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



ACSF BULLETIN



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for social, spiritual, scientific and technological development of India.

Indian Prime Minister's meeting with Ex-PM of the United Kingdom



Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and ex-Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Mr. Rishi Sunak, held a bilateral meeting on September 9, 2023, during UK ex-PM's visit to India for the G20 Summit in New Delhi.

Through his high-level attendance at numerous G20 meetings and activities, the Prime Minister expressed his gratitude to the UK for its support to India during its G20 Presidency.

The two leaders expressed their satisfaction with the advancements made in various areas of bilateral cooperation in line with the Roadmap 2030 and the India-UK Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, particularly in the areas of the economy, security and defense, technology, green technology and climate change, health, and mobility. Additionally, the two leaders discussed important matters and shared concerns regarding regional and global challenges.

A balanced, mutually beneficial, and forward-looking free trade agreement will hopefully be finalised shortly after both leaders assessed the status of the discussions. They also expressed hope that the outstanding concerns could be resolved as soon as possible.

For a more in-depth conversation, Prime Minister Modi invited ex-PM Sunak to see him one-on-one at a time that works for both of them. Prime Minister Sunak accepted the invitation & complimented PM Modi on a productive G20 Summit.



India - United Kingdom Development Partnership

2030 Roadmap for India-UK future relations

The 2030 Roadmap for India-UK future relations is a strategic framework designed to enhance and expand the bilateral partnership between India and the United Kingdom over the next decade. This comprehensive plan, launched during a virtual summit between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson in May 2021, aims to foster cooperation across a range of critical areas. The roadmap underscores a shared commitment to building a modern, prosperous, sustainable, and secure partnership.

Key Areas of Cooperation:

1. Trade and Economy:

- Free Trade Agreement (FTA): Negotiations are in progress to establish a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement, aimed at significantly boosting bilateral trade and investment.
- Economic Collaboration: Focus on supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), promoting innovation, and enhancing market access for businesses in both countries.

2. Defense and Security:

- Strategic Defense Partnership: Strengthening defense ties through joint military exercises, defense technology cooperation, and intelligence sharing.
- Cybersecurity: Collaborative efforts to address cyber threats and enhance cybersecurity measures, ensuring a safe digital environment.

3. Climate and Sustainability:

- Climate Action and Environmental Sustainability: Joint initiatives to combat climate change, including collaboration on renewable energy, sustainable development, and green technologies.
- Clean Energy Transition: Partnership in advancing clean energy technologies, reducing carbon footprints, and supporting sustainable urban development.

4. Health:

- Healthcare Collaboration: Enhancing cooperation in public health, including joint research and development in medical technologies, pharmaceuticals, and pandemic preparedness.
- Vaccine Partnership: Continued collaboration on vaccine distribution and development to combat global health crises, such as COVID-19.

5. Education, Science, and Technology:

- Educational Exchange: Expanding opportunities for student and academic exchanges, scholarships, and collaborative research between educational institutions in both countries.

- Scientific and Technological Innovation: Joint ventures in research and development, focusing on emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, space exploration, and biotechnology.

6. People-to-People Connections:

- Cultural Exchange: Promoting cultural understanding and exchanges through arts, heritage, and tourism.
- Visa and Migration Policies: Facilitating easier movement of people between the two countries for work, study, and tourism, strengthening interpersonal ties.

7. Global Cooperation:

- Multilateral Engagement: Working together on global platforms such as the United Nations, G20, and Commonwealth to address international challenges, including security, climate change, and sustainable development.
- Development Cooperation: Joint efforts in supporting development projects in third countries, particularly in areas such as infrastructure, education, and healthcare.

The 2030 Roadmap for India-UK future relations represents a significant commitment to deepening ties and addressing common global challenges through mutual cooperation and shared values. It is a forward-looking strategy that aims to harness the strengths of both nations to create a resilient and dynamic partnership for the future.

ACSF (India) Congratulates Ms Lindy Cameron CB OBE

Ms Lindy Cameron CB OBE has been appointed British High Commissioner to the Republic of India in succession to Mr Alex Ellis CMG



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Stories of 75 Commonwealth Alumni on 75 Years of Indian Independence

Dr. O. P. Kharbanda is the Pro Vice-Chancellor of Health Sciences at Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences in Bengaluru and Professor Emeritus at the National Academy of Medical Sciences. He has earlier served as distinguished Dr CG Pandit National Chair of Indian Council of Medical Research, Chief and Professor and Head of the Centre for Dental Education and Research and Director of WHO Collaborating Centre at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi. Dr. Kharbanda's international reputation in dentistry and orthodontics, a testament to his global influence and expertise, his various important positions, and numerous awards all contribute to his story of commitment, leadership, and dedication to providing quality service to society.



Dr O. P. Kharbanda

The first stop: Lucknow

Inspired by his family physician, Dr. Kharbanda's journey began with a decision to pursue dentistry after his 12th Board exams. He graduated with a Bachelor in Dental Surgery in 1976 from the prestigious King George's Medical College, Lucknow, where he earned two Gold Medals, seven Honors, two Merit Scholarships, and three book prizes. His academic excellence secured him a spot in the highly sought-after specialty of Orthodontics for his master's program at the same institution. His interest in the field of cleft lip and palate was sparked during this time. This interest deepened at AIIMS, where he collaborated with Dr. SS Sidhu, a colleague with experience in cleft lip and palate treatment under the guidance of Dr. Olav Bergland in Oslo, Norway. He began his professional career as a lecturer at Medical College Jhansi before joining the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi in 1985 in Orthodontics. At AIIMS, he faced numerous challenges, managing complex cases including cleft lip and facial deformities.

The Manchester Milestone

In 1995, Prof. OP Kharbanda was selected as a British Commonwealth Medical Fellow. He received training there and worked with the Oslo team, Dr. Gunvor Semb, and Professor William C. Shaw. He was also introduced to the 'Eurocleft' project. After that, he traveled to several global facilities for cleft lip repair. Dr. Kharbanda turned down a lucrative consulting offer at the Oman Khaula Hospital Cleft Center in favor of returning to school as a Cleft Fellow at Manchester. In the late 1990s, he visited cleft centers in Arizona, Saint Louis, Lancaster, and Toronto as an American Cleft and Craniofacial Scholar. At the Lancaster Cleft Clinic, he had the privilege of meeting Dr. Rusty Long. Dr. Kharbanda's experiences and learnings at this Centre significantly influenced his passion for cleft care.

The home-coming

Prof. Kharbanda returned to India with the passion to create cleft care teams and specialized cleft centers. Cleft treatment in India needed to be structured because large number of these cases were either incorrectly or inadequately treated, with little to no attention paid to speech, orthodontic, or ENT care. He ascertained that it took more time and effort to care for the cleft after the regular tasks were completed. However, his patience & passion has created an impact in the minds of those who matter to carve out care for cleft. His thoughts played a significant role in the formation of the Indian Society of Cleft Lip Palate and Craniofacial Anomalies (ISCLPCA) in 2002, which brought together plastic surgeons, maxillofacial surgeons, orthodontists, speech therapists, and other professionals committed to improving the lives of individuals affected by cleft lip, palate, and craniofacial anomalies. He rose to the position of President of the Cleft Conference and -

gave the highly esteemed "Founders Oration at 15th Annual Conference of Cleft Lip and Palate and Craniofacial Anomalies, Chandigarh".

Professor Kharbanda played a key role in promoting interdisciplinary management and a holistic team approach to cleft care with a greater focus on quality outcomes. Under his leadership, several cleft clinics were established and guided at various locations across India. Prof. Kharbanda also served as a Medical Advisor for ABMSS, a significant NGO with over 80 charity cleft care centres in India and neighbouring countries. His expertise and guidance greatly improved cleft care and support for individuals affected by cleft lip, palate, and craniofacial anomalies. His advocacy has significantly influenced the perception of cleft care in India, fostering a collaborative and comprehensive approach that benefits patients and professionals.

Making of workforce

Prof. OP Kharbanda contributed enormously to the field of cleft orthodontics across the globe by sharing his expertise through numerous interactive sessions and hands-on courses at various professional global forums, study groups, speciality organisations and institutions in India and overseas. He conducted formal cleft orthodontics modules as a visiting Professor at the University of Sydney and the University of Western Australia Perth in Australia, University Teknologi MARA University Sains Malaysia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh. His collaborative effort spanned several years, allowing him to deepen his expertise in cleft orthodontics and disseminate this knowledge by teaching the students. His passion for research in cleft and craniofacial orthodontics is evident through his long list of publications in high-impact national and international journals. The first multi-centre India cleft task force project of ICMR, which he curated and steered, guides cleft care protocols for India. He also authored the first global textbook devoted to "Cleft Orthodontics".

Prof. Kharbanda's unwavering dedication has left a lasting impact on the field of cleft care in India, benefiting countless patients and families. Despite this, there remains a substantial gap in research on the cause and prevention of cleft conditions, he mentioned. He said overall the journey of Cleft Care has been remarkably enriching, rewarding and fulfilling for him.

Finally, Prof. Kharbanda urged young commonwealth fellows and scholars to pursue research on the etiology and prevention of cleft problems in order to alleviate the suffering of cleft patients.

**Every Child, no matter where they are born
has right to SMILE**

Stories of 75 Commonwealth Alumni on 75 Years of Indian Independence

The biographical sketch of Dhiranjan Malvey takes us through his early life and professional journey that began as a UGC research fellow in Statistics and ended up as a legal practitioner. In between, he donned the hats of a radio broadcaster, broadcast journalist, news and current affairs content editor, management professional and legal advisor. He was awarded Shastri Indo-Canadian Fellowship for media in the year 2000 and Commonwealth Fellowship in the year 2003.



Dr. Dhiranjan Malvey

Early Life

Mr. Dhiranjan Malvey was born on March 9, 1952. His father was a Bihar Government official and mother a housemaker. In his early years, he was fortunate to evolve through various layers of urbanisation. This was firstly because his parents were attached to their rural roots and secondly due to his father's work which required them to relocate frequently.

After studying postgraduation in Statistics from Bhagalpur University, Mr. Dhiranjan was able to secure UGC fellowship for pursuing PhD from Patna University. As luck and circumstances would have it, he could not carry it forward for more than 4-5 months and landed into the Programme Wing of All India Radio in December 1975. He initially worked as Transmission Executive and subsequently as Programme Executive for almost 11 years. In these two capacities, he was responsible for planning, production, and presentation of radio programs of various categories but his key focus was on science communication. He was passionate about producing programs aimed at explaining various inventions, discoveries, and developments in diverse fields of science in an easy-to-understand language using all kinds of formats, including talks, interviews, documentaries, and drama.

Experience at BBC, London

After serving All India Radio for more than 12 years at various places like Patna, Bhagalpur, Ranchi and Bhopal, he was selected for the Hindi Service of BBC, London where he worked for almost three and half years from March 1988 to July 1991. Staple diet of BBC Hindi service was news and news analysis. The very nature of the job helped him in developing a certain insight into international politics and diplomacy over a period of time. His years in BBC were very momentous as his job required him to keep close watch on various global events like dissolution of Soviet Union, student led protests at Tianamen Square in China and its brutal crushing, and Iraq War. Each day unfolded new excitement and challenges.

He was, however, able to continue with his love for science communication in BBC as well. During his tenure, he produced a weekly science magazine program that was mainly based on latest developments in various fields of science. Digressing from his mandate, he scripted and produced a long documentary series on Indian scientists and their contributions, right from Aryabhata to APJ Abdul Kalam. The television show garnered positive reviews along with a minor dispute. In the documentary on Bhaskaracharya, he credited him with discovery of the law of gravitation almost six centuries prior to Newton. An English woman in the PR department was furious to learn of this and reported to Dr David Page, the Eastern Service's deputy head. But after he gave the authorities the full story, the uproar subsided. The BBC's policy was to respect the factual accuracy of producers and journalists without interfering with their ability to carry out their jobs.

Back to India..... the love for science continues!

He later turned the series into a book after returning to India. The material about Sir C V Raman from this book was eventually added to the NCERT Hindi textbook for students of class nine. It is still there. After his BBC stint, he joined Doordarshan and was posted in the News and Current Affairs Department in July 1991, where he worked for nine years. During those days, he got the opportunity to professionally deal with many stalwarts like Prannoy Roy, Vinod Dua, Karan Thapar, Nalini Singh, Raghav Bahl and Anuradha Prasad on a regular basis. All of them were highly talented people and Doordarshan provided them with a platform for launching their media careers. Subsequently, many of them blossomed into Media Moghuls. There was so much to learn from each one of them.

Quench to learn more led him to pursue an MBA

In the nineties, as television developed from a creative endeavor to a complete industry, Mr. Malvey dealt more and more with media entrepreneurs and less with creative staff members. His frequent engagement with them piqued his interest in management training. Due to his demanding job schedule, he was unable to attend normal classes; hence, in 1998, he completed an MBA at Indira Gandhi Open National University.

Awards Galore!

In the year 2000, he was awarded media fellowship by Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute for studying public service broadcasting in Canada for a period of four months. He was hosted by the Faculty of Information and Media Studies at the University of Western Ontario (London, Canada). During this fellowship, he was appointed as honorary visiting professor. The fellowship enabled him to study the origin, growth, development and prospects of the Canadian radio and television with a focus on public service broadcasting.

In the year 2003, he was awarded a three-month Commonwealth Fellowship for studying multiculturalism in British media. He was hosted by Commonwealth Broadcasting Association for carrying out the desired study. The fellowship exposed him to various television and radio organisations in UK. He also got the opportunity of studying the legal framework for race relations in Britain. He said that receiving the fellowship was an amazing exposure and learning opportunity.

In conclusion, Dr. Dhiranjan exhorted the younger generation of Commonwealth scholars and fellows to follow their passion in all that they undertake.

Follow your passion, be prepared to work hard and sacrifice and don't let anyone limit your dreams

Dr. S.S. Ahmed, a distinguished retired Professor from the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at Dr. Ziauddin Ahmed Dental College, Aligarh Muslim University, emerges as a luminary in the field of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery. With an illustrious career marked by transformative experiences, including a prestigious Commonwealth Fellowship, Dr. Ahmed's journey serves as an inspiring narrative of dedication, leadership, and the pursuit of excellence in the realm of dentistry.



Prof. S. S. Ahmed

Early Inspiration

Dr. SS Ahmed's academic journey began in early 1980's at King George's Medical College, Lucknow, where he completed his Bachelor's Degree in Dentistry followed by Masters in Dental Surgery while specialising in Oral and Maxillofacial surgery (OMF) in 1986. He witnessed a transformative turn when his esteemed teacher, Prof. R Pradhan, secured the elusive Commonwealth Fellowship. Upon Prof. Pradhan's return after finishing the fellowship, the department underwent a profound metamorphosis under his visionary leadership, becoming a beacon of excellence in OMF Surgery. This indelible mark by Prof. Pradhan ignited Dr. Ahmed's own aspirations, propelling him toward the dream of a Commonwealth Fellowship and shaping his trajectory in dentistry. After completing his studies, Dr Ahmed joined UP Provincial Medical Services, providing Dental Healthcare to the people from the State of Uttar Pradesh. However, inspired by Prof Pradhan, he was still inspiring to revolutionise the Dental Health education in India. He joined Aligarh Muslim University as a lecturer in 1997.

Commonwealth journey

In 2006, he was awarded the Commonwealth Academic Staff Fellowship at Glasgow Dental Hospital and School, with an additional attachment at Southern General Hospital in Glasgow. Immersing himself in a new cultural milieu, Dr. Ahmed's passion for OMF Surgery thrived, particularly in the evolving trends of maxillofacial trauma management. His time in Glasgow not only broadened academic horizons but also solidified his commitment to advancing the field.

The tenure at Glasgow Dental Hospital and Southern General Hospital marked a significant phase, providing hands-on experience in intricate oral surgeries and a profound understanding of dental trauma management. Collaborating with esteemed Maxillofacial and Craniofacial Surgeons, Dr. Ahmed delved into the latest surgical techniques and cutting-edge technologies. The six-month attachment in both hospitals significantly enhanced his knowledge and skills, catalysing innovative developmental ideas. Working alongside luminaries such as Prof. Khursheed Moos, Prof. Ashraf Ayoub, Mr. Graham Wood, John Devine, David Koppel, and Ian Holland enriched his clinical expertise and facilitated meaningful engagements across diverse disciplines.



OMF surgeons are trained in dentistry, surgery and general medicine, hence making them unique for connecting medicine and dentistry. OMF surgeons are also skilled cosmetic surgeons who can perform facial reconstructive surgeries to improve aesthetics.

Catalysing Change

Armed with enhanced clinical skills upon returning to India, Dr. Ahmed became a catalyst for the advancement of maxillofacial surgery care, driven by a vision to elevate the department to international standards. Transformative changes inspired by his UK experiences were successfully implemented, including the inclusion of international faculty and high-level training for students, elevating the department's profile to an international standard. The Commonwealth Fellowship not only propelled his career but also enriched the lives of students, the department, and the institute. Beyond academia, Dr. Ahmed's time in the UK facilitated exploration, academic visits, and connections with individuals from diverse backgrounds, fostering profound personal and cultural growth.

Bringing Laurels

In 2008, Dr. S.S. Ahmed received recognition from the Vice Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University for his outstanding contributions. In 2013, he was nominated by the university for the Indo-Hungarian Educational Exchange program, during which he actively engaged in academic pursuits at Sammelweis University in Budapest, Hungary. Dr. Ahmed further extended his academic reach by visiting the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial and Reconstructive Surgery at Aachen University Hospital, RWTH, Aachen, Germany.

His research focuses on Maxillofacial trauma, Neurological diseases of the maxillofacial region, and Microbiology of odontogenic infections. Dr. Ahmed's diverse interests include Orthognathic surgery, TMJ Surgery, Pre-malignant lesions, jaw tumors, dentoalveolar surgery, bone tissue regeneration, congenital facial anomalies, and diseases of TMJ, resulting in the publication of more than 45 research papers in various national and international journals.

Prof. S.S. Ahmed's enduring influence extends beyond the realms of research and surgery; he stands as a beacon of inspiration for his students. As an esteemed educator, he has not only transformed the landscape of education at Aligarh Muslim University but has also earned the distinction of being the most cherished teacher and a resounding role model for generations to come.

Lastly, Prof. Ahmed once again expressed gratitude to the Commonwealth Commission, UK and urged young fellows and scholars to continue honing their abilities in order to become future innovators and leaders with the ability to positively impact the world.

GENDER EQUALITY: INSIGHTS FROM THE GLOBAL GENDER GAP REPORT 2023 AND INDIA'S PROGRESS

By - Dr. Lata Suresh

In an era shaped by evolving societal norms and the pursuit of inclusive progress, understanding the dynamics of gender equality is crucial. The Global Gender Gap Report 2023, released by the World Economic Forum (WEF), offers nuanced insights into the state of gender parity worldwide. From Iceland's remarkable 14-year streak as the most gender-equal nation to India's multifaceted journey, the report explores diverse aspects of countries' performances.



The report aims to dissect key findings, providing a comprehensive exploration of global and regional perspectives on gender equality. Beyond numerical rankings, it delves into underlying trends, revealing the complexities influenced by cultural, social, economic, and historical factors. From encouraging progress to persistent challenges, the report prompts an examination of diverse factors shaping perceptions and attitudes towards gender equality.

The analysis goes beyond numbers, seeking to understand the broader implications of the findings. It explores areas such as women's representation in politics, healthcare disparities, and the media's role in shaping gender perceptions. By unraveling potential reasons behind observed trends, the article offers insights into expectations, frustrations, and realities influencing individuals' perceptions of gender parity.

The report serves as a gateway to a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding global gender equality. It advocates for an informed and empathetic approach to address challenges revealed in the Global Gender Gap Report 2023, emphasising collaborative efforts across governments, civil society, businesses, and individuals for meaningful and sustained progress.

The report highlights India's progress, securing the 127th position among 146 countries, with a 1.4 percentage point improvement in the overall score compared to the 2022 report. Despite advancements, economic participation and opportunity remain challenging at 36.7%. The pursuit of gender equality aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 5, and the report's findings provide insights into global progress.

The Global Gender Gap Index assesses countries based on economic participation, education, health, and political empowerment. While Iceland maintains its top rank, India has seen improvements in wage trends and political empowerment. Local governance in India boasts a 44.4% women's representation, placing it among the top countries.

The report notes a 1.9 percentage point improvement in India's sex ratio at birth, contributing to overall increased parity -

after a decade of slow progress. Globally, the gender gap closure reaches 68.4%, with the top nine countries achieving at least 80% closure. India's progress is reflected in various aspects, including political empowerment and local governance.

Despite positive strides, challenges persist in workforce participation, education, political representation, healthcare, violence against women, and legal rights. Comparisons with other countries highlight variations in gender equality across regions, emphasising the need for tailored strategies.

Observations indicate specific trends in gender perceptions influenced by high expectations, the reality of existing inequalities, perceived disparities, cultural norms, intersectionality, media portrayal, and historical context. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for informed conversations and policies aimed at advancing gender equality.

Addressing challenges requires a multifaceted approach involving societal attitude changes, policy reforms, and dismantling systemic barriers. Continuous monitoring of trends is essential for informing effective strategies and fostering global gender equality. Collaboration among governments, civil society, businesses, and individuals is imperative for comprehensive and sustained efforts towards closing the gender gap.

In conclusion, the exploration of the Global Gender Gap Report 2023 and India's progress underscores the intricate tapestry of gender dynamics on a global scale. While commendable strides have been made, challenges persist across various facets, demanding a nuanced and collaborative approach.

The report's findings serve as a call to action, emphasising the need for informed and empathetic strategies to address gender disparities. Achieving true gender equality requires continuous efforts across governments, civil society, businesses, and individuals. It is not merely a numerical goal but a complex interplay of societal attitudes, policy reforms, and the dismantling of systemic barriers.

Understanding the specific trends in gender perceptions is vital, considering factors such as high expectations, the reality of existing inequalities, perceived disparities, cultural norms, intersectionality, media portrayal, and historical context. These dynamics, though complex, provide valuable insights for shaping policies and fostering meaningful conversations that drive progress.

As the pursuit of gender equality aligns with broader Sustainable Development Goals, the importance of continuous monitoring and study of trends cannot be overstated. The multifaceted nature of gender dynamics necessitates adaptive strategies that evolve with changing societal norms and expectations.

In essence, closing the gender gap is not a destination but an ongoing journey, and the Global Gender Gap Report serves as a compass guiding us toward a more equitable future. It is through collaborative and sustained efforts that we can hope to create a world where gender equality is not just an aspiration but an inherent reality for all.

Disclaimer: Views/opinions are author's personal.



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AI IN LIBRARIES: TRANSFORMATIVE TRENDS, CHALLENGES, AND THE PATH FORWARD

By - Dr. Alka Rai

Introduction: Artificial Intelligence (AI) integration in libraries has evolved significantly. Early automation in the 1960s led to the emergence of Online Public Access Catalogue (OPACs) in the 1980s. The 1990s saw the rise of digital libraries, and AI began improving search functionalities and providing personalised recommendations. In recent years, AI has been applied to metadata enhancement, the development of chatbots and virtual assistants, recommendation systems, data analytics, and preservation efforts. Notable developments include AI's role in enhancing accessibility through tools like text-to-speech and language translation and its contribution to digitising and conserving historical materials. These advancements collectively shape the modern landscape of library services, emphasising efficiency, accessibility, and user engagement.

There is still discussion about the impact of artificial intelligence on libraries. For example, AI can automate tasks such as data management so librarians can concentrate on strategic and user-centric activities. User engagement and satisfaction can be enhanced through personalised services that are helped by AI algorithms to analyze user data. Accessibility, as well as the production of narrative and transcript texts to disabled users, can also be improved by AI. The future of libraries in the age of AI is a topic that has generated much interest and debate among librarians, researchers, policymakers and technologists. With the rapid advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning, there is a growing concern that the traditional role of libraries as repositories of knowledge and information may become obsolete.

Status of AI in Indian Libraries: The technological integration in Indian libraries has witnessed substantial progress, as evidenced by the incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) in various software and resources to optimize operations. Library Management Software (LMS) facilitates day-to-day activities, while AI-integrated library e-resources enhance resource search efficiency. Antiplagiarism software ensures content originality, language tools improve linguistic aspects, and optimise and categorisation tools streamline resource searches from a unified platform. Additionally, Indexing databases have evolved with the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI), enhancing their functionalities for the benefit of researchers. AI contributes to improved search and retrieval, automating indexing and categorization through Natural Language Processing (NLP). AI also aids in author recognition, predicting collaboration opportunities, and supporting interdisciplinary research.

Despite these advancements, the implementation of AI Chatbots, representing an innovative frontier in user interaction, is in its initial stages. The integration of Chatbots powered by AI holds significant promise for transforming user engagement and support mechanisms. This incipient phase involves meticulous exploration and customisation of Chatbot capabilities to align with specific library requirements.

Benefits: However, rather than spelling trouble for libraries, AI allows them to evolve and adapt to the changing needs of their users and the wider society. One of the most significant ways AI is expected to impact libraries is by automating various tasks and processes. For instance, AI-powered systems can sort and categorise large volumes of data, making it easier for librarians to -

manage and maintain their collections. Another area where AI can benefit libraries is the provision of personalised and analysing services. AI algorithms can help libraries deliver tailored content and recommendations to their patrons by analyzing user data and preferences. This can improve user engagement and satisfaction and encourage the discovery of new and relevant resources. AI can also be used to develop intelligent chatbots and virtual assistants as reference librarians that can help users navigate the library's resources and services more effectively. Moreover, AI plays a crucial role in enhancing the accessibility of library resources, particularly for users with disabilities. For example, AI-powered tools can be used to automatically generate captions and transcripts for audio and video content, making it more accessible to users who are deaf or hard of hearing. Similarly, AI can be used to develop text-to-speech systems to help visually impaired users access written content more easily.

AI has the potential to knowingly enhance information literacy by automating information retrieval, providing personalised content recommendations, assisting in critical evaluation, and detecting plagiarism. Adaptive learning platforms powered by AI can tailor educational content, while natural language processing aids in text analysis. Interactive tutorials, simulations, and VR/AR technologies provide immersive learning experiences. However, challenges such as algorithmic bias and ethical considerations must be addressed, and a balance between AI-driven automation and the development of critical thinking skills is crucial for fostering comprehensive information literacy.

Challenges: Implementing Artificial Intelligence (AI) in libraries, while offering significant benefits, has inherent drawbacks. Financial considerations, such as initial costs and ongoing maintenance, need to be revised for some libraries. The lack of a human touch in AI interactions can impact user experiences and customer service. Concerns about bias in AI algorithms and potential job displacement for library staff contribute to skepticism and resistance. Privacy issues arise from the collection and processing of user data. Technical challenges, including specialised expertise, may hinder successful implementation. Ethical dilemmas, such as autonomy in decision-making and user surveillance, require careful consideration. Additionally, there is the risk of dependency on AI systems and resistance to change from staff and users.

Conclusion: Artificial Intelligence (AI) integration in libraries has undergone significant evolution, transforming the landscape of library services. From the emergence of Online Public Access Catalogue (OPACs) in the 1980s to recent developments in AI-enhanced metadata, chatbots, and virtual assistants, libraries have adapted to leverage AI for efficiency, accessibility, and user engagement. In the context of Indian libraries, technological integration has witnessed substantial progress, with AI contributing to various aspects such as Library Management Software (LMS), antiplagiarism tools, language enhancement, and discovery platforms. Striking a balance between leveraging AI's advantages and addressing its drawbacks is crucial for libraries to remain dynamic and essential in an ever-evolving technological landscape. The ongoing dialogue about the impact of artificial agents on libraries emphasises the need for thoughtful integration, user education, and a proactive approach to navigate the challenges and opportunities AI presents.

Disclaimer: Views/opinions are author's personal.



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KOLKATA COMMONWEALTH ALUMNI MEET AND PANEL DISCUSSION ON MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCY - HOW MODERN LIFESTYLE AFFECTS OUR MENTAL HEALTH"

The British Council in India, on behalf of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK, organised a Commonwealth Alumni engagement event and a panel discussion on Mental health emergency - How Modern Lifestyle affects our Mental Health on 8 December 2023 in Kolkata followed by a networking reception.

Aatreyee GuhaThakurta, Head of Higher Education Mobility, welcomed the invited dignitaries to the programme. She briefed all the guests about the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission and shared information about the engagement programmes that British Council does on their behalf in India. She further spoke about the presence of Association of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellow (ACSF) in India and the work they are doing for the wider Commonwealth community.

Rishikesh Chanda, National Lead for Infrastructure and Head of Trade and Investment at the British Deputy High Commission, Kolkata addressed all the visiting delegates. He said, "Alumni UK as a key stakeholder act like a living bridge between the two countries, and they are the most vital component of the work that we do in India. UK alumni are in a unique position. They are not only the ambassadors of the UK in India but also the ambassadors of India in the UK."

Panel discussion was moderated by Dr Debanjan Chakrabarti, Director East and Northeast India, British Council. He introduced all the panelists and invited them on the dais to begin the panel discussion. Dr Sandeep Chatterjee said that for the human mind to work optimally needs a good environment. He further emphasised that we should know the power of now and focus on the opportunities available, to us, at any given point of time. This will help reduce the stress of our mind and will enable us to achieve our targets. Nilanjana Mallick spoke about dementia. She shared her thoughts and expertise on the topic of mental health and stressed on the importance of mastering the art of controlling the chaos of the mind. She further gave her own example and said how she has nurtured the habit of living life at the present moment. Dr Oihika Chakrabarty mentioned that the individuals should keep a check on emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing to keep mental health aligned. Dr Sonia indicated that having motive/goals gives individual right direction to move ahead in life. Also being socially connected with others can ease stress and anxiety and boost self-worth.

The event was attended by 35 guests including Commonwealth/ Chevening Indo-British Scholars, Association members. This event was aimed to strengthen Commonwealth Alumni network in India, particularly in East India. The session concluded with a Q&A session, but the conversations continued over a networking reception.



COMMONWEALTH ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT EVENT AND PANEL DISCUSSION ON 'TRANSFORMING INDIA: FOSTERING A DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM IN THE NEXT DECADE'

The British Council in India, on behalf of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK, organised a Commonwealth Alumni engagement event and a panel discussion on 'Transforming India: Fostering a Digital Ecosystem in the next Decade' on 16 December 2023 in Mumbai followed by a networking reception.

Ms. Rashi Jain, Director-West India, British Council, welcomed the invited dignitaries to the programme. She provided an overview of the British Council and briefed all the guests about Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (CSC) and shared information about the engagement programmes that British Council does on behalf of CSC in India. Dr. Adarsh Kumar, founding member of ACSF-India and Professor of Forensic Medicine & Toxicology at AIIMS, New Delhi addressed the gathering. He spoke about the presence of ACSF in India and the work they are doing for the wider Commonwealth community.

Dr Solomon Salve, Consultant - International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union), introduced the panel members and invited all of them on the stage. The panel discussion was moderated by Ms. Saloni Saraf, Business Development, Recti.

The panelists Dr. M. M. Ananth, Ms. Priyanka Mishra Roy, Mr. Shalabh Sahai and Dr. Raghu Thota elaborated on how technology has been contributing to their various sectors such as academia, health, legal, and social development. panelists were engaged in a lively discussion to understand the technical and the human aspects of smoothly implementing a digital ecosystem in India, what it would mean for the marginalised sections of the society, and the role of humans in successfully implementing such an ecosystem.

The event concluded with the vote of thanks by Dr Namrata Ganneri, Asst Professor, S.N.D.T. College of Arts & S.C.B. College of Commerce & Science for Women, S.N.D.T. Women's University on behalf of the Commonwealth alumni.

Thirty-eight illustrious guests, including Commonwealth and Chevening Alumni, attended the ceremony. The goal of this gathering was to increase the network of Commonwealth alumni in India, especially in West India. After the talk, there was a Q&A, but the discussions carried over to a networking reception.



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



Ms. Rohini Haridas, a Ph.D. student at the Malaviya National Institute of Technology Jaipur, India, is deeply passionate about smart grid cybersecurity and her research focuses on modeling Load Redistribution attacks in smart grids, particularly from the attacker's perspective.

The primary aim of her work is to uncover the most effective strategies attackers could use to cause maximum disruption, considering these real-world limitations. This insight is crucial for developing more effective defense mechanisms, enhancing the stability and reliability of smart grids. Her research is particularly relevant as countries globally, and especially in India, are rapidly expanding their smart grid infrastructures, making robust cybersecurity strategies more vital than ever. With the Commonwealth Split-site Scholarship, Rohini is set to join the University of Bath, UK. This opportunity will enhance her research capabilities and provide her with a platform for international collaboration, furthering her aim to contribute to both national and global energy sector security.



Tinku Casper D'Silva is an early career researcher having an interdisciplinary background in Mechanical Engineering and Environmental Technology. He aspires to work for society and thrive to tackle the environmental problems, especially in the field of waste-alternative fuels-transportation nexus.

He is pursuing his doctoral degree in Renewable Energy and Environment at the Centre for Rural Development and Technology, Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi. In his doctoral research, he is focussing on value addition of anaerobic digestion as a sustainable and low-carbon hydrogen transportation system using methane as a carrier medium of hydrogen.

He was conferred with the Commonwealth Split-site Ph.D. Scholarship in 2023-2024 at Lancaster University where he is working on developing a two-stage anaerobic digestion for simultaneous production of biohydrogen and biomethane from organic wastes. His research area has utmost significance considering the global energy transition that is taking place towards renewables. The shift happening would ultimately pave way for the establishment of gas-based fuel economy mostly hydrogen and methane, to be dominated in the energy sector as sustainable fuels in the near future. He is also exploring the biohydrogen and biomethane production potential from selected waste biomass for highlighting the significance of biofuels in Indian fuel market.



Siddhi Joshi is a Commonwealth Scholar pursuing an MSc in Global Sustainability Solutions at the University of Exeter. With a foundation in Political Science and Sociology from Miranda House, University of Delhi, Siddhi's trajectory of global exposure includes the Global Village on The Move Program at Lehigh University and the KL-YES program for the US Department of State.

Siddhi's leadership narratives span various organisations, from her pivotal role as a working committee member at Y20 India for India's G20 presidency to being a fellow of the Azadi Leadership Program. She has also founded initiatives such as Laal Lahar for menstrual awareness and celebrated queer stories through 'Paint Our Stories'. In the past, as President of the Global Youth Miranda House Chapter, she promoted gender minorities in International Relations. Siddhi's empathy, coupled with a deep commitment to sustainable global solutions, positions her as a catalyst for positive change in our society



Vaibhav is a development practitioner by profession and a public speaker. He belongs to a marginalised community in a rural part of Maharashtra State. Vaibhav has more than 8 years of work experience in the rural development space and largely, his working area is the Central Tribal Region in India.

He is keen to understand the agro-ecological discourse around the world and its impact on indigenous communities. Vaibhav's engagement with the tribal community of Dhamanpani village in the Mandla district of Madhya Pradesh helped the community to create pathways for comprehensive development and self-sustainable village. Currently, Vaibhav is pursuing an MSc in Environment and Development at the University of Leeds as a Commonwealth Shared Scholar. Along with this, he delivers the role of a Course Representative at the School of Earth and Environment. Vaibhav's research area is around climate change, adaptation, indigenous communities, livelihood and gender. The findings of his study would help the communities to cope with new climatic disasters and reduce vulnerabilities.



Manasa Garikaparathi is an Urban Designer and sustainability professional actively involved in urban mobility, streetscape design, multi-modal integration, transit-oriented development, urban renewal, and placemaking in Indian cities. She is currently pursuing an MSc in City Design and Social Sciences from the London School of Economics and Political Science, as a recipient of the Commonwealth Masters Scholarship 2023.

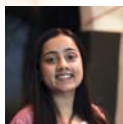
She is also a mentor with Women on the Move (WoTM) Transforming Transport in Asia Network and a member of the Women in Planning Leadership team within the International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP). She represented as a panelist on the online event "Financing sustainable urban future for all" through the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network (UN SDSN) for World Cities Day. The discussion, organised by the Local Pathways Program, focused on the vital role of youth in localising SDG 11. She has earned her recognition both domestically and internationally, including winning the ISOCARP Student Award in Jakarta 2019 and the ISOCARP YPP Poster Prize Award in Doha, Qatar, in 2021. She also participated in the EU +CityxChange- SiNoPSE 2018 workshop on Sustainable Energy in Cities in Trondheim, Norway, representing India. She served as a rapporteur and Congress team member for the 58th World Planning Congress in Brussels, Belgium.

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

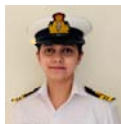


ACSF-INDIA CONGRATULATES

following Commonwealth Scholars/Fellows from India
on their Selection as
CSCUK Alumni Advisory Panel Member 2023-2025



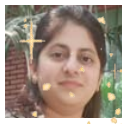
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PATHAK**
INDUS ACTION INITIATIVES



**MS. BIDISHA
PANDEY**
AUSTRALIAN TRADE AND
INVESTMENT COMMISSION



**DR. KAILASH
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SHUKLA**
DEPT OF PSYCHOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF ALLAHABAD



**DR. SABUJ
BHATTACHARYA**
INSTITUTE FOR STEM CELL, CL &
REGENERATIVE MEDICINE

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CSCUK Alumni Advisory Panel Member (2021-2023)



DR. ADARSH KUMAR
PROFESSOR OF FORENSIC MEDICINE,
AIIMS, NEW DELHI



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