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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.

ACSF-India Congratulates His Majesty the King Charles III on the Coronation



His Majesty the King Charles III was Coronated on Saturday 6th May, 2023 at Westminster Abbey, London.

His Majesty is pictured in full regalia in the Throne Room at Buckingham Palace.

His Majesty is wearing The Robe of Estate, The Imperial State Crown and is holding the Sovereign's Orb and Sovereign's Sceptre with Cross.

His Majesty is seated on one of a pair of 1902 throne chairs that were made for the future King George V and Queen Mary for use at the Coronation of King Edward VII.

The Coronation reflects the monarch's role today and look towards the future, while being rooted in longstanding traditions and pageantry.



India - United Kingdom Development Partnership

Prime Minister Modi of India and PM Rishi Sunak's meeting : 21 May 2023



Prime Minister of UK, Rishi Sunak and the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi met during G7 Summit in Japan.

Prime Minister Modi passed on his warm congratulations on the coronation of his Majesty King Charles III.

The leaders reflected on the deep ties between the UK and India, rooted in human connections, and the vital importance of democracy and fair and open trade.

They discussed progress on a UK-India Free Trade Agreement. The leaders agreed that their teams would continue to work at pace to finalise an ambitious and mutually beneficial deal.

The leaders discussed the wider objectives of the G7 Summit and the Prime Minister of UK committed his strong support for India's G20 Presidency, which comes at a crucial time for global security and prosperity.

Both the countries are looking forward to working closely.

2030 Roadmap for India-UK future relations

India and the UK are committed to a partnership that delivers for both countries. 2030 roadmap for India-UK future relation has five broad sectors as given below -

- Connecting our countries and people
- Trade and prosperity
- Defense and security
- Climate
- Health



UK and India sign landmark research agreement

The UK and India signed a landmark agreement to collaborate on science and innovation on 26 April 2023, following a meeting between UK Science Minister George Freeman and Indian Minister of State for Science and Technology Dr Jitendra Singh.



Collaboration between the two countries strengthened through an ambitious 'Roadmap 2030' that provides a framework for UK-India relations across health, climate, trade, education, science and technology, and defence.

The India-UK Science & Technology (S&T) collaboration has been growing at a rapid pace and the joint research programme has gone from an almost zero base to close to £300-400 million now.

This will enable deeper collaboration on science between the two science powerhouses that will drive economic growth, create skilled jobs and improve lives in the UK, India, and worldwide.



The Commonwealth Scholarships Commission offers:

- Commonwealth Split-site Scholarships
- Commonwealth Master's Scholarships
- Commonwealth Shared Scholarships
- Commonwealth Distance learning Scholarships
- Commonwealth Professional Fellowships

For more information please visit :
<https://cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk/scholarships>

Stories of 75 Commonwealth Alumni on 75 Years of Indian Independence

Dr. Mukesh Kalra is a distinguished figure in the field of Orthopaedic Surgery, currently serving as the head of the Orthopaedic Surgery Department at Lady Harding Medical College (LHMC) in New Delhi, India. With an impressive tenure of 15 years as Director-Professor under the Ministry of Health, Government of India, Dr. Kalra exemplifies dedication and commitment to community service. In his multifaceted role, Dr. Kalra seamlessly manages clinical, teaching, and administrative responsibilities within the department. His extraordinary journey in education and mentorship began as early as 1998 when he started guiding numerous MS Orthopaedics and PhD students at Delhi University. His wealth of experience is not limited to LHMC alone; he has held pivotal positions in prestigious medical schools across India, including Maulana Azad Medical College New Delhi, JIPMER Pondicherry, and the Faculty of Medical Sciences at Delhi University.



Dr. Mukesh Kalra

Early Years

Hailing from the vibrant city of Ludhiana, India, he embarked on a path that would see him conquer every challenge life placed in his way. Dr. Kalra proudly recounts his early days as a Hindi medium student. His unyielding resolve propelled him to clear the arduous medical entrance exams, setting him firmly on the path to realizing his dream of becoming a doctor. His remarkable career took root when he assumed the role of an assistant professor at the esteemed Lady Harding Medical College (LHMC) in New Delhi, India. Here, Dr. Kalra began a journey marked by numerous milestones, but his path was not without obstacles. One of the most formidable challenges he faced was a daunting dual diagnosis – with both Non-Hodgkin lymphoma and basal cell carcinoma in the skin. With the combination of correct treatment and an indomitable mindset, he emerged as a true hero, triumphing over cancer and emerging as a survivor for the last two decades. His resilience in the face of adversity serves as an inspiration to all. He shares his life's journey with an accomplished ophthalmologist and together they are raising two brilliant children, embarking on their own beautiful journeys in life.

Commonwealth Journey:

In 2000, Dr. Kalra received a prestigious one-year Commonwealth Fellowship, tenable at the Imperial College London, School of Medicine and Science. As a specialised orthopedic surgeon, he was assigned to the National Health Service (NHS) at Hammersmith Trust, where he worked under the leadership of Professor Sean Hughes. He also held a clinical assistant position equivalent to a specialist registrar. During this period, Dr. Kalra actively participated in various capacities, including assisting consultants in the outpatient department, operating theaters, and contributing to research projects at Charing Cross and Hammersmith hospitals in London.

He thoroughly enjoyed engaging in academic activities alongside FRCS (Orthopedics) students and teaching undergraduate students whenever he had the opportunity. This experience was both enriching and intellectually stimulating. As a dedicated learner, Dr. Kalra attend several courses by the British Orthopaedic Association and conferences such as the American Academy Meeting in San Francisco. He believes that this fellowship has played a pivotal role in enhancing his surgical and clinical skills in areas like knee and shoulder arthroscopy and joint replacement during his fellowship. At Imperial, he got an opportunity to collaborate with exceptional surgeons like Mr. Richard Coombs, Mr. John Nixon, Mr. Andrew Wallace, and Professor Sean Hughes. This experience profoundly influenced his career, motivating him to strive for excellence in serving humanity.

A significant milestone during his fellowship was when his family joined him in the UK. His elder son holds fond memories of attending a London school as a fourth-grade student. Despite his academic commitments, Dr. Kalra made sure to explore the beauty of London and traveling throughout the UK, cherishing the memories created.

Post-fellowship Journey

Following his fellowship, Dr. Kalra embarked on a diverse and enriching professional journey. He served as a registrar in the Kingdom of Bahrain for two years, later becoming a consultant in Oman and eventually assuming the role of Head of Department at Sohar Hospital. These experiences exposed him to various work cultures, contributing significantly to his professional development. Over time, he dedicated himself to disseminating knowledge in Orthopedic Surgery, with a focus on joint replacement therapy, knee and shoulder arthroscopy, and ankle procedures. He provided training to students and received appreciation from notable patients like Dr. J. M. Waghmare, a Member of Parliament, who commended Dr. Kalra and his team for their exceptional service. Dr. Kalra fondly remembers the words of the Honorable MP, "Service to humanity is service to almighty."

He also served as an external expert on selection panels for candidates through organisations such as UPSC and UGC. In 2014, Dr. Kalra had the privilege of undertaking a three-week short fellowship in the UK through the Indian Orthopedic Society UK. That same year, the Association of Freelance Journalist & Writers of India honored him with the 30th Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Memorial National Teacher's Award. In 2017, he was elected as the President of the Delhi Orthopedic Association, where he served for a year. He has over 25 publications in both national and international journals, along with numerous national presentations, including one oration and chapters to various orthopedic books.

Dr. Mukesh Kalra, a beacon of resilience, demonstrating that with unwavering determination, one can overcome any obstacle and emerge as a hero in their own story. His enduring commitment to his profession, his role as an educator, and his active engagement makes him a true luminary in the world of medicine and a source of inspiration for all. His dedication to healthcare and education has undoubtedly left an indelible mark on the medical community and the countless lives he has touched.

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As a founding member of ACSF, he proudly says that ACSF is very close to his 'heart and house', he laughs as ACSF's current address is his home address

Stories of 75 Commonwealth Alumni on 75 Years of Indian Independence

In a journey spanning nearly three decades, Dr Charru has dedicated herself tirelessly to the world of drama and education, emerging as a beacon of inspiration in the field. She has been teaching Human Development and Childhood Studies at Bhagini Nivedita College where she also headed as a Principal for two years initiating several National and International projects for students of a college located in the rural belt of Delhi. Dr Charru was awarded the Fulbright Academic and Professional Excellence fellowship for which she went to the University of Pennsylvania in 2021. She was a 2012 Commonwealth Scholar and a Fulbright Postdoctoral Fellow at University of Pennsylvania, USA from 2013-2014. For her contribution to the field of Drama she was awarded with the Shastri Indo-Canadian award which she pursued at the University of British Columbia, Canada. She is the Country Director- India for Star Scholars Network, where she has created space for mental health projects.



Dr. Charru Sharma

When Drama meets Research

Dr Charru embarked on her academic journey by earning a Master's degree in Child Development from Lady Irwin College, University of Delhi. Her first significant step into the world of drama and education occurred when she started teaching at the National School of Drama, Theatre and Education Company, India. Through her work, Dr Charru has witnessed the profound effects of drama on individuals of all ages - children, adults, parents, and teachers. This experience sparked a fire within her to understand the power of drama to catalyse personal growth. She started looking for research opportunities but, in an era, when drama's potential for transformation was largely an uncharted territory in India, she faced resistance in her quest for finding a supervisor to pursue her doctoral research for which she had also successfully cleared the UGC JRF- NET exam. In finding ways to have a supervisor she approached various institutions, but it took her two long years to find a supervisor who was willing to guide her and that too only happened when Dr. Charru decided to slide letters in the locker off to every single Professor at the Central Institute of Education mentioning her research interest. However, another obstacle loomed as the department she was applying for research was skeptical of admitting her without a Master's degree in education. Undeterred, Dr Charru persevered and succeeded after a year and finally enrolled for her doctoral research degree.

Research back in 1990s

Research in the 1990s was a vastly different landscape compared to today's digital era. Access to resources and literature, especially in the niche field of drama and education in India, was severely limited. Dr. Charru's quest to review pertinent literature led her to local libraries across the country, only to discover a handful of relevant books. At that time Mr. Barry John's (who had brought the theatre in education concept from UK to India) personal library became the source of her literature review. She mentions Mr. Barry John's willingness to share his collection on theatre, education, and drama with children was invaluable. Yet, obtaining resources was just the beginning. Her research journey demanded a physical presence in schools to conduct extensive studies, i.e. a study leave from her college. Failure in getting that kept her in a difficult situation for a while but soon she got awarded the ICSSR Doctoral Fellowship and after that she never looked back. Through her first presentation at the International Drama and Education Congress in Ottawa, Canada in 2003 she got a lot of support from international practitioners and researchers in her area, and started sharing research papers through post. As a result of such collaborations Dr. Charru's book called "Drama and Theatre with Children: International Perspectives" got published by Routledge, UK.

From struggling to getting a supervisor for her PhD position where her thesis got appreciated by all the reviewers, and an instant job offer at IIM Ahmedabad, Dr Charru finally enjoyed a moment of her victory before embarking on the next phase.

Commonwealth Journey to Fulbright Visiting Faculty

In a tale of international exploration, Dr. Charru started her Commonwealth journey at the University of Reading in 2012. She mentions that experience was truly remarkable and useful as such a Master's program in drama and education are rare to find in India at that time. It wasn't just a course; it was an intricate web of connections, thoughtfully planned to integrate faculty with university and schools as well. She recalls the joy when she found out the resources she can have at the university library, remembering her struggling days in India for research papers. She bagged the Fulbright fellowship right after her commonwealth journey in USA. Such international exposure played a huge role and paved her way to move forward in a direction to become a leader in drama and education at both national and international platforms.

As a matter of fact, she is one of those rare fellows who bagged the Fulbright Award twice. In 2022, she successfully completed the Fulbright Academic and Professional Excellence Fellowship. As a Fulbright faculty she introduced an innovative model blending drama and mindfulness, conducting workshops and teacher trainings for graduate students, school children, and teacher trainees, equipping them with essential classroom skills. Presently, she is engaged in a collaborative endeavor to further advance drama and education with children, youth, and communities across borders.

We all need people to be more human and more kinder and more compassionate to each others.

Transforming Lives Through Drama and Dedication

Parallel to her academic journey, she is a certified yoga and mindfulness instructor. Her spirituality merged seamlessly with her academic pursuits, recognising the profound synergy between drama, mindfulness, and personal healing. Today, she stands as a testament to the power of dedication, resilience, and the pursuit of one's passion. Her transformative journey from a dedicated drama enthusiast to a global authority in drama and education is an inspirational tale that reminds us to never give up on our dreams and to embrace the uncharted paths of knowledge and self-discovery. Her story embodies the idea that through unwavering dedication and a commitment to one's passion, one can inspire change, uplift spirits, and make a profound impact on the world to make it more humane and compassionate.

Stories of 75 Commonwealth Alumni on 75 Years of Indian Independence

Prof. (Dr.) Nanthini is currently working as Professor and Head, Department of Community Health Administration at National Institute of Health and Family Welfare, Delhi. Her activities spans from running regular training and teaching to PG Diploma students in public health management and MD (community Health Administration) to creating awareness and conducting trainings for health professionals in the area of Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child Health and Adolescents (RMNCH+A) and in-service training courses for the nursing professionals across the country. She has coordinated several training programs in the areas of Nursing Management, Research Methodology, Strengthening Midwifery Practices for Safe motherhood, Educational Technology, Public Health Nutrition, Infant and Young Child Care, Patient safety etc. for the past 18 years.



Dr. Arumugam Nanthini

A woman from 1980s

Dr. Nanthini's journey is a testament to the power of passion, perseverance, and the unwavering belief in one's calling. Born into a middle-class family as the third child, she discovered her love for nursing at a tender age. Despite excelling academically and having the chance to pursue medicine, Dr. Nanthini chose nursing, driven by the inspiration drawn from a neighbour who served as a head nurse. Her parents fully supported her decision, realising the value of letting their daughter pursue her aspirations. This encouragement became the catalyst for Dr. Nanthini's focused studies and professional growth. Post completing her schooling in Tamil Nadu, she joined Madras Medical College, Chennai, in 1987 for her B.Sc in Nursing. The journey didn't stop there; it only gained momentum. Dr. Nanthini, after her post-graduation in nursing, became a faculty member at a College of Nursing for six years. Her insatiable thirst for knowledge led her to pursue a distance learning MA and M.Phil in Sociology. She didn't stop there but ventured into Public Health Administration and Hospital Administration, making her a versatile force in the field. Completing her Ph.D. in nursing, she joined the National Institute of Health and Family Welfare, where she currently serves as a Professor and Head of the Department of Community Health Administration.

From Delhi to UK

In 1998, a new chapter unfolded as she moved to New Delhi due to her husband's job. This change did not deter her spirit; instead, she embraced the opportunity and worked as a consultant for four years in a World Bank-funded Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) project.

Her story took an international turn when she received the Commonwealth Professional Fellowship in Patient Safety in 2009. During her fellowship at NHS, Manchester, she gained invaluable insights of patient safety, clinical governance, and more. Returning to India, she generously shared her newfound knowledge through the Nursing Journal of India and in-service training courses nationwide. Grateful for the opportunities bestowed upon her, Dr. Nanthini acknowledges the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission for its pivotal role in her journey. Her dedication has inspired the next generation, as her daughter Gayathri, pursuing her post-graduation in Urban and Regional Planning, is motivated to contribute to her profession through doctoral studies in Europe. Her Commonwealth Professional Fellowship became a springboard for further achievements—a SIDA fellowship in Child Health in 2011 and WHO fellowships in RMNCHA in 2019 and 2023.

Contribution to Nursing and Covid Trainers

Motivated by her experiences, Dr. Nanthini actively contributed to the advancement of nursing education in India. As a core group member appointed by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, she contributed to curriculum development and operational guidelines, strengthening pre-service education in nursing and midwifery.

In response to the recent COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Nanthini's resilience shone bright. With the support of the Government of India and collaboration with John Hopkins University, USA, she conducted Training of Trainers on Leadership in Infection Prevention and Control for Nursing Professionals, developing 191 master trainers nationwide. Her journey is not just a personal triumph but a service to the community. Dr. Nanthini served as a nodal officer for specialised projects in Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) and skills-lab training for health professionals in Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child Health and Adolescents (RMNCH+A).

Way back in 1990, Dr. Nanthini started her career as clinical instructor at the School of Nursing, Christian Fellowship Hospital, Oddanchatrum, Tamilnadu. She had several opportunities for job progression outside of her regular responsibilities because of her strong work ethic, curiosity, and excellent service skills that she developed while working at the missionary hospital in Oddanchatram which also had close association with Vellore. Following two years of employment as a nursing faculty member at Christian Fellowship Hospital, her career contribution was centered on mentoring and instructing the next generation of health care professionals. Later, she began her career primarily in teaching, training, and research after earning her Ph.D. (Nursing) and joining the faculty of the National Institute of Health and Family Welfare, the nation's premier public health institution. She has always attempted to instil not only clinical competence but also a sense of empathy and ethical practice in her students. She made an effort to put policies that support diversity and ongoing professional development into effect while serving as the deputy secretary general of the nursing professional association. It also allowed her to get the pupils ready for the demands of the ever-changing health care industry.

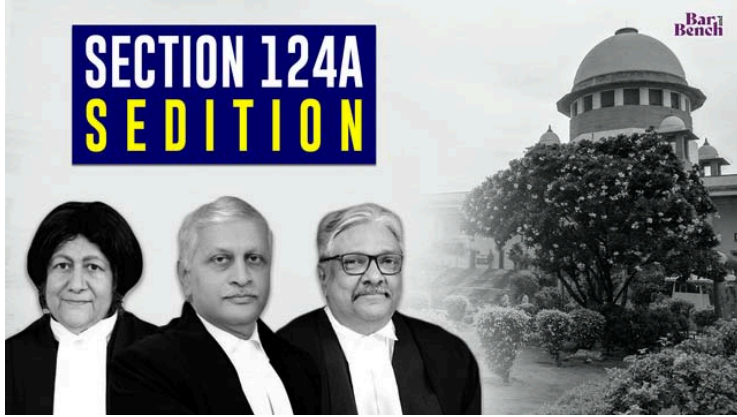
Message to youth

Dr. Nanthini's message to the younger generation resonates with wisdom—take care of your health, never stop learning, seize opportunities, and be a willing and selfless worker. Her story is not just a narrative of personal success but an inspiration for all those aspiring to make a meaningful impact in their chosen fields.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND SEDITION LAW

By - Dhiranjan Malvey

Recently, sedition law was in news after a bunch of petitions were filed in the Supreme Court urging its repeal. Central Government had assured the Court that it would thoroughly review this law. Accordingly, in a bill that proposes to replace the existing Indian Penal Code with a new Code, step has been taken in this direction. To enable general readers to follow the ongoing debate, this article attempts to explain this controversial law in simple terms and trace its checkered journey since its enactment in 1870.



Section 124A SEDITION

Right to freedom of expression is an essential precondition for any democratic polity; without this right, a democratic state is beyond contemplation. This right allows the people in general as well as opposition parties, media and intellectuals in particular, to keep vigil on the functioning of the government, give suggestions for improvements and, if required, to criticise its policies and performance, including organising peaceful public protests. In a functioning democracy, one can't justify the existence of a law that directly strikes at the root of this precious right!

Sedition law, which comes into direct confrontation with the freedom of expression, owes its existence from section 124A of the Indian Penal Code. This law was non-existent in 1860, when Indian Penal Code was originally enacted. It was made part of the Code for the first time in 1870 and then modified in 1898.

Sedition law has a nexus with the term 'expression', whether made orally, or in writing, or through signs, visual representation, or any other means. Thus, this law takes within its ambit and scope all forms of expression, provided such expression is exciting, or is attempting to excite hatred, contempt, or disaffection towards the government established by law.

It is evident that the sweep of this law is very wide and if a government finds any criticism unpalatable, it can easily take the critic in the ominous clench of this law. If convicted, a person may be incarcerated for a period ranging from three years to rest of his life, or made to pay fine, or suffer both the consequences. Though conviction rate in sedition cases is quite low, process itself becomes punishment. The accused person gets immediately arrested and release on bail comes after a long drawn legal battle. In view of the problems and limitations faced by the Indian justice delivery system, the Damocles sword keeps on hanging over the accused for many years.

When the Constitution of India was promulgated on 26th January 1950, right to freedom of speech and expression was enshrined in Article 19 as a fundamental right of every citizen.

It effectively meant that sedition law was no longer legally valid. However, it continued to remain a part of the Indian Penal Code, though in a defunct state.

The banishment did not continue for long. In 1951, the very next year, first amendment to the Constitution came into force, which validated laws that imposed certain reasonable restrictions. The Amendment infused new lease of life into sedition law.

The law, however, received a big jolt from Allahabad High Court in 1959. In its judgement delivered in "Ram Nandan versus State of Uttar Pradesh", the Court observed that sedition law was nothing but a tool in the hands of the government for suppressing disaffection against its rule. As such, it was against democratic norms and hence unconstitutional.

In its checkered history, the law underwent fresh revival in 1962, when Supreme Court restored its constitutional validity - albeit in a restricted manner. In its landmark judgement in "Kedarnath Singh Versus State of Bihar", the apex court attempted to strike a balance between conflicting needs for upholding the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression and at the same time preventing its misuse as a tool for causing public disorder. In its verdict, the five-judge bench pronounced that criticism of government would be termed as sedition only when there was a direct call for violence or if there was incitement to it. In ordinary circumstances, such criticism would not be regarded as sedition.

Even after six decades, Kedarnath judgement continues to hold water and forms the basis for deciding sedition cases. But in recent times, there have been renewed calls for repeal of sedition law, and a clutch of petitions in this regard are currently pending before the Supreme Court. In its response, the Central Government assured the Court that it would undertake review of sedition law. Consequently, the Court directed that pending such review, no fresh cases under the sedition law be registered and investigations in already registered cases be kept on hold. It further ordered that ongoing sedition cases be intermitted for the time being.

It is worth considering that Britain repealed the sedition law in 2009. Australia followed suit the very next year. The law exists in US in a very restrained manner and is used sparingly in exceptional circumstances. In recent times, this law was used against unruly supporters of Donald Trump, who created unprecedented ruckus in the Capitol Hill, following his defeat in the Presidential elections. Policy of the present Indian Government is to review all the antiquated laws and either repeal or amend them, if so required. During last eight years, hundreds of such laws have thus been repealed. In the recently concluded Monsoon Session of the Parliament, the Government introduced a new bill named "Bhartiya Nyaya Samhita" to replace the existing Indian penal Code. Sedition law no longer figures in this new bill. Once this bill is passed by the Parliament and comes into force, sedition will be relegated to the dustbin of the legal history of India.

Disclaimer: Views/opinions are author's personal.



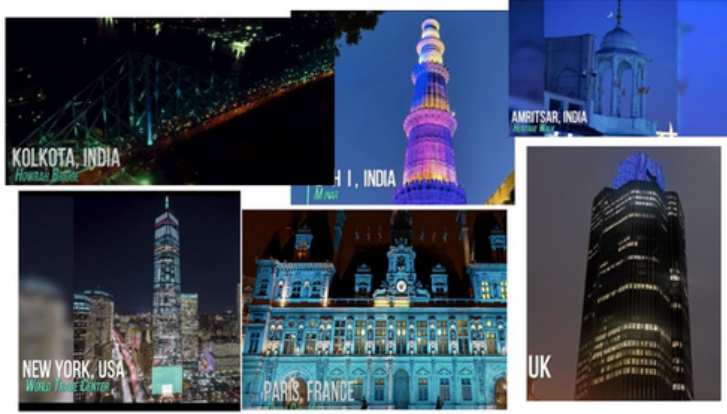
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"Give, even if you only have a little"

- Buddha

CERVICAL CANCER: THE ROAD TOWARDS ELIMINATION

By - Dr Bindiya Gupta



Monuments in teal world wide at the global launch of cervical cancer elimination

In 2020 an estimated 6,04,127 new cases of cervical cancer were diagnosed, and 341,831 women died from the disease globally. Cervical cancer remains the fourth most common cancer amongst females and around eighty percent of the global burden is contributed by the lower-income countries.

This is primarily due to difference in implementation of prevention and treatment services across countries in the world. The vaccine coverage in LMICs has been low overall, with an estimated 3% of the primary targeted population of young girls in less developed regions vaccinated by 2014. By 2016, only 14% of LMICs had established vaccination programmes. The screening programs are poorly implemented and not uniform in several LMICs and access to diagnostic facilities, precancer and cancer treatment, and supportive and palliative care is variable. The disparity is evident from the current statistics which show that 84% of 158 million eligible women in high income countries and 48% of 404 million women in upper middle income countries have ever been screened compared to only 9% of 397 million women in LMIC and 11% of 74 million women in low income countries.

Being the most preventable and treatable forms of cancer, WHO has developed a global strategy towards the elimination of cervical cancer as a public health problem using the triple strategy of vaccination, screening and treatment. A threshold of 4 per 100,000 women-years has been proposed for elimination as a public health problem. On 17th November 2020 WHO launched a Global initiative to Accelerate the Elimination of Cervical Cancer which outlined three key steps: vaccination, screening and treatment. This resolution was universally adopted by 194 countries at the World Health Assembly. The following 90-70-90 targets should be met by all countries by 2030:

- 90% of girls fully vaccinated with the HPV vaccine by 15 years of age
- 70% of women screened using a high-performance test by age 35 and again by 45
- 90% of women identified with cervical disease receive treatment (90% of women with pre-cancer treated and 90% of women with invasive cancer managed).

WHO Cervical Cancer Elimination Modelling Consortium (CCEMC) had done a comparative modelling of potential intervention scenarios in 78 low-income and lower-middle income countries using various combinations of vaccination, screening and treatment strategies. Girls-only HPV vaccination was predicted to reduce the median age-standardised cervical cancer incidence in LMICs from 19.8 to 2.1 cases per 100 000 women-years over the next century (89.4% reduction),

and addition of twice-lifetime screening reduced the incidence to 0.7 cases per 100 000 women-years (96.7% reduction). WHO triple-intervention strategy would also contribute to the realisation of the 2030 UN SDGs (target 3.4—a one-third reduction in premature mortality from non-communicable diseases by 2030). The mortality rate reductions of 33.9% by 2030, 96.2% (94.3–96.8) by 2070, and 98.6% (96.9–98.8) by 2120 would be achievable by this strategy. The strategy also stresses that investing in the interventions to meet these targets can generate substantial economic and societal returns. An estimated US\$ 3.20 will be returned to the economy for every dollar invested through 2050 and beyond, owing to increases in women's workforce participation. The figure rises to US\$ 26.00 when the benefits of women's improved health on families, communities and societies are considered.

However, challenges are present at all levels of prevention. Generating awareness about vaccination and screening and conveying the message to the masses is a great challenge. This is compounded by the problem of vaccine hesitancy and misinformation by several countries. Also, vaccine manufacturing and delivery challenges have to be met and production needs to be scaled up. Other HPV vaccine barriers are the vaccine cost and logistics of administering vaccines in countries with absent or inadequate adolescent health platforms. India's indigenous vaccine Cervavac was launched on September 1, which will be available at a much lower cost making it much more affordable than existing licensed vaccines and thus spreading the benefit to the masses.

Scaling up cervical screening in low and lower-middle income countries, has historically been very challenging. In general, all guidelines recommend HPV-based screening; while visual inspection with acetic acid has been recommended as an alternative in low resource settings. Technology development and low cost for HPV test, promotion of HPV self-collection and point-of-care testing, use of screen and treat strategy will potentially provide increasingly practical and cost-effective methods of screening and prevention. Pre-cancer treatment services will need scaling up and a further challenge is establishment of appropriate referral pathways for cancer treatment and palliative care services. Finally, to establish a continuum of efforts, countries will require coordinated efforts from all stakeholders, configuration of central financing and purchasing mechanisms, establishment of public/private partnerships, and the prioritisation of cervical cancer control in national cancer control plans. Policy must be implemented within the geographic and cultural context of each particular country so that both rural and urban communities have access to affordable care such that women living in the least accessed regions can be equally served.

To conclude, screening and vaccination are cornerstone of cervical cancer elimination. Dr Princess Nothemba Simelela, Assistant Director-General of the WHO, has rightly said “the fight against cervical cancer is also a fight for women's rights: the unnecessary suffering caused by this preventable disease reflects the injustices that uniquely affect women's health around the world. Together, we can make history to ensure a cervical cancer-free future. “The need of the hour is immediate action to scale up vaccination, screening and treatment for pre-invasive and invasive cervical cancer to achieve the goal of cervical cancer elimination.

Disclaimer: Views/opinions are author's personal.



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ALUMNI ASSOCIATION HONOURS- INDIA 04 MARCH 2023

British Council India invited various UK alumni associations in India to participate in the 'Alumni Association Honours', an award to recognise the fantastic work being done by the UK Alumni associations across the country.

Associations across various Alumni chapters and UK universities and colleges participated in this programme where they presented the work, they have done in the last year to win awards across categories and to showcase best practice to the peers across alumni associations nationally.

ACSF-India participated in this activity and received the Association Honours award at the annual Study UK Alumni Awards event-2022 in Kolkata on 4th March 2023. ACSF-India was honoured with a certificate and cash prize.

Andrew Chadwick, Global Lead for Alumni and Outward Mobility, British Council presented the awards to the winning Alumni Associations at the gala ceremony in Kolkata.



ANDREW CHADWICK'S MEETING WITH MEMBERS OF ASSOCIATION OF COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARS AND FELLOWS

Andrew Chadwick, Global Programme Lead, Alumni and Outward Mobility, Higher Education and Science visited India from 5-9 March 2023. On behalf of the Commonwealth Scholarships Commission, British Council organised a meeting of the Association of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows (ACSF), Editorial Board Members, and key Commonwealth alumni with Andrew Chadwick on Monday, 6 March 2023 at British Council, New Delhi. The session was conducted face-to-face mode, where Editorial Board Members of ACSF-Bulletin and key alumni attended the event.



The meeting was chaired by Andrew. He welcomed all the alumni followed by an introduction from the attendees. Dr Adarsh Kumar, Executive Member, ACSF gave a brief overview of goals and objectives of ACSF-India. The meeting was an interactive and informal discussion where the attendees shared their experiences gained during and after higher studies in the UK.

Andrew appreciated the efforts of ACSF-India to launch a newsletter, ACSF-Bulletin and discussed on the national platform for Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows in India. He mentioned that the Alumni UK Platform is a global network of people of diverse background from around the world who have studied in the UK and suggested everyone to join this platform.

The meeting was concluded with discussions on ways of working together on various project and collaboration to nurture the relationship further.

HOMECOMING EVENT

British Council India on behalf of commonwealth scholarships commission organised a homecoming session for the recently returned Commonwealth scholars on 14/01/2023.

The session began with opening remark by Mr. David White, Senior Political Advisor, British High Commission, India. He welcomed all the scholars and fellows and congratulated them on completing the prestigious scholarships. He mentioned that "Commonwealth is a Network of Networks" and Commonwealth fellows are doing amazing work in India.

Dr Dhruva Chaudhry, President, ACSF joined virtually and delivered the welcome address. He welcomed everyone and requested new fellows to join ACSF-India.

After welcome speech, Dr Adarsh Kumar, Executive Member, ACSF-India briefed the activities of ACSF-India. He emphasised that the goal of ACSF-India is to 'hone the skills and channel the experiences, qualifications and accomplishments of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows towards social, spiritual, scientific and technological development of India.'

Thereafter, Dr. Kailash C. Petkar and Ms. Deepika Yadav welcomed scholars and fellows and delivered remarks on the release of second issue of ACSF-Bulletin dedicated to Her Majesty the Queen, Elizabeth II.

This was followed by the introduction of alumni and a workshop on 'Pause, Breathe and Relax: Tools for Wellbeing' conducted by Ms. Charru Sharma. The event was attended by 10 recently returned scholars and 22 Alumni in face-to-face mode.

The event was concluded with vote of thanks and ACSF-jingles.



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



Neha is a doctoral candidate at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India, specialises in cross-disciplinary research on food systems and community-led climate change adaptation in the Indian Himalayas. She received 2021-22 Commonwealth split-site scholarship at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex.

Her wide-ranging professional engagements include working for research projects funded by international entities like the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, UK Research and Innovation, the Swiss State Secretariat, and World Resources Forum Association. Holding an MPhil in Social Sciences in Health from JNU, her areas of interest straddle nutrition, adaptation, uncertainties, and COVID-19 impacts. A contributing author to Down to Earth magazine, Neha writes on fortifying resilience and adaptability to climate risks. Neha's publication repertoire includes several op-eds, papers, and three co-authored articles in the WHO's COVID-19 global literature list. She advocates for addressing stratification-induced vulnerabilities in mountain societies and champions sustainable mountain development.

Snigdha Mishra is a doctoral student in chemical engineering at Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, India. She is passionate about metal recycling from electronic waste. She is a recipient of Commonwealth Split-site scholarship at University of Leeds.



In her PhD research, she is working on designing and screening of greener deep eutectic solvents for selective extraction of metals from electronic waste. E-waste is a global issue because of its high generation rate, hazardous constituents, and high intrinsic values. The urgent need to develop eco-friendly processes to recycle e-waste and recover metals motivated her to choose this topic. In future, she is interested to scale up lab developed sustainable technology for waste reduction to support Swachh Bharat Abhiyan campaign of government of India.



Alka Rai is a Commonwealth Professional Fellow from the batch 2021-2022 at the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO) in London. Currently serving as the Deputy Librarian at Dr B.R. Ambedkar University Delhi, she has made significant contributions and has over 14 years of experience in the field.

During her fellowship, Alka worked on 'Inclusion of Girls in ICT: Closing the Gender Digital Divide' aligning with her doctoral research on the Digital Divide in Higher Education. Driven by her experiences of gender discrimination and language barriers, she diligently acquired technological and language skills to bridge the digital divide and address the gender digital gap in India. Alka's efforts encompass information literacy programs and user awareness initiatives, successfully training over 6000 library users and empowering them with digital literacy skills. Through her dedication and expertise, she continues to significantly impact her field and contribute towards a more inclusive and equitable society.



Aditi Patil is a nature conservationist and a writer. She is a recipient of the Commonwealth Shared Scholarship (2022-23) at the University of Cambridge to study MPhil in Conservation Leadership. For her dissertation she worked with International Union for conservation of nature to investigate threatened species that are also invasive in some parts of the world.

Aditi has six years of working in the conservation sector with various agencies including the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, WCS-India, WWF-India, Gujarat State Forest Department and Land Conflict Watch. She has also worked on independent research projects on the themes of indigenous forests rights, illegal wildlife trade and agroforestry. She has authored a book called 'Patriarchy and the Pangolin' which is a sarcastic take on gender in India's conservation sector. After completion of her MPhil, Aditi wishes to continue her work on different needs of conservation in India.

Lt Cdr Bidisha Pandey (Retd) has been a Logistics Officer in the Indian Navy for a decade. She led the Naval Marching Contingent twice on Rajpath, in 2014 and 2015, as part of the Republic Day Parade, and represented the Indian Navy in the Trans-Atlantic Cape to Rio International Ocean Sailing Expedition 2017.



On completion of her service tenure in July 2021, she pursued MSc in Prosperity, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship at the Institute for Global Prosperity, University College London as a Commonwealth Scholar. In her present role as Director (Trade) at the Australian Trade and Investment Commission, she facilitates bilateral trade between India and Australia. She also heads Aerospace, Advanced Manufacturing and Space sectors and leads Diversity and Inclusion initiatives for South Asia region. Being one of the few women leaders in the field of Defence, Manufacturing and Space in India, she continues to set an example for women to fight for their dreams and conquer unknown territories.



Subrata Mondal is a recipient of the Commonwealth Split-Site Scholarship at the University of Cambridge. He pursued Ph.D. in chemistry from Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati. Currently, he is working as a postdoctoral fellow at Queen Mary University of London.

He is a biophysicist, well-versed in spectroscopy and microscopy techniques and has a strong background in organic synthesis. His research interest primarily focuses on biochemical events that trigger neurodegenerative disorders such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease. He also designs and develops novel therapeutic materials with the potential to treat neurodegenerative diseases. He has a total over 10 years of research experience along with a diverse background in biophysics, organic synthesis, nanotechnology and supramolecular chemistry. He enjoys nature photography and literature in his leisure.

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

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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](#)

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