



UNIVERSITY NEWS

A Weekly Journal of Higher Education

Association of Indian Universities

Vol. 58 • No. 46 • November 16-22, 2020

S K Saidapur

Trends in the 21st Century Education[#]

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National Education Policy 2020: A Magna Carta for 21st Century Higher Education

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— **Convocation Address**

Jayanti Dutta

A Serious and Emphatic Account

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A Weekly Journal of Higher Education
Published by the Association of Indian
Universities

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In nature living beings tend to evolve in response to many prevailing forces operating in the given environment. They essentially struggle, for resources like food, space, and mate. Additionally, it involves overcoming tussle with the neighbors (inter and intra-specific competition for food, space and mate), and also avoid parasites and predators. Thus, predators, parasites and neighbors are 3 major enemies of all forms of life. Who survive at the end? Obviously those that can overcome such challenges survive and/or reproduce. This defines the phrase 'survival of the fittest', a connotation that has no bearing to the physical fitness of an individual. It simply refers to the ability of organisms to leave behind fertile offspring. Such ability is largely due to (1) reshuffling of genes in each generation, (2) selection of useful (including harmless) genes, and (3) elimination of genes that are harmful particularly in early life. This is a very sketchy depiction of how in nature selection pressures work on living beings. Charles Darwin called it natural selection and proposed that through such a mechanism organisms evolve (Theory of Evolution-1958). It is a profound theory with ramifications even outside biological realms. For instance, market or socially driven forces, akin to selection forces in nature, affect evolution of human societies, trade and commerce, industrial production, political rise and fall of individuals, and behaviors like, nepotism, favoritism and corruption in public life. The Universities are also organic entities and they too are affected by the selection forces operating around them at a given point of time. Therefore, scenario of higher education at any given point of time in the history is a reflection of the quality of academicians and educational managers of that time; from faculty of colleges/universities, principals, Vice Chancellors, State Higher Education Ministers, State Councils of Higher Education, UGC, AICTE, IMA, ICAR, ICMR, Bar Council and other regulatory bodies. This prelude is merely to remind ourselves that we must own our responsibilities in addition to crying for our rights.

Evolution of Education System in India

India is indeed the mother of all civilizations as it represents one of oldest surviving of the 45 or so civilizations of the world. She will always be remembered for her many notable contributions in the fields of science and technology, medicine, yoga & meditation, metallurgy, architecture and engineering and more importantly universal message of spirituality to the whole world (Gautier 2013, 2019). India may well have been the world leader in promoting the

[#]Reprinted from University News, Vol 58 (18) May 04-10, 2020

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