

Dialogues on Community Engagement and Social Responsibility in Higher Education

As public institutions, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) world-wide are being challenged to demonstrate their societal relevance through their core functions of teaching and research. With rapid growth in enrolments in post-secondary education, the issues related to social relevance of curriculum, inclusion of indigenous knowledge, access to hitherto excluded students and direct contribution to problems in their communities have gained ascendancy in India.

The new 12th Five Year Plan has, for the first time, included an action agenda in this respect:

In the face of growing isolation of HEIs from society, there is a need for renewed effort for HEIs for genuinely engaging with community, conduct socially relevant research and education and foster social responsibility amongst students as part of their core mission. For this purpose, a National Initiative to Foster Social Responsibility in Higher Education would be launched. An Alliance for Community Engagement, an independent association of practitioners, academics and community leaders would be created to support its implementation.

In light of the above, it is imperative that:

- Mapping and research of current practices in community engagement and social responsibility is undertaken
- Dialogues across civil society, academia and policy-makers in different provinces and regions are conducted in order to build shared understanding of and common actions for realizing the above initiative of the 12th Plan.

During the India Launch of UNESCO Chair on Community-based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education in Jamia Millia Islamia on December 10, 2012, the Member of Planning Commission, Dr. Narendra Jadhav asked the UNESCO Chair to take the initiative for this in the country.

Therefore, as part of Global Education dialogue series of British Council and UNESCO Chair are partnering to take the above agenda forward in the North East during June-September' 2014.

Programme Outline

September 17-18' 2014, Dialogue at Indian Institute of Guwahati (IITG), Assam

Day 1: September 17' 2014

9:30-9:35 am: Opening Remarks, **Dr Pahi Saikia**, Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT-Guwahati

9:35-9:40 am: Welcome Remarks: **Dr Arupjyoti Saikia**, HOD/HSS,

9:40-9:50 am: Inaugural address: **Head of the Institution**, IITG

9:50-10:00 am: Overview of the British Council portfolio in Higher Education, **Ms Sujata Sen**, Director British Council, East India

10:00-10:30 am: Setting the stage: **Dr Rajesh Tandon**, Co-chair, UNESCO Chair in Community Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education.

10:30-11:00 am: Tea

11:00 pm - 1:00 pm: Plenary Session I: Trends in Assam, **Chair: Dr Rakesh Gupta, Visiting Professor of Political Science, IIT Guwahati**

11:00 - 11:15 pm: Sharing the findings of the Assam Survey, **Dr Pahi Saikia**, Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT-Guwahati

11:15 - 11:30 pm: Sharing the findings of Tezpur University Survey, **Ms Sarmistha Das**, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Tezpur University

11:30 - 11:45 pm: Sharing the findings of North Eastern Hill University (NEHU) Survey, **Dr Binayak Dutta**, Assistant Professor of History, NEHU

11:45 - 12:00 pm: Sharing the findings of TISS, Assistant Professor of Political Science, **Dr. R.K.Debbarma**

12:00-12:30-Open discussions

12:30 - 12:40 pm: Comments from Chair.

1:00 pm: Lunch

2:00 - 3:30 pm: Forms & Structures of Community Engagement, **Chair: Prof Dilip Baruah**, Former Professor of Economics & Principal Cotton College, Gauhati University

2:00 - 2:15 pm: Experiences from Punjab, **Dr Ronki Ram**, Dean, Faculty of Arts, Punjab University

2:15 - 2:30 pm: **Dr Mohammad Yasin**, Professor of Political Science, Department of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning, North Bengal University

2:30-2:45: **Prof Girin Phukon**, ICSSR National Fellow & Director, Institute of Tai Studies and Research

2:45 - 3:00 pm: **Prof Dhrubajyoti Saikia**, Vice-Chancellor, Cotton College State University

3:00 - 3:15 pm: **Prof Apurba Kumar Baruah**, Retired Professor Political Science, NEHU, & National Fellow ICSSR

3:15 - 3:30 pm: Open discussions

3:30 – 3:50 pm: Comments from Chair

3:50-4:00 pm: Tea

4:00 - 4:30 pm: Small group discussions on “Forms & Structures of Community Engagement”

Day 2: September 18’ 2014

9:30 - 10:00 am: Report back from groups, Session moderator, **Sujata Sen**, British Council

10:00-11:30 am: Policy Implications, **Chair: Prof Arupjyoti Choudhury, Dean Academic, KKH University, Assam**

10:00 - 10:15 am: **Dr Mahfuza Rahman**, Professor of Geography, Cotton College State University

10:15 - 10:30 am: **Prof Nani Gopal Mahanta**, Professor of Political Science, Gauhati University

10:30-10:45 am: **H.N Das**, IAS(Retd), Former Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam

10:45 - 11:00 am: **Prof Akhil Ranjan Dutta**, Professor of Political Science, Gauhati University

11:00 am -11:15: Open discussions

11:15 am-11:30: Comments from Chair

11:30 - 11:45 am: Tea

11:45- 1:00 pm: Ways Forward, **Chair: Dr Rajesh Tandon**, UNESCO Chair in Community Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education.

11:30 - 11:45 am: **Subhrajyoti Bharali**, Asomi NGO

11:45 - 12:00 pm: **Dr Pahi Saikia**, HSS, IITG

12:00 - 12:15 pm: **Prof Rakesh Gupta**, Visiting Professor, HSS, IITG

12:15- 1:00 pm: Comments from Chair

1:00 pm: Programme closes with lunch