

IN LOVING MEMORY

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN
QUEEN ELIZABETH II
21ST APRIL 1926 - 8TH SEPTEMBER 2022



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ASSOCIATION OF COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARS AND FELLOWS (ACSF - INDIA)
NEWSLETTER



ACSF BULLETIN

ACSF presents E-Newsletter - 'ACSF BULLETIN'
for social, spiritual, scientific and technological development of India.

TRIBUTE TO HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN ELIZABETH II

These remarks from 1947, "My whole life, regardless of how long or how short it may be, will be spent in service," can be used to admire the excellence of any individual. These words were spoken by none other than our beloved Queen Elizabeth II before she rose to the throne. Her Majesty was an outstanding person who led a remarkable life. She was a consistent presence and a role model for all of us, directing and assisting us for as long as any of us can remember. Her Majesty was the paragon of responsibility, stability, wisdom, and grace during her reign, which spanned seven decades of unprecedented change and hardship. To get an idea of the level of dedication she brings to her work, consider the fact that between 1971 and 2018, she was absent from only one Heads of Government Meeting. During her reign, Elizabeth embarked on the most extensive tour of any queen in the annals of history. It is a well-established truth that Her Majesty had a deep affection for the Commonwealth, and that affection was reciprocated by the people of the Commonwealth. Her talent as Head of the Commonwealth of Nations, where she was always a wonderful host and consummate diplomat, was the only thing that could compare to her devotion for duty. She deserves credit for the expansion and vitality of our present Commonwealth, which is also a monument to her dedication, knowledge, and leadership during her time. We mourn the loss of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II with the deepest level of sorrow and unimaginable sadness. A great light has been extinguished after living a long life dedicated to faith, duty, and service.

We would want to take this opportunity to convey on behalf of Association of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows (ACSF), our profound grief at her passing, our admiration for all that she was, and our unending gratitude for all that she provided to us. To the entire Royal Family, please accept our thoughts, prayers, and love as expressions of our deepest sympathies.



QUEEN ELIZABETH II - INDIA



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Stories of 75 Commonwealth Alumni on 75 Years of Indian Independence

Pushpendra Kumar Gupta superannuated as Professor from the Department of Agricultural Botany (now Department of Genetics and Plant Breeding) with additional responsibility as Dean, Faculty of Agriculture in 1996, and thereafter continued working in the department as an Emeritus Professor. He visited UK (1974-75), Germany and Canada for higher studies and collaborative research in the field of plant cytogenetics, molecular biology and biotechnology. Professor Gupta received several awards including the Agra University Gold Medal for MSc, Normal H Dill Memorial Gold Medal (1998), Choudhary Charan Singh Vishwavidyalaya Gaurav Award (2003) and Birbal Sahni Gold Medal by Indian Botanical Society (2004). He was elected to the Fellowship of National Academy of Science (India), Allahabad (1978), Indian Academy Sciences, Bangalore (1989) and National Academy of Agricultural Science, New Delhi (1991).



Prof. P. K. Gupta

The Beginning of his extraordinary journey

Professor Gupta was born on December 14, 1936 in the city of Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh (U.P.), India and completed his school education from the same place. Later, he completed his undergraduate (B.Sc.) and postgraduate (M.Sc.) degrees from Agra University. He worked briefly as Lecturer at Meerut College, Meerut and DAV College, Muzaffarnagar. Later he moved to Gorakhpur University in 1960 where he worked for nine years. He joined University of Manitoba, Canada for his PhD degree (1967) on a Commonwealth Scholarship. After his return from Canada, he served GPU for two years and then joined Meerut University, Meerut. He worked as Professor and Head, Department of Agricultural Botany and Dean, Faculty of Agriculture at Meerut University. He continued there in active service till his retirement (1996) and later as an Emeritus Professor.

Prof Gupta-The Scientist

Most often scientists specialise in one area of research and seldom explore others. However, Prof Gupta has continued to evolve in his scientific quest in the area of plant biology and genetics. Often a scientist, starting his/her career in one field of specialisation. Over the years, he worked in several related areas including cytogenetics, genetics, mutation breeding, quantitative genetics, molecular biology, crop biotechnology and genomics. He also completed several research projects. Owing to his exceptional work Professor Gupta is recognised as a Fellow of all the four national science/ agriculture academies of India, including the Indian National Science Academy (FNA), the Indian Academy of Sciences (FASc), the National Academy of Sciences India (FNASc) and the National Academy of Agricultural Sciences (FNAAS). Besides this, he has been a fellow and a member of several academies and scientific societies in the country.

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AT THE AGE OF 86, PROF GUPTA IS AN INSPIRATION FOR ALL THE YOUNG SCHOLARS AND FELLOWS. HE CONTINUES HIS QUEST FOR LEARNING AND DISSEMINATION OF THE KNOWLEDGE HE HAS.

Prof. Gupta- The Writer

There will not be any graduate student studying plants/genetic who has not read book(s) written by Prof Gupta. He has authored several books prominent of which are A Text Book of Genetics, Cell Biology and Genetics, Genetics and Biotechnology in Crop Improvement, Cell Biology, Molecular Biology, Cell and Molecular Biology, Biotechnology and Genomics, Molecular Biology and Genetic Engineering, Plant Biotechnology, Biotechnology and Immunology and Molecular Biology and Biotechnology to name a few.

Commonwealth Scholarship

Prof Gupta was the recipient of Commonwealth scholarship at the University of Manitoba in Canada (1964-67), which provided him with an opportunity to learn front-line advanced 'Wheat Cytogenetics' and also learn about the man-made cereal, the 'triticale'. Later, he availed the Commonwealth Academic Staff Fellowship, UK (1974-75) to work on nuclear repetitive DNA in *Lolium* hybrids. He published several quality research publications during his visits (including a paper published in *Nature* publication). This work helped him avail a CIDA Associateship at Canada and later as a Visiting Professor (NSERC Exchange Programme) at the University of Ottawa for six months in 1988. These visits gave him an opportunity to work extensively on *Hordeum* Cytogenetics and DNA-based molecular markers, which later allowed him to develop a wheat molecular biology laboratory at Meerut with funds from Department of Biotechnology, thus bringing Meerut on the international map. As a result, several of his students got good scientific exposure and are now working on important positions in USA, Canada and Australia.

Prof. Gupta- The Visionary

Prof Gupta appreciates the work that is being done by 'Association of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows' in playing an important role in bringing Commonwealth scholars and fellows together and developing awareness in them about how these scholarships/fellowships gave a new direction to the careers of some of our illustrious alumni. He suggests that the Association should prepare a list of the fellows in each country, who really distinguished themselves and make this information available to Academic Institutions and also on Social Media in different countries. Particularly in India, the young students and faculty in the formative years of their career may feel inspired and apply for these fellowships. He thinks, the Association may help in career placement of these fellows in the future. Association may also develop a network with national units in each country, so that conferences may be organised at national level, inviting the young bright students and faculty members at the initial stage of their careers.

At the age of 86, Prof Gupta is an inspiration for all the young scholars and fellows. He continues his quest for learning and dissemination of the knowledge he has.

"Give, even if you only have a little"

- Buddha

Stories of 75 Commonwealth Alumni on 75 Years of Indian Independence

Dr. Kapil Narula, is Economic Affairs Officer at UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Beirut, Lebanon. He served as an officer in the Indian Navy for over two decades in several leadership roles such as the Head of Electrical Department of a warship and Head of Faculty of Electronics and Communication Engineering at the Indian Naval Officer Training Academy. After resigning from active military service as a Commander, he joined the University of Geneva, Switzerland as a senior researcher in energy efficiency. He was the first veteran to be laterally recruited as Advisor, NITI Aayog at the rank of Joint Secretary, following which he moved to work at the United Nations. He holds an interdisciplinary PhD in economics and a master's degree in engineering. He is the author/editor of seven books, more than 100 articles/papers and is on the editorial board of 10 academic journals.



Dr. Kapil Narula

Serving the country

Born and brought up in Delhi, Dr. Kapil was influenced by the towering personality of powerful Indian emperors and leaders. After completing his schooling, he joined the National Defence Academy, the elite training academy for defense officers in 1992 to follow his dream of serving the country. Following the rigorous military training, he joined the Indian Navy and completed his engineering degree standing first in his course. He served as an electrical officer on a destroyer class warship. In 2002 the ship was deployed for patrolling during the Kargil conflict. Subsequently, he completed his masters degree from IIT Kharagpur. He was intrigued at the opportunities for energy management at his work places and in 2008 he started advocating the need to adopt an energy policy for the Indian Navy. Over the course of next few years he wrote several policy papers and presented several proposals on the subject.

Expanding frontiers

His persistence was rewarded and in 2010 he was sponsored on study leave for two years to pursue an interdisciplinary PhD degree from IGIDR, a deemed university fully funded by the Reserve Bank of India. He completed the mandatory course work in half the allotted time by staying on campus on weekdays and travelled on the weekends to join his wife and children, often studying in the Mumbai locals to maximise his time. On enquiring about the reasons, he reminisced, "I want to maximise my productivity and finish a major part of my thesis, because I will soon return back to my full time job". He also recalls, "Those were some of my most productive days with a punishing schedule – morning 0400h to midnight – but the reward was an exponential learning curve".

He then utilised the balance time of his study leave to pursue PhD fellowship. He was sponsored by the Ministry of Science and Technology as a young scientist to spend three months at IIASA, Vienna. "That short stint gave me the first international exposure and exposed me to the fascinating world of research – and I decided to work with the best global minds", he mentioned. In 2012 he re-joined active military service and was posted as the Head of Faculty of Electronics and Communication Engineering at the Indian Naval Officer Training Academy in Kerala where he led a faculty with 30+ professors to deliver training to 1500+ officer cadets in 50+ subjects.

Building a research career

Following this he was deputed as a researcher at the Navy's think tank at Delhi. During this time, he completed his PhD thesis, wrote six books and edited an international journal. He also delivered on his mission of framing an energy policy for the Indian Navy which was formally integrated as an environment conservation roadmap. He also attended several international training programs in Germany, US, UK and France during this time. In 2016, he was selected as the Commonwealth Professional Fellow and worked at University College London (UCL) on shipping energy efficiency and emission reduction. In one sense, this was a segue to the next stage of his career, and he felt ready to move beyond Indian shores to work on global energy issues.

He is indebted to the Commonwealth fellowship for providing him a valuable opportunity to work with the best minds in modelling of GHG emissions from shipping and utilised the time in London to engage with the International Maritime Organisation, interact with the shipping industry and collaborate with academicians at LSE. This experience has also helped in his current role as a mentor to an African student of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission who is undergoing her master's studies at University of Strathclyde.

Breaking glass ceilings

After taking voluntary retirement from active military service, Kapil joined the University of Geneva as a senior researcher and lecturer where he worked for three and a half years. He then became the first veteran to be laterally recruited as Advisor, Energy at the rank of Joint Secretary at NITI Aayog, the think tank of the Indian government, where he led energy modelling initiative to inform India's energy and climate policy choices. Later, he moved to work as an international civil servant and was arguably, the first Indian veteran to work as Economic Affairs Officer at the United Nations. Kapil's core expertise is in technology and economics and he leverages the understanding of these subjects for energy and climate policy making. His past work includes energy efficiency, renewable energy, decentralised distributed generation for energy access, energy security, climate modelling and policy evaluation. His work also overlaps with climate action, SDGs, NDCs, climate resilience, mitigation, adaptation, low carbon development, blue economy and maritime sustainability. He has also contributed to several global projects such as, Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming' and has worked with leading international experts on energy and climate policy. He believes that his best is yet to come and he looks forward to the next two decades of his working life to serve the society with eager anticipation.

Success mantras

Kapil says that it is important to have a vision and always have your eyes on your goal. "Life is an exciting journey where you can chart your own path, because everyone is unique". He says, - "One has to look at big picture and for holistic development one needs to balance all aspects of life". He takes out time for developing spiritual, physical, mental, emotional and social aspects of his personality. He says that failures are extremely important in one's journey and you learn more from failures than success. "In school you are first taught a lesson and then appear for an exam, but in life you are first tested and then learn a lesson".



HIS LIFE'S PHILOSOPHY IS TO GIVE MORE THAN WHAT WE TAKE. TO GIVE BACK TO THE SOCIETY, HE MENTORS YOUNG PROFESSIONALS, PROVIDES CAREER ADVICE TO KNOWLEDGE SEEKERS AND OFFERS A HELPING HAND TO ORGANISATIONS WHICH ARE MAKING A SOCIAL IMPACT. HIS MANTRA FOR SUCCESS: CONNECT WITH THE SOURCE OF INFINITE POWER, THINK BIG, BELIEVE IN YOURSELF, AND STAY SIMPLE.

Stories of 75 Commonwealth Alumni on 75 Years of Indian Independence

Dr. Bulbul Dhar-James is currently working as a Professor in the Department of Political Science, and Coordinator, MA Human Rights Programme at Jamia Millia Islamia. She has done her PhD on 'Politics of Economic Liberalisation in Urban Tanzania', from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London as a Commonwealth Scholar. She has also been a Post-Doctoral Fulbright Fellow on Global Political Economy and Governance. She is an exceptional academician who is committed to promote human rights centric approaches for Political Economy and Gender.



Dr. Bulbul Dhar

Early years

With her father in the Army, young Bulbul traversed the length and breadth of the country in her growing years, making countless friends from different backgrounds. She completed her degree in Political Science from Lady Sri Ram College (LSR), one of the finest colleges in India. Later, she did Master's in Political Science from the prestigious Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU). Just before her final semester at JNU, she applied as ad-hoc faculty at LSR and successfully got her first assignment as Lecturer in Political Science. Moving forward, she joined Janki Devi Memorial (JDM) College where she taught Political Science and choreographed folk dances – sung by the renowned Vocal Exponent Shubha Mudgal. Later she was awarded the Commonwealth Scholarship to pursue PhD at SOAS, University of London on a very contemporary and unexplored area of research titled 'Politics of Economic Liberalisation in Urban Tanzania'.

The Culturalist

Dr. Dhar is a trained Kathak dancer. Her evenings in school and college often meant traveling to Mandi House with her sister to learn this Indian Classical dance from Bhartiya Kala Kendra. Being an avid admirer of performing arts, she often visits cultural areas of Delhi- watching theatre or enjoying a recital. This aspect of her remained even while doing her Ph.D. in London and one part of her allowance was always spent on buying tickets for cultural events. She was regular at Operas and Musicals in London, where the Royal Opera House was her favourite spot. Today, as an executive body member of LSR's alumni association, she promotes cultural programs and baithaks along with other conventional methods like webinars to address the digital divide and women empowerment.

Complete Commonwealth Experience

Landing in UK to pursue her PhD at SOAS, was the first step for Dr. Dhar to start a new journey in her life. This was the first time she was away from home, in an entirely new country in a completely different culture. Initially, she was living in YMCA but very soon shifted to one of London's finest Post Graduate Residential Communities "the William Goodenough House" (Willy G as it was fondly called). At Willy G she experienced multiculturalism at its best- something she always cherished even while traveling with her father. The library at SOAS provided opportunity to intermingle with students from different backgrounds and subjects. During the period of Annual British Council Dinner for Commonwealth Scholars, she met her future husband who was studying Environmental Economics at UCL.



Dr. Dhar had multiple rejections from Tanzanian Government before she finally got the Research Permit for fieldwork. She mentions giving up should not be a choice, rather a motivation to try with double power.

She also had some unpleasant experiences with one of her supervisors to which she objected and came out victorious in this battle and a new supervisor was assigned to her. This was her life changing experience which is also reflected in her work on gender and empowerment.

Tanzania Travels

Travel to Tanzania is one of the most cherished journeys of Dr Dhar's life. She was so inspired with the culture and people that she named her daughter 'Malaika' – a Swahili word for 'divine angel'. This was the time when Tanzania was a newly liberalised nation, still in its nascent stage. The government was initially wary of her research on economic liberalisation while the common people were not very sure what exactly economic liberalisation meant. Racism was rampant across the country and surprisingly she witnessed not just differentiation between whites and Blacks but also between Asian and locals.

Indians comprised of a huge community in Tanzania amongst Asians and mostly they mingled amongst themselves, often avoiding socialising with native Tanzanians or Africans. This caused exceptional discomfort to Dr Dhar. She decided to stay in a small apartment at the University to enable her to interact with Tanzanians and Africans. Her warm and friendly behaviour towards Africans was both surprising and welcoming for them. At a lunch hosted by an African research organisation, she was a breath of fresh air in a saree, signifying Indian culture with a cosmopolitan group of Indians and Africans dining together- a rare sight in Tanzania at that time. She was doing everything together which seems difficult for many of us. Getting married, having a baby, doing a PhD and field work at Tanzania! She is a role model & inspiration to many.

Ace Academician

After completing PhD, she returned to India for a short stint at JNU followed by National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER) to a permanent teaching position at Jamia Millia Islamia in the Political Science Department. She is an ace academician and researcher which landed her a Post- doctoral Fulbright Fellowship in Global Political Economy, where she was one of the only two Asians in cohort. She later contributed towards the development of various Masters level courses like 'Global Political Economy and Governance', 'Science Technology, Environment and Human Rights', 'Administrative Theory', Gender studies amongst others for various academic institutions. Then Vice Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia and former Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, Mr Najeeb Jung delegated her to head the Women Studies Centre of the University and further develop the same with a Human Rights perspective. 'For me Gender is a commitment not just an academic discipline' she proudly says.

Stories of 75 Commonwealth Alumni on 75 Years of Indian Independence

Dr. Manu Mahajan is an Associate Professor of Urban Design at the School of Planning and Architecture (SPA), New Delhi. He is a recipient of the commonwealth Scholarship and also the Commonwealth Split-site Scholarship. He also received Erasmus Plus Global Mobility Scholarship and DAAD scholarship. Dr. Manu has more than 20 years of consulting and research experience in assignments in Urban Design, Heritage Management, and Urban Planning. Some of the significant works handled by him in various capacities are, Vision Document and Action Plan for the Taj Trapezium Zone, a Master Plan for Shri Vaishno Devi Shrine, a study on re-drafting the Delhi Development Act, Landscape and public space design for Gujarat International Finance-Tech City (GIFT), Investment Region planning for Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC), preparation of model heritage bye-laws for ASI protected properties, review of Patna riverfront project, Master Plan for HSEZ, Gurgaon and Global Environment Facility (GEF) promoted Sustainable Urban Transport Project (SUTP). He is a founding member & honorary secretary of ACSF, India.



Dr. Manu Mahajan

Commonwealth Journey

Dr. Manu mentioned the beginning of Commonwealth journey when he received two letters from Commonwealth Scholarship Commission for him and his wife Ms. Kanak Tiwari in the year 2005. He pursued his second master's at Development Planning Unit (DPU), University College London, and his wife studied M.Phil. (Development Studies) at the University of Cambridge, UK. He describes that part of life like a Shahrukh Khan movie, where he being the leading actor with long black coat, traveling from Kings Cross London to Cambridge Station every second weekend to meet his wife, DDLJ moment! One more fine summer came again in 2018, when he received another scholarship, the Commonwealth Split-site scholarship to pursue part of his Ph.D. at the University of Leeds. During the stay in 2019-20, he mentioned experiencing a bit of loneliness, as this time he has to leave his wife and two kids back in India. But he stayed on, being a brave boy in his early 40s, finished the analysis part of his Ph.D. research, and the months of October, November, and December 2019 showed him the stimulation that happens when every hypothesis of ones research starts finding evidence. He became a mini-researcher in those three months at Leeds and gives the credit to the university facilities and hard work. He thanks the Commonwealth commission for such an enriching experience. He recalled his days and feels privileged when students ask him for recommendation letter to apply in UK universities. He motivates her daughter to study at the London School of Music so that when Papa is 60, he can again visit his favorite city and sit in Fitzroy Square, on a bench, and enjoy another Summer.

Professional World was Cruel

After finishing Urban Design from SPA, New Delhi in January 2000, Manu was focussed to draw big plans hence decided to enter the market of large urban planning and design projects. He then briefly worked as a Research Associate in the Department of Urban Design, SPA and joined an Indian arm of a Canadian Company. His first assignment was in Trivandrum where he stayed for 2 years as a Bachelor and fell in love with coconut oil, and coconut chutney. The project site was a 16 km long stretch from Kovalam beach to Akkulam lake for tourism infrastructure improvements. He came back from London in 2006 and joined the same office and this time stayed for one year in Bombay, a city that fascinates him every time he visits. This time the assignment was working on the Business Plan for Mumbai Metropolitan Region, an area involving 20 municipal entities. He mentions that period as "Dreams were coming true". Further he Joined a big developer company to work on making a master plan for Special Economic Zone in Gurgaon. As in charge of a 25-member team comprising of landscape architects, urban designers, and urban planners, he felt powerful! Between all these hustles, he mentioned buying his first car in 2008 and hiring a driver. This was like a man who once dreamed to have a car, and finally having it with the sense of satisfaction. Next 3 years he worked in Indore, had poha with jalebi every morning, and worked on a Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor related -

assignment. Life was good but suddenly on one fine day, in a meeting, he was asked to include Betma Reserve Forest, near Pithampur in the master plan as a development site. He realized; his hands might get dirty now due to involvement in unethical business. He says, *how can I cut slices of this small hillock into development parcels?* The second realization came in January 2013, while preparing an urban design plan for Gujarat International Finance Tech City (GIFT), a global firm near Ahmedabad. He mentioned this project as the decision making one, as he left this cruel, multinational firm- based professional world in August 2013. He also gives credit to two books he read that year for making such a bold decision, *World Bank and the Poverty of Nations* and *Geographies of Development*.

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IN HIS WORDS: A SMALL-TOWN BOY WAS BECOMING PART OF A CHAIN REACTION THAT DESTROYS THE LIVES OF POOR FARMERS IN INDIA THROUGH LAND ACQUISITION AT PEANUT PRICES THAT ARE SOLD BACK BY THESE VERY CORPORATIONS AT SKYROCKETING PRICES.

Academic Life is no Better

He still wonders whether entering into academia should be called as an accident or a destiny. He was called as a guest lecturer in January 2008 for a seminar course by his dear Professor in the Department of Urban Design, SPA, New Delhi. He came back again for a design tutorial and a design studio in 2010-11. He was also invited by Jamia Millia Islamia in 2011 as a guest faculty for their evening program when they started Masters in Urban Regeneration. These were the formative years of his academic life. later he applied and got selected as an Assistant Professor in SPA, New Delhi, and with great difficulty and mental struggle joined in August 2013. Before joining, he mentioned calling his dear old friend, based in New York, and asking "what to do yaar"? And, she said, "Manu you have become a manager, approving time sheets of 50-55 junior colleagues, go back to the university to retain some sanity and design sense". He accepted her recommendation, and there he is in his 10th year as a full-time faculty, dealing with a postgraduate batch of 20-25 students, understand the new digital generation scrolling Instagram feeds.

Draw, Draw, and Draw, Roll Baby Roll (In his words!)

My life till now has been full. Almighty has given me everything, One hobby, that I continued since 1996 is drawing historic landscapes in India. Hence, I have a dream, the last wish, to exhibit my pen and ink sketches of London, Bombay, Calcutta, Chennai, Shimla, and New Delhi at the ground floor lobby of the British Council, New Delhi. Soon I will be inviting all of you for that!



DENTAL BLUES IN COVID 19 TIMES: MANAGING WITH SMILES By - Dr. Ajay Mahajan

As the world is fighting the dreaded Covid-19 pandemic and the whole government and health machinery is focused on managing the affected patients, citizens suffering from other ailments are facing problems



due to limited OPDs and other restrictions. Dental and oral health related diseases are prevalent in the society and may result in extreme discomfort. Unlike other health problems majority of the dental problems manifest with no other symptom than pain. A visit to the dentist is the only way out to get an established diagnosis and specific treatment. If neglected the dental problems may result in spread of infection and emergency situation. Since dental treatments involves contact with the dentist and many procedures involve aerosol generation visiting a dentist in these times is considered to be risk. This has resulted in closure of many dental clinics and hospitals and even those doctors who are working are dealing with only emergencies, with limited treatment options. Considering the present situation, awareness and prevention seem to be indispensable. This will not only prevent routine visits of the patients to the dental hospitals and clinics but also help in contributing the prevention of spread of Covid-19 by avoiding undue exposures to aerosols and crowds. The following dental problems are common and can be prevented and managed conservatively by the patients without necessarily visiting the dentist.

Dental pain and sensitivity: Dental pain and sensitivity could be a result of decayed teeth, problems related to gums, food lodgement or infection. Many desensitizing tooth pastes are commercially available and can be used without prescription. Brushing regularly twice daily with a fluoridated tooth paste, avoiding sweet and sticky in between meal snacking can greatly reduce the risk of initiation and progress of tooth decay. In case sensitivity increases and pain starts spontaneously the patient should consult the doctor who might just give an antibiotic prescription and ask you to visit only if required. Bleeding from gums and swelling of gums could be due to lack of proper oral hygiene, conditions like pregnancy, puberty, nutritional deficiencies. Maintaining proper oral hygiene, adequate nutrition can help to resolve the problems. Mouth washes and gum paints are available over the counter and can be used safely to relieve the symptoms.

Pain, swelling and fever are commonly associated with the eruption of wisdom tooth, especially among teenagers. Warm saline rinses, pain relieving gels are effective in relieving the symptoms in many cases. Over the counter analgesics can also be helpful and should be taken after consulting your doctor.

Oral ulcers: Oral ulcers are very common and may interfere with eating, speech. Since majority of the ulcers are self limiting and resolve within 7 to 10 days the patients can manage them at home by eating a balanced diet, maintaining sufficient fluid intake and leading a disciplined life to reduce stress. Application of pain relief gels 2-3 times a day after meals will give relief in majority of cases. Multivitamin supplements can also be taken for a week or two to boost immunity.

Children and dental issues: Teething problems start when the child is six months of age and may be accompanied with pain in -

gum pads, fever and irritability. Parents should not panic as these symptoms are transitory and subside as the tooth erupts. Cavities can be prevented by making the children brush twice daily and maintain good dietary habits.

Senior citizens and dental issues: In addition to other dental problems, senior citizens might need replacement of missing teeth or problems associated with their dentures. Old aged patients should avoid visiting dentists for new dentures and implants, keeping in view the susceptibility of old aged people to covid-19. Loose dentures should be managed for the time being by using denture adhesive creams. Denture related ulcers and dryness of mouth can be managed by saliva substitutes and pain relieving gels which are easily available in the market.

Key points:

- Visit the dental hospitals only if it's unavoidable and mandatory after telephonic consultation with your doctor.
- Many dental problems can be managed effectively at home by following proper oral hygiene, dietary modifications and telephonic dental consultations.
- Sugary and sticky foods like chocolates, candies should be curtailed.
- A balanced diet rich in fibers and vitamins is beneficial.
- Intake of self medication should be avoided.
- Pregnant females must brush twice daily and maintain good oral hygiene.
- Last but not the least maintain a steady smile as your smile will last long and not the corona virus.

When to visit a doctor:

- In case there is acute pain associated with swelling, fever or difficulty in breathing.
- Non healing ulcers which persist for more than 2 weeks.
- In case there is difficulty in mouth opening or difficulty in speech.
- In case there is spontaneous bleeding from gums.
- In case of dental trauma due to accident or fall.

Disclaimer: Views/opinions are author's personal.



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CANCER SURGERY- A SURGICAL STRIKE BY SURGEONS

By - Dr Anand Gupta & Dr Shyam Popat

A surgical strike is a well-planned procedure that is executed to hit a target with due diligence to achieve a required outcome with minimum loss. Similar is the analogy of cancer surgery executed by oncosurgeons as compared to surgical strike executed by commandos to tackle terrorists in any territory.



A healthy human body is like a peaceful country. Here, millions to trillions of cells live in different provinces i.e. organs. They all live in harmony and stay in a healthy balanced state. Sometimes in this peaceful environment, some of the cells get brainwashed. This can happen due to some internal and/or external stimuli or trigger factors. Specifically, in mouth cancer, these preventable external stimuli are the consumption of tobacco (smoking or chewing) and/or alcohol, etc. In other cases, it could be some of the micro-elements e.g. asbestos or UV rays, which may tweak our native cells to turn cancerous.

All these initiators are called 'carcinogens'. The influence of these external stimuli gets exponentially increased by important internal stimuli like the body's genetic makeup. Hence, cancer cells start to multiply in uncontrollable numbers and form a colony/tumor similar to headquarter developed by terrorists to multiply in numbers. They begin to destroy nearby areas leading to putrefaction in the central part of tumour (as normal residents are killed in a terrorist zone) and kill the nearby tissues and sometimes the entire organ if not prevented otherwise. Normally, white blood cells (WBC) in the human body keep on fighting cancer cells. This is similar to the police forces that try to fight internally and at least prevent terrorists' further invasion of other areas (metastasis in scientific terms), i.e. organs. If our body's defense goes down then these terrorist cells invade and affect other organs. The scientific evidence of this defense can be observed under the microscope as an aggregation of lymphocytes (WBC) in high numbers surrounding the tumour tissue.

During metastasis, 'sleeper cells' are formed in nearby organs or distant organs. In mouth cancer, the cancer cells have a specific path of migrating through the neck to the lungs. In the neck, lymph nodes are special filters (checkpoints) to stop cancer cells from migrating to distant organs. If the treatment is delayed, they are likely to migrate and capture different organs. If no further action is taken at this point for a long time, these terrorist cells will capture the entire body (country) and kill the person within the span of a few months.

To mitigate such a catastrophic end, a 'Surgical Strike' is highly needed by the army of doctors to harness these terrorist cells and evacuate the disease. A Surgical Strike is a well-planned procedure that is executed to hit the target with due diligence to achieve a required outcome with minimum loss of host cells. A Multidisciplinary team (MDT) individualises the treatment by considering various host-related factors (age, medical history, and previous treatment) and terrorist tumor-related factors (size, location, metastasis, and the nature of tumor). The treatment could be surgery (i.e. direct army attack on the site), radiotherapy (i.e. air strike), chemotherapy (i.e. targeted weapons), or any combination of these (Fig 1). Evidence suggests that whenever possible, surgery gives the highest survival rates as compared to any other modality as seen in the treatment of mouth cancer.

The surgical strike should be so well planned by surgeons that tumour cells should not get alerted while doing the surgery. Actually, the information of surgery being carried out is transferred to the tumour by the route of neuron transmission (networking within body organs) when we start to cut the nearby tissue. And once these terrorist tumor cells come to know that they are under attack, they start moving rapidly. In a few in-vitro microscopic studies, it has been proved that cancer cells move and replicate at a faster rate as compared to normal cells. In a recent article by a famous oncosurgeon of India, it is stated that if we give block (local anaesthesia) to the nerve supplying tumour before starting the surgery, the chances of metastasis are less. It is like cutting off all the surrounding network of the nearby tumor, exactly like the enforcement of a curfew and blocking internet access. The tumour cells follow a specific pathway for the spread to other organs. Commonly these spreading routes are lymphatic (lymph) or circulatory (blood) system. So, surgeons start to cut the route (lymphatic channels) first, and then the head-quarter i.e. the tumor is removed so that no further spread occurs during the surgery. When this surgical strike happens, surgeons have to take care of surrounding critical structures to prevent damage to them while undergoing surgery.

We preserve important structures like major blood vessels and nerves which are vital for the survival of the particular organ or the patient itself (Figure beside).



If the cancer is extensive in size (higher stage) then the MDT plans to first do radiotherapy (Air strike) or chemotherapy (targeted weapon system) to decrease or contain the size of tumour and then perform the surgical strike. Once the tumour is removed, it is evaluated in the pathology laboratory by pathologists (like critical evaluation of evidence by forensic experts in forensic labs) to execute more information about the nature of the tumor. If it is found that the nature of the tumour was aggressive and there are chances of micrometastasis (sleeper cells), further attack in the form of airstrike (radiotherapy) is attempted to prevent the redevelopment of terrorist organisation.

If all efforts attempted by defense forces go in vain and the nation goes into deathly hallows, then the help of motivation experts and spiritual leaders can be attempted to increase the morale and strength of the whole nation to fight at the individual level. We can compare this to immunotherapy and yoga/ meditation. When nothing works and the body comes into the grip of the enemy, then the nation falls.

Hence, the first step (Surgical strike) to tackle this menace is the most important step to mitigate such a dreaded disease, and we oncosurgeons together with MDT experts, fight and strive hard to bring the patient back to normal life and decrease the burden of disease. Interestingly mouth cancer surgery is also called COMMANDO Surgery (COMbined MAndibulectomy and Neck Dissection Operation) and we act as Commandos to attempt a Surgical strike on Cancer.

Disclaimer: Views/opinions are author's personal.



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INNOVATIONS : IGNITING THE SPARK

By - Mr. Ishoo Ratna Srivastav



It is not very difficult to observe that innovations play a crucial role in terms of a nation's economic growth, scientific achievements and in general towards the overall well being of its people. The recent rise of China is not merely an outcome of its cheap supply of labour and the policy framework by an authoritarian regime, but it has also showcased its technical prowess and has built universities that have earned a lot of reputation for innovations. The patents and publications by Chinese universities now compete with the best in the world, whereas 30-35 years ago, China was nowhere in the race. India too needs to scale up its ambition to innovate as we desire to play a leadership role on the technological frontier.

Innovation demands a structured approach, guided by well equipped institutions which hand hold the minds impregnated with ideas before they leap frog towards a large-scale deployment. However, before we make these structured efforts, there are certain attributes lying at the periphery and are akin to hygiene factors but are very essential to get absorbed in the value system of our society, if it wishes to get into a problem solving mode. Some are listed as below:

- **Telling the right stories, asking the right questions, but no question is stupid:** Most kids in classrooms are told the story of the falling apple that inspired Newton to discover the laws of gravity. Well, most of us might not know, the big question in Newton's mind was, "if the apple from the tree falls down to the ground, can the moon also fall on the earth someday?" Now just imagine how the mention of the moon part of the story can expand the boundaries of the thought of an adolescent mind. Students should be encouraged to think critically and ask the right questions. But remember, asking the right questions is good but no question should be shot down as a stupid one.
- **No job is mean:** Respect for labour is empowering and it inspires innovation. A proud workman can go beyond juaad and can innovate towards serving a larger purpose. Remember, opportunities for doing things in a better way exist almost everywhere.
- **Hands on is great but theorising is welcome too:** It is necessary that we emphasise on learning by doing. Something done with our own hands leaves us liberated, joyful, motivated and confident forever. Of course there will be failures but they would make us wiser. So entering into the waters is essential as we learn to swim, however imaginatively theorising about the idea too has a space in the innovation ecosystem and should not be looked down upon.

- **Learn from everywhere and organise your learning:** It is said that ideas germinate on the cusps of a variety of fields of study. It is essential to have an interdisciplinary approach to obtain a holistic view of the problem question and address it from multiple knowledge fronts. Take for example; biologists, chemists, computer scientists, statistical modellers and several other domain experts come together to find a vaccine for covid 19. Organising knowledge too is critical for the innovation ecosystem.
- **Bear with us please, it takes time:** Targeting low hanging fruits is fine, however, it must be recognised that path breaking innovations require a lot of patience and perseverance. The fact that creating an innovation ecosystem is a long term commitment, has to get social acceptance.
- **Think very long term too and think for the universe:** Yes, we need to innovatively address the day to day issues however innovation also demands an ability to gaze at the crystal ball, think for a very long term and ideate for the universe.
- **Healthy competition, ethics and social responsibility:** Every generation has a moral obligation to leave a better world for its progeny. Apart from this basic tenet, the question of good and evil too remains central to the innovation landscape. In this context it is pertinent to state that, a law abiding, healthy competitive space forms the bedrock of an innovation ecosystem.

These are just rudimentary enumerations as we try to foster a culture of innovation. We must remember that innovation is not an inanimate brick and mortar structure, rather it's an expression of collective social spirit towards rising to the challenges for a better future. We need to nurture this spirit and there is no doubt that the curious Indian mind, shaped by the traditions of reasoning, can innovate for the world.

Disclaimer: Views/opinions are author's personal.



Mr. Ishoo Ratna Srivastav is a Deputy Chief Mechanical Engineer (Planning and Environment Management) at North Western Railways Jaipur

"Don't limit a child to your own learning for she was born in another time"

- Rabindranath Tagore

ACSF News/Events

EDUCATION LEADERS NETWORKING RECEPTION 16 NOVEMBER 2022

Education Leaders Networking Reception was held on 16 November 2022. The event was graced by Ms. Alison Barrett, Director, British Council and attended by UK Alumni.



LAUNCH OF ACSF E-NEWSLETTER, ACSF-BULLETIN ON 18 AUGUST 2022

British Council India hosted an event to launch E-Newsletter (ACSF-Bulletin) of ACSF India. Soft launch of the E-Newsletter was conducted on 15 August to celebrate 75 years of Independence followed by formal launch on 18 August 2022. The event was conducted in Hybrid mode and 57 scholars/alumni/fellows attended the launch event. The event started with the welcome note by Rittika Chanda Parruck, Director Education- India, British Council followed by interaction with the alumni members. She welcomed the audience and congratulated them on Launch of 1st India E Newsletter. Aatreyee Guha Thakurta, Head Higher Education – Mobility India also congratulated everyone at the launch event. The Session was moderated by member ACSF Dr Aditi Kothari, she welcomed our prestigious guest Dr Dhruva Chaudhry, President ACSF, Dr Adarsh Kumar (Editor-in-Chief) and Editorial Board members Ms. Dipika Yadav, Dr. Kailash C. Petkar & Dr. Lata Suresh. The session concluded with alumni interacting and exchanging good notes on their scholarships experience and welcoming new alumni in the group. After the launch a networking event was organised where all guests interacted with each other.

All the panel members mentioned that over the period of time, it has been realised that across the globe Covid pandemic incapacitated the health care systems and emphasis should be given to upskill the current health workforce to face such challenging situations in future. The session was concluded with a Q&A session, but the conversations continued over high tea in the autumn evening in Delhi. The event was attended by more than 75 UK alumni.



PRE-DEPARTURE BRIEFING OF COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARS AT BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION ON 18 AUGUST 2022

British Council India on behalf of commonwealth scholarships commission organised a Pre - departure briefing for Commonwealth scholars. The briefing was conducted in Hybrid mode, 5 scholars attended face to face session and 17 scholars attended online session via MS Teams and had total of 22 scholars who attended the briefing session. The session was introduced by Sakshi Sharma, Manager Higher Education and then welcome note by Aatreyee Guha Thakurta, Head Higher Education – Mobility India. She welcomed all new scholars and fellows and congratulated them on winning the prestigious scholarships. In the welcome note speech, she also covered points on higher education in UK, student's life and how scholars can benefit during their stay in UK. The opening remarks were concluded by sharing a brief overview of commonwealth scholarships commission and informing the scholars about the wide CSC alumni network and upcoming activities. In the next segment of the briefing session, pre-departure information was shared along with relevant links to refer, scholars were satisfied and were able to connect from the information provided. Ms Deepika Yadav, CSFP Alumni joined virtually to share her experience of studying and staying in UK.



ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT EVENT AND PANEL DISCUSSION ON 'STRENGTHENING HEALTH SYSTEMS AND CAPACITY' ON 3 NOVEMBER 2022

The British Council in India and Association of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows (ACSF) in India on behalf of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK organised an event where UK Alumni were invited to meet Emma Green, Deputy Director of the STEP team at FCDO (Scholarships, Tertiary Education and Partnerships).

The event started with the welcome note by Rittika Chanda Parruck, Director Education India, British Council. Emma Green also addressed alumni and mentioned that "Commonwealth is the only scholarship where development is in the heart and FCDO believes in investing in those individuals where it seems that the relationship lasts a lifetime and Commonwealth is one of those scholarships programme". She also expressed her interest in listening to the impact and success stories from individuals who attended the event.

Eminent experts and alumni were invited for the panel discussion. The session was moderated by Dr Dhruva Chaudhry, President of ACSF. He mentioned that though the Pandemic effect is going on, by large it is over and there is need to strengthen our Health care system by embracing changes required to do capacity building of the health care workers.

ACSF CORE GROUP MEETING 18 AUGUST 2022

ACSF core group meeting was conducted at CharBagh, British Council, Delhi to discuss the overall functioning of ACSF.

Important points discussed were to increase the memberships of ACSF and widen the social media presence of ACSF. Sixteen members attended the meeting.



Recent Scholars-2021 - "A window to the Future"



Excy Hansda is a conservation architect and an architectural historian in the making. He is a recipient of Commonwealth Masters Scholarship at the University of Edinburgh, where he studied Architectural Conservation. Currently, he's pursuing PhD in Architecture at the University of Liverpool on an AHRC studentship.

His research investigates how Mumbai's Art Deco Architecture was shaped by Indian agents to respond to various political, social, and nationalistic demands during the late-colonial period. Focusing on Art Deco dwellings built between 1930-47 by UK-trained Indian architects and BIT, he aims to create a critical historiography of 'indigenous modernity', which connects the materials, process, design and patronage of buildings with broader socio-economic-political issues. Apart from this, he wishes to use this research to generate awareness of the heritage of these humble dwellings in Mumbai.



Arunima Ghosh is a Commonwealth Shared Scholar from the batch of 2020- 2021. She did her 2nd Master's in Digital Health from the University of St. Andrews under this scholarship. She is a project management professional and collaborative communicator with proven technical competencies.

At present she is working at Kohler India as an Agile project manager (Finance Strategic Initiatives). She has 11 years of work experience in healthcare operations and business solutions. She started her journey with a masters degree in Bioinformatics from Birla Institute of Technology, Mesra, Ranchi and joined an ed-tech company soon after her degree. She has also worked as a PGT teacher for more than a year during the year 2012-2013, where she enjoyed teaching biology to high school students and still feels a teacher inside her. Right now she is interested in transforming the businesses across several domains by leveraging the new tools and technologies.

Amisha Pathak is a Commonwealth Scholar from the batch 2020-21, during which she pursued an MA in Educational Planning, Economics and International Development from the University College London. Amisha grew up in a semi-urban locality of Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh and pursued her undergrad from Banaras Hindu University in Political Science.



She worked with multiple NGOs and Think Tanks that enriched her experience with the ground reality of education and poverty in India. Currently employed as a Chief Minister's Fellow with the Government of Delhi. Amisha aims to develop an equitable education system that distributes the benefits of quality education equally to all children in India. On weekends, Amisha volunteers as a Social Science Teacher at a government school in Delhi where she loves spending time with children, learning 'with' them and educating them to become kinder and smarter future citizens of the world.

Ipsita Chakraborty is a doctoral student at Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur, India with keen interest in development of energy-efficient, cost-effective, and environment friendly on-chip integrated photonic devices for next-generation communication network. She was a split-site scholar at University of Southampton.



In her PhD research, she worked on designing scalable, energy-efficient on-chip integrated optical modulators exhibiting ultra-fast broadband operation using novel materials. As a visiting research scholar and Commonwealth split-site scholar (2021 to 2022), she worked on implementing compact, broadband ENZ based modulators on silicon nitride platform for Neuromorphic applications. In future, she is interested in developing energy-efficient, cost-effective, and environment friendly on-chip integrated photonic devices for next-generation communication network.



Satender Rana completed his MSc in Development Management with a specialism in Applied Development Economics on a Commonwealth Shared Scholarship from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). After finishing his education from the LSE. Satender worked as Independent Consultant with the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI).

He has 12 years of experience in development consulting and social science research with organisations like the World Bank, UNDP etc. Presently, he works as a Senior Research Fellow with the Indian School of Development Management (ISDM) where he is leading research at the Knowledge Institute and talent management project. His work focuses on harnessing the power of data, ML, and AI to enable social sector organisations in making evidence-informed decisions. A keen learner, Satender is also pursuing an Executive Programme in Data Science from the Indian Institute of Management Lucknow (IIML).



Krithika Sangilidurai is a Commonwealth Split-site Scholar (2021-2022), currently doing her part of Ph.D. research at Cranfield University, Bedford under the Environmental Science theme. Her research focuses on the impacts of microplastics on agricultural soil biodiversity.

Her area of interest includes remediation, waste management, emerging contaminants, heavy metals, soil, water, and wastewater analysis. She has Masters in Environmental science and completed her Bachelors in Agriculture. Her Masters' research thesis is on the green synthesis and nano-remediation of heavy metals. Her combined perspective and knowledge on environmental science and agriculture made her choose an area of research for her Ph.D. She is currently pursuing Ph.D. and looking forward to setting up her career in the Research and Development sectors to work on understanding fundamentals and bring the application of science to solve real-world problems.

ACSF is seeking your stories/articles to publish in the quarterly ACSF bulletin to share with the wider community. Interested scholars/fellows may reach out to us on - acsf-newsletter@acsfindia.org

Upcoming Event

Interchange 23: 13 – 17 February 2023, Save the date!

We are delighted to announce that the British Council, on behalf of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (CSC), will host the third annual global conference for Commonwealth Scholars and Alumni, Interchange 23. The conference will take place from 13 – 17 February 2023 and address the theme Clean Energy, Air and Oceans.

As the pace of climate change quickens and many countries are already beginning to feel its consequences, Interchange 23 offers Commonwealth Scholars, Alumni and other stakeholders the opportunity to come together in a virtual space to share knowledge and research related to preserving marine resources, increasing the use of renewable energies, and reducing air pollution. It will also be an opportunity to celebrate achievements, develop professional networks, and connect to the work of the CSC. We hope that everyone will be able to join and engage with this exciting opportunity.

For details and registrations please visit:

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/education/science/news/interchange-23>

For any enquiries please email to - interchange23@britishcouncil.org

Alumni Association Honours- India

In recognising the fantastic work being done by the various UK Alumni chapters, the British Council is delighted to announce the Alumni Association Honours.



We invite alumni associations across various city chapters, and UK universities and colleges to participate in this programme where you will present the work you have done in the last year in a requested submission format and win awards across categories to showcase best practice to your peers across alumni associations nationally. The Association Honours will be presented at the annual Study UK Alumni Awards event where the winning chapters will be honoured and get a chance to present their successes and learning to other associations present.

For details & registration please visit:

<https://www.britishcouncil.in/study-uk/events/alumni-association-honour-india#:~:text=We%20invite%20alumni%20associations%20across,t%20your%20peers%20across%20alumni>

TIMELINE

Forms open for submissions: 10 October 2022 to 6 February 2023

Editorial Board Members



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Dr. Vijay Chatterjee

ACSF REQUESTS ALL SCHOLARS AND FELLOWS TO JOIN ACSF (INDIA).

Interested Scholars and Fellows may reach out to us on - info@acsfindia.org or submit [Membership form here](#)

ACSF IS SEEKING YOUR STORIES/ARTICLES TO PUBLISH IN THE ACSF BULLETIN TO SHARE WITH THE WIDER COMMUNITY. INTERESTED SCHOLARS AND FELLOWS MAY REACH OUT TO US ON FOLLOWING

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