengaluru, ‘Public Policies for Education of Urban Poor - Case Study’ by **Ms. Shukla Bose**, Founder, Parikrma Foundation, ‘Evaluating Public Policy – The Process and Instruments’ by **Dr. Padmavathi B.S.**, Director, Centre for Educational and Social Studies (CESS), Bengaluru and ‘Policy Evaluation and the Civil Society – Emerging Challenges’ by **Ms. Kathyayini Chamaraj**, Executive Trustee, CIVIC, Bengaluru.

Post the classroom sessions, the students conducted Field Group Projects and on the completion of the same they presented their work to a panel of reviewers consisting of Dr. Mythili P. Rao, Research Coordinator, JAIN, and three Ph.D Scholar in Public Policy currently affiliated to JAIN: Ms. Papiya Bhattacharya, Ms. Tania Mukherjee, and Mr. Chitresh Shrivastva, on 23rd March. All students were then required to submit their written project reports, after which they were awarded their Certificates of Completion on 31st March during a virtual ceremony.



The Rising Researchers

Jayan Philip, Ph.D Scholar in Cultural Studies, published an article titled 'Flags - History Reflected, Geography Represented and Identity Respected' by the Arms Chair Journal on March 12, 2021. The same can be accessed at <https://armchairjournal.com/flags-history-geography-represented-identity-respected/>

Praveenkumar Mellali, Ph.D Scholar in Public Administration, has successfully worked as convener of one day national seminar entitled, 'Implementation of NEP-2020 in Karnataka: Opportunities and Road Ahead', organised by the Karnataka Rajya Mahavidyalaya Shikshak Sangh (R) – Mysore University Vibhag, in Collaboration with the University of Mysore, Mysuru, Karnataka State Open University, Mysuru, the Karnataka State Higher Education Council, Bengaluru and the Center for Educational and Social Studies, Bengaluru, on Saturday, 9th January, 2021 at Vijnan Bhavan, Manasagangothri, University of Mysore, Mysuru.



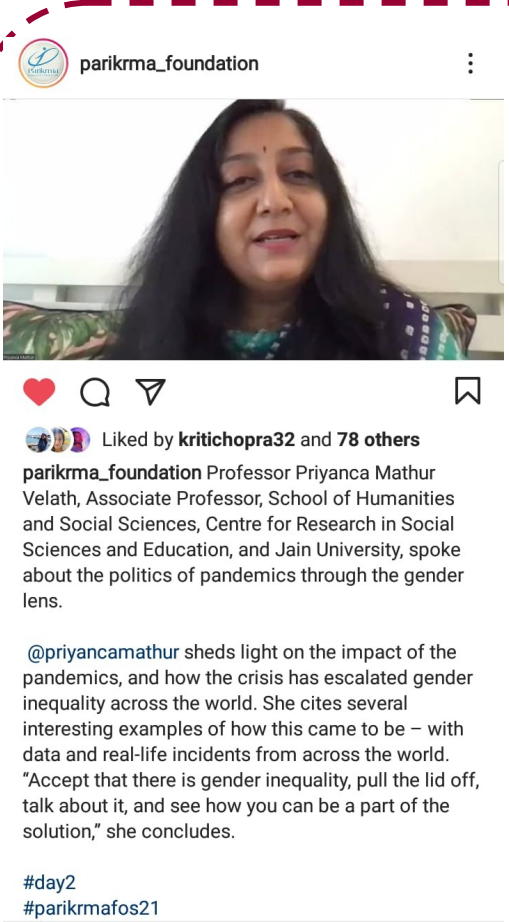
Mithilesh Singh, Ph.D Scholar in Mass Communication, presented a paper titled 'Cultural Diversity at the work- place: Impact of Managerial Communication on Employees Engagement' at The 26th International Conference of the International Association for Intercultural Communication Studies, Jointly organised by Manipal Academy of Higher Education, The University of Alabama and Center for Intercultural Dialogue on March 12-13, 2021.

Chitresh Shrivastva, Ph.D scholar in Public Policy published his article titled 'Putting Indian High-Speed Rail on the Fast Track: Challenges and Opportunities' in Global Railway Review blog published by Russell publishing. The article can be accessed at: <https://www.globalrailwayreview.com/article/118701/indian-high-speed-rail-challenges/>



Dr. Reetika Syal, Assistant Professor, CERSSE, JAIN was Resource Person for Field Investigator Training Workshop for a project on "Examining Paid and Unpaid Domestic Work in Urban Homes of different socio-economic backgrounds" in Urban Bangalore on 13th and 14th March 2021. This is an International Labour Organisation Project with Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS), Bangalore, and Lokniti- Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi.

Dr. Reetika Syal, Assistant Professor, CERSSE, JAIN also published a paper titled 'Collaboration, Co-Optation or Navigation? The Role of Civil Society in Disaster Governance in India' in Voluntas International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations, with Margit van Wessel and Sarbeswar Sahoo. The impact factor of this journal is 1.60 and the open access article can be downloaded from <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-021-00344-8>.

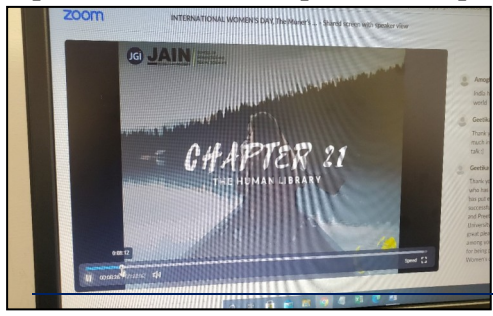


: **Dr. Priyanca Mathur**, Associate Professor, CERSSE, JAIN was invited by UGC—HRDC, Bangalore University to conduct a session on ‘Gender Sensitisation’ for its Faculty Members on 2nd March, 2021.

She was also invited to deliver a Lecture on ‘Politics of the Pandemic’ at the Parikrma Foundation’s ‘Festival of Science’ on 19th March, 2021.

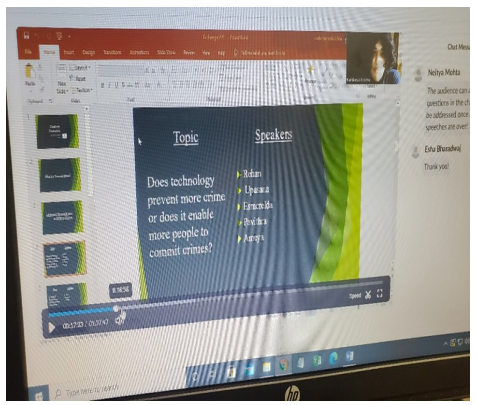
She published a paper titled ‘Red, Green and Saffron—The Changing Colours in the Political Landscape of West Bengal’ in *Mainstream Weekly*. The same can be accessed at <http://mainstreamweekly.net/article10615.html>

The School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Block II, Jayanagar Campus to celebrate International Women’s Day on 8th March 2021 read the stories of the lives of different people everyday via news reports or television updates. Chapter 21 was a platform to listen to the stories of the victims of sexual abuse, Acid Attack, Domestic



Violence, plus size discrimination and much more. It gave students an opportunity to interact with women who went through similar incidents, first hand. The program endeavored to create a space for the victims as well as students to uninhibitedly share their experiences and thereby, provide opportunities for learning.

The Exchange (An Academic Platform) in collaboration with the Debate Club (Sapere Aude), The School of Humanities and Social Sciences, JAIN (Deemed-to-be University), Block 2, Jayanagar Campus, organized an event for the exchange collaborating with the debate club, Sapere Aude a debate on the topic of “Modern Technology and World Peace”. The event was moderated by Neitya Mohta (First Year OPJ) and Kartikeya Krishna (First Year BA Eco Hons), the President and Secretary of the Debate club respectively. The number of participants were 114 students. The debate introduced students to the turncoat style of debating. This style of debating made the panelists prepare for and against their chosen motion.



ANY BODY CAN CREATE (ABCC), a poetry competition, was organized by the book club of, SHSS, Jain (Deemed to be University), Carte Amante to celebrate World Poetry Day on 21st March. The club held four competitions starting from Monday 15th march, 2021 to Thursday, 18th March. The participants could choose one or more than one of these categories- Haiku, Block Poetry, Theme Based/ Prompt Based, Write a poem on your favorite series/movies/book.

Upcoming Events in Social Sciences



Karnataka Political Science Association (R)
Mysore, INDIA
In collaboration with
Department of Political Science
St Joseph's College (Autonomous)
Lalbagh Road, Bengaluru-27, Karnataka, INDIA

Presents
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
On the Theme

**Democracy and Globalization in An Open
World: Multi-Disciplinary Perspectives**

Dates
28th and 29th April, 2021
(Wednesday & Thursday)

Venue
St Joseph's College Auditorium,
Lalbagh Road, Bengaluru.

KAPSA Second Annual International Conference.



About The Organizers

KARNATAKA POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION was formed in the year 2019, to create an inclusive Political science community, comprising of students, scholars and Academicians. The main objective of KAPSA is to promote the Discipline of Political Science in the state of Karnataka, with a National and International outlook. The Association has collaborations with many other Academic bodies both in India as well as abroad. It has organized quite a few Conferences, Seminars, Symposiums, special Lectures and discussions on many of the contemporary political and social issues during the last two years.

About St Joseph's College (Autonomous)

ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), Bengaluru, was founded in the year 1882. It is currently being run by the Society of Jesus (S.J.), also known as the Jesuits. The Mission of the college is to form Men and Women, who will be the agents of change, committed to the creation of Society that is Just, Secular and Democratic. The Students who have graduated from this college are found all over the Globe. The College was conferred the status of "College of Excellence", by the UGC, in the year 2014. In the year 2017, the College was Re-accredited with A++ Grade and 374/A COPA in the 4th Cycle by the NAAC. It is on the threshold of attaining the University status.

Sub-Themes

- Challenges to Democracy in the globalized world
- Covid-19 Pandemic and the New world order
- Globalization and Dalit Movements
- Identity Politics : Trans-national perspective
- Social Movements in a Globalizing World.
- Globalization, Democracy and State Sovereignty
- De-globalization Debates
- New Media And Democracy
- Globalization and National Education Policy, 2020
- Democracy, Globalization and The Corporate World
- Colleges, Overseas Education, Democracy and Globalization
- Impact of Globalization on Public Administration
- Impact of Globalization on Public Policy
- Globalization, Democracy and Internal Security Issues
- Globalization Impact on Smaller Communities
- Democracy and Debating Reservation Policy
- Globalization, Democracy, Nation and Statehood Movements.
- Multiculturalism in the Globalized World
- Politics of Energy and Environmental Democracy in a Globalized World
- Globalization, International Trade and Neo-Colonialism
- Global-governing Institutions and Democracy
- Globalization and Anti-Globalization
- Democracy and Transitional Shifts
- Gender, Democracy and Globalization
- Diaspora and Transnationalism
- Democratization, Globalization in the Developing and Underdeveloped States
- Electoral Democracy: Regional and Global Perspectives
- Democracy and De-centralization in India
- Globalization and New World Order
- Globalization, Refugee and Human Rights
- Democracy, Globalization and Transformative Politics
- Cluster University and Multidisciplinary Studies
- US - Elections: Triumph of Democracy
- Science and Ethics for Sustainable Development
- Literature During Lock Down
- Social Distancing and Physical Distancing: Sociological Perspective.
- Vaccine Nationalism Vs Vaccine Internationalism
- Democracy & Science
- Geo Politics
- Surveillance Security State and Non Democracies
- Role of Opposition Parties in Democracy
- Social Media and The Post-truth World Order

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(For KAPSA Life members & Faculty of St Joseph's college, Bengaluru ₹2000)
Presentation, Publication & KAPSA Life Membership
₹5000/-

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The Registered Delegates will be provided
Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner. The delegates have to
arrange their stay.

The last date for payment of registration fees is
25-04-2021.

All payments Shall be made to
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