Re-Imagining the Idea of a University in the Present Times

Author/Presenter: Dr. Snehsata
Associate Professor
Dept. of English & Foreign Languages
Central University of Haryana (India)
Email: snehsataeng@cuh.ac.in

Abstract: The unprecedented technological advancement in the recent times has expanded mankind's access to the far away planets in the outer space and to the microbes and viruses of our own world. The same technology has enabled us to manufacture self-destructive weapons which, in some impulsive hands, can sweep life completely out of this planet in a few seconds. At such a critical juncture, contemplating university as a space where minds are disciplined and shaped to think rationally and act ethically becomes pertinent.

Borrowing the phrase "the idea of a university" from John Henry Newman and Wilhelm Von Humboldt, the paper formulates its argument around the following questions and tries to search for possibilities as answers. 1. Is there a possibility of envisioning a universal model of university in a world that is historically, geographically, culturally, and economically diverse? 2. With money becoming the central value directing most human endeavours, and universities turning into factories of mass-production fulfilling the mindless demands of market, is there a possibility for university to break away from this vicious circle, stand independently, upholding and disseminating the holistic values of *Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram* (Truth, Goodness, Beauty), and help mankind in achieving its true potential? 3. With the availability of overwhelming information (usually mistaken as knowledge) on internet and AI ready to think, analyse, and systematize this information for us, what pedagogical possibilities are available for the university community to reinforce critical thinking and logical habits of mind? 4. Is there a possibility of freeing the university from the control of political power and, thus, nurturing courage, truth, honesty, and fearlessness in the university community?

Ideas of educationists like Tagore, Gandhi, Radhakrishnan, Newman, and Humboldt will be utilized to strengthen the discussion.

Lykilorð

The purpose and role of university – university for the public good -