

DNYANA GANGA

Dnyanprassarak Mandal's COLLEGE AND RESEARCH CENTER LIBRARY E-BULLETIN

Date: 17/03/2020

Vol. No.11

Issue No. 1

Compiled By:

Dr. Jayaprakash

Librarian

Dnyanprassarak Mandal's College and Research Centre,
Assagao, Bardez, Goa - 403 507

About this e-bulletin

It is a compilation of information from different sources which would be of interest to professionals, academicians and students. While adequate care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of links provided, we do not accept any liability. If you have any interesting information to share or to provide feedback, pl. write to dmclibrarian@rediffmail.com

NUMBER THAT MATTERS

KNOW YOUR HEALTH / DID YOU KNOW

- People who drink tea regularly have better organised brain regions, suggesting that habitual tea drinking can protect against age-related decline in brain structure and cognitive function.
- As per Journal of the American College of Cardiology, Running a marathon for the first time was associated with reduced blood pressure and arterial stiffness equivalent to a four-year reduction in vascular age.
- Psychological Bulletin say that, Listening to music while exercising not only makes exercise more enjoyable but it can actually make it more productive and less tiresome, enhance physical performance, and improve physiological efficiency.
- Working 49 or more hours each week was linked to a 66% greater risk of developing sustained hypertension and a 70% greater risk of having masked or hidden hypertension, a type that can go undetected according to Journal of Hypertension.
- A single child is not more self-centered or narcissistic than children with siblings.
- Your personality as a teen could predict your risk of dementia: those who were calm and mature as teens had a 10% reduced risk of dementia in their 70s, says JAMA Psychiatry.
- Taking a hot bath or shower in water of 40-42* C for about 90 minutes before bedtime can significantly improve sleep quality and help you fall asleep faster.

Source: Various issues of Health magazine of the Week

This Dell Foundation-backed edtech startup lets students rent textbooks for as low as Rs 10

KopyKitab was among India's first digital libraries founded in 2011 by Sumeet Verma and Amit Shrivastava. At the time, India's education sector was yet to go through technological disruption, and 'edtech' hadn't caught up as a term. Textbooks, especially for higher education, cost a lot, and students in small towns had limited access to them.

It was going well, with the site recording about 100 rentals per day. KopyKitab adopted a B2B model where it tied up with schools, colleges, and other educational institutions to acquire students quickly. But logistics and payment collections remained a challenge. Also, the business model was cost-intensive, and fully dependent on seasonal demand for textbooks. "When we wanted to scale up, we thought that it was better to do something in digital because edtech was catching up. If we had to build a sustainable business, we had to include technology," Sumeet shares.

In 2016, KopyKitab pivoted to a B2C model. It partnered with educational publishers to convert physical textbooks into ebooks and digital chapters, which can be bought or rented on its platform.

Its inventory consists of 200,000 learning resources from more than 150 educational publishers, including S Chand, Oswaal, Laxmi Publications, NCERT Books, Shuchita Prakashan, and others. There are textbooks, mock tests, and study packages for professional courses like medicine, management, engineering, chartered accountancy, company secretaryship, etc. and even entrance exams like CAT, NET, GATE, IIT-JEE, UPSC, and others.

Source: <https://yourstory.com/2020/03/dell-foundation-edtech-startup-kopykitab-students-rent-textbooks>

Rohtak varsity to hold PhD viva through Skype

Teaching to go on via YouTube, WhatsApp

The authorities of MaharshiDayanand University have decided to conduct academic activities through internet-based social media platforms.

A meeting chaired by Vice-Chancellor Rajbir Singh decided to suspend classes and examinations with immediate effect until March 31 in compliance with the orders issued by the Director-General (Higher Education) following the Covid outbreak.

It was decided that events involving gatherings would not be organised on the university campus during the said period.

“PhD viva voce sessions will be avoided during this period. If necessary, these may be conducted through video-conferencing or Skype. Teachers are advised to form WhatsApp groups to guide students. Textual and video study material will be provided on the university website or YouTube portal. Teachers may interact with students through Skype and video-conferencing,” said the Vice-Chancellor.

Registrar Gulshan Lal Taneja asserted that all hostels of the university were being vacated and would remain closed during the said period.

“Foreign students will continue to stay at hostels. If some foreign students are out of the country and return during this period, they may be allowed to occupy their hostel accommodation, but only after thorough medical screening,” he maintained.

Permissions granted to employees for travelling abroad during the period stood withdrawn. Visits of MDU faculty members to inspect various colleges were deferred. The university library would remain closed though issuance and return of books would be done as usual.

Source: <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/rohtak-varsity-to-hold-phd-viva-through-skype-55518>

Union Budget 2020-21: Positive Shift of Focus On Hi-End Skills and Quality Higher Education

The important highlights of the Union Budget 2020-21 which will shepherd the evolution of higher education in India are discussed below.

Education in India, especially the higher learning sector required a rethink. Our country's learning practices, which have largely remained memory-based, demanded a shift towards skill-based trainings where the outcomes are based on practical learnings. Understanding the need of training and re-training in the Indian education eco-system, the Union Budget earmarked Rs 99,300 crore for education in 2020-21 and allotted Rs 3,000 crore for skill development. The dedicated efforts to bridge the gap between skill-based trainings, hi-end programmes and future demands will provide the necessary skills, knowledge and tools to succeed in the future. The other important highlights of the Union Budget 2020-21 which will shepherd the evolution of higher education in India are:

Hopes from New Education Policy: The Indian Government is all set to announce New Education Policy (NEP) in the coming years. The country is all set to become world's youngest and largest workforce by 2030. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in her budget speech mentioned that dialogues are being held with responsible stake-holders and the Government has received over 2.5 lakh suggestion over NEP. Indian students not only need literacy but also job and life skills. Our expectation from NEP is that it will give a boost to ways in which subjects are being taught in higher education institutes through a mix of regulatory changes and development initiatives. Ministry of Human Resources & Development will institutionalize a new set of education standards. NEP will also give a

boost to classical languages like Sanskrit. The upcoming policy is likely to make a series of changes in ways in which board examinations are conducted in India to eliminate fear of failures in students. The MHRD is looking to merge University Grants Commission (UGC) and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). There will be a single regulatory body, and the existing multiple regulatory bodies will evolve into playing new roles for a better change.

Announcement of online and special bridge courses: Aiming to provide quality skill-based learning to students from deprived sections of the society or to those who lack access to higher education, the government has proposed to start degree level full-fledged online education programme in the country. This shall be offered only by institutions that are ranked within top 100 in the National Institutional Ranking framework. About 150 higher educational institutions will also start apprenticeship embedded degree/diploma courses by March 2021. These decisions will not only help higher learning to reach the grassroots but will also assure quality learning in students. The decision will bring new and updated technical education requirements to the learners. In addition, special bridge courses, designed by the Ministries of Health and Skill Development together with professional bodies will bring equivalence in the education sector. These specially designed courses will also include language requirements of various countries to ensure career opportunities in foreign lands. Understanding the huge demand for medical teachers, nurses, paramedical staff, the government will train young people in these fields with skill-based training courses to cater to the demands in the rural areas.

Better infrastructure with FDI and commercial borrowings: The Indian education sector especially the higher learning section has always demanded a better infrastructure. To

attract talented teachers, better resources, modern research rooms or labs, greater inflow of finance is required. The government plans to initiate steps to encourage external commercial borrowings and Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) for education sector which was much needed. The new rules to ease foreign investments will give a major boost to capital-starved education infrastructure in India.

Support to Start-up ecosystem: India is the third biggest start up ecosystem in the world and the government is keen on pushing start-ups across the country. The Union Budget talks about setting up of an investment clearance cell, pre-investment advisory to ease investments in start-ups. A dedicated investment clearance cell will provide end-to-end support which include advisories, information on loans, fund clearance etc. This will be a huge boost to entrepreneurship culture in India which will help to meet the job demands of skilled workers coming out of the educational institutions every year. Apart from these, announcement of an exclusive TV channel for start-ups which will be designed and run by start-ups is a welcoming move.

Global approach and modern learning: The Union Budget 2020 has also announced schemes for betterment of pre-existing systems from a global perspective. “IND-SAT” test to be held under the ‘Study in India’ programme in Asian and African countries. This will help foreign candidates to get scholarships for studying in Indian higher education centres. Focus is on skill-based trainings which majorly include language training which will help students to get jobs in the international markets. Training under the areas which define new age skills such as Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, Big Data, 3D printing, robotics, virtual reality, etc, will be important. It is really good to see that govt. is realizing

the change in dynamism of global requirements and demographic trends and taking new steps to mitigate the potential threats.

Source: <http://bweducation.businessworld.in/article/Union-Budget-2020-21-Positive-Shift-Of-Focus-On-Hi-End-Skills-And-Quality-Higher-Education-/13-03-2020-186106/>

Personal Loans for Higher Education Made Easy With Bajaj Finserv

PUNE, India, Mar 13, 2020 (GCBusiness) — To find success today, one needs to have a high-quality education. And most Indian students dream of pursuing higher education abroad because of factors such as high-quality educational infrastructure, vast array of specialized courses, wholesome exposure and superior employment opportunities. But not only is this dream challenging, it also comes with a price tag.

An individual may choose to dip into his/her savings to meet the expenses of an education abroad for their loved ones, but most people choose to rely on loans to bridge the gap between shortfall and the required money. And while many lenders provide education loans, there also exists the option of personal loans for higher education.

Personal loans are unsecured loans that edge over education loans in terms of flexibility of use and convenience. For starters, education loans generally depend on the institute the ward may be getting into and cover fixed expenses such as tuition fees. Personal loans for higher education can be used to meet pretty much any expense that maybe lined up

– from tuition fees to the cost of books, living expenses, an emergency fund to meet unplanned expenses or more.

Bajaj Finance Limited, the lending arm of Bajaj Finserv, offers easy personal loans for higher education that can be used to cover any financial need when pursuing an education abroad.

The personal loan for higher education by Bajaj Finserv enables one to avail funds of up to Rs.25 lakh. With the Flexi Loan facility, individuals can borrow from the sanction as and when the need arises, without having to make a fresh application every time. Besides, they pay interest only on the utilized amount and further lower their EMIs by up to 45%*. Here are some of the instrumental features to assist the purpose of higher education loan: Easy to meet eligibility criteria and has minimum documentation

Loan is disbursed to one's account within 24 hours, with approval in just 5 minutes Bajaj Finserv Personal Loan for Higher Education offers financing on a collateral-free basis, giving students the independence to fund other monetary needs attached to international higher education rather than just paying off their degree/course tuition fee The Flexi Personal Loan pre-payment option coupled with a flexible tenor of up to 60 months offers convenience and added affordability

With these attractive features, personal loan for higher education by Bajaj Finserv attempts to make this financial journey of students a little smoother and supports them to achieve their future goals.

Individuals can also check their pre-approved offers on personal loans by the lender by providing their names and contact information. About Bajaj Finance Limited Bajaj Finance Limited, the lending arm of the Bajaj Finserv group, is one of the most

diversified NBFCs in the Indian market catering to more than 36 million customers across the country.

Headquartered in Pune, the company's product offering includes Consumer Durable Loans, Lifestyle Finance, Digital Product Finance, Personal Loans, Loan against Property, Small Business Loans, Loans for Professionals, Home loans, Credit Cards, Two-wheeler and Three-wheeler Loans, Commercial lending/SME Loans, Loan against Securities and Rural Finance which includes Gold Loans and Vehicle Refinancing Loans along with Fixed Deposits. Bajaj Finance Limited prides itself on holding the highest credit rating of FAAA/Stable for any NBFC in the country today. It is also the only NBFC in India with the international 'BBB' with stable outlook for long-term, by S&P Global Rating.

Source: <https://goachronicle.com/personal-loans-for-higher-education-made-easy-with-bajaj-finserv/>

HRD ministry to rework single Higher education regulator plan

NEW DELHI: The government plans to have a single regulator for higher education which will house three separate arms, instead of creating four independent bodies as suggested by the new education policy drafting committee. The rethink comes after reservations were raised during inter-ministerial consultations about the feasibility of four separate bodies at a time the government is talking about merging existing regulators like University Grants Commission and All India Council for Technical Education.

“If the aim is to have a single higher education regulator, it should be that. Any other body must be made part of the single regulator for better coordination and achieve desired impact,” said a government official with knowledge of the development. “It will take some time, but the plan will be reworked,” the official added. The new education policy drafting committee, led by scientist K. Kasturirangan, had suggested a single National Higher Education Regulatory Authority (NHERA), it needs to be aided by three more bodies – a General Education Council (GEC), the National Assessment & Accreditation Council (NAAC), and Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC).

While GEC was conceived to put in place academic standards and education outcome, NAAC will do the accreditation work and HEGC will be in charge of funds to colleges and universities. NAAC has been in existence for years as a separate institution accreditation body. India has been considering a single higher education regulator for the past 10 years. The previous United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government had moved a bill in the Rajya Sabha, which was later withdrawn by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government after a change in regime at the Centre.

The need for the revamp of the higher education regulator was also part of the Bharatiya Janata Party’s election manifesto ahead of the 2014 general elections. Single higher education regulator plan has moved back and forth several times, and can only be in place once the new education policy is notified. The proposed NEP is yet to be finalized even after six years of deliberations.

Source: <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/hrd-ministry-to-rework-single-higher-education-regulator-plan-11583989260049.html>

Getting 'Bharat' to work: upGrad brings placement opportunities to first-time job-seekers in over 300 cities

While 1000 learners have been placed so far, the company plans to cater to over 10,000 jobs in the next financial year. upGrad, online higher education company, partners with major corporates across BFSI and Technology sector to provide placement opportunities to the remotest corners of India with over 300 cities, thereby getting 'Bharat' to work.

The initiative is being undertaken by the upGrad Academy Business vertical, which extends upskilling opportunities to the first-time job seekers and placement guarantee on successful completion of the program. The salary package starts from Rs 2.5 lakhs per annum, with job opportunities majorly looking into the area of sales.

While 1000 learners have been placed so far, the company plans to cater to over 10,000 jobs in the next financial year. Nonetheless, the initiative has also received more than 1.5 lakh enquiries from across India.

"With such opportunities, we are trying to create an impact towards achieving the USD 1 trillion economy goal for India, which requires the entire Bharat to go to work. Academy Business vertical works on a 'Source-Train and Deploy model' which enables large organisations who are looking at mass recruitment in their level one, two roles, to have a skilled-ready workforce and as we move ahead, we look forward to on boarding more companies targeting similar goals," said Mayank Kumar, co-founder and MD, upGrad, while speaking about upGrad Academy.

The recent Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) suggests that India's unemployment rate has moved upwards to 7.78 per cent in February 2020, highest in the last four months. Education companies can play the role in bridging this gap by giving access to job opportunities to the masses, and by helping the corporates get industry-ready talent.

Source: <https://www.edexlive.com/news/2020/mar/11/getting-bharat-to-work-upgrad-brings-placement-opportunities-to-first-time-job-seekers-in-over-300-c-10634.html>

Almost half of Indian start-ups don't hire women to save on maternity costs

Globally, a lack of diversity is one of the biggest problems the tech industry faces, despite a significant growth in the number of women working in the tech industry, female representation has stalled over the last decade. While the West has made some steps towards gender equality, other countries still lag behind, such as India. Roughly 40% of Indian women complete higher education and join the workforce, but drop out within the decade because of family commitments.

It's been proven time and time again that diversity is good for business, but a recent survey found that almost half of early stage start-ups in India have hired fewer or no women

in the last year, compared to the previous year. This is down to the higher costs of complying with the government's six-month paid maternity leave policy, which was enforced in 2017.

When India first doubled its paid maternity leave, critics predicted the new law would potentially discourage employers from hiring women in a country that already lags behind in workforce gender equality — only 27% of Indian women were in work in 2012. [Read: *How to stop bias from creeping into the recruitment process, a diversity expert explains*] Talking to the Financial Times in 2017, Sushmita Dev, an MP for the opposition Congress party said: “Since the employer has to pay the salary during the leave period, the amendment might turn out to be counterproductive. [The] innovative thing to do would be to bring in paternity benefits.”

The study by Local Circles, a community platform based in India, received over 8,500 responses from various companies in the country. It was noted that start-ups and small businesses believe companies with an annual turnover of less than Rs 10 crore (\$1,000,000) should be exempt from the six-month paid maternity leave policy, and instead offer women three months of paid leave.

Though the law was well intended, immediately after it was passed there was a 10% dip in women employees in the country's total workforce. Not only are startups expected to pay the full 26 weeks of maternity leave, but a temporary replacement employee will likely need to be hired too.

While startups and small companies in India may not be intentionally adding to a toxic society that keeps women behind, female representation in India's workforce is

continuing to decrease. Without the help of the Indian government, tax benefits, and amnesty schemes, it will only get increasingly harder for women to return to work after having a child.

Source:<https://thenextweb.com/growth-quarters/2020/03/09/almost-half-of-indian-startups-dont-hire-women-to-save-on-maternity-costs/>

Job Opportunities

National Financial Reporting Authority

Posts: Manager, Asst Manager – 18

Eligibility: Manager: Chartered Accountant or Master of Business Administration with specialization in Finance or Accounting or Chartered Financial Analysis or Law or Post-Graduation in Commerce, Economics, Finance or any other discipline, from a recognized University or Institution a minimum six years of post-qualification experience in the fields of law, investigation, Information Technology, Finance, Economics, Accountancy, Auditing, Administration.

Selection process: Candidates will be selected based on written test and interview.

How to apply: Applicants are required to go to NFRA website <https://nfra.gov.in/> and open the link “Tenders/Advertisements”. Thereafter, click on the option “APPLY ONLINE (ASSISTANT MANAGER / MANAGER)” which will open a new screen. Candidates are required to access their application via NFRA website only. There are 2 Posts – Manager and Assistant Manager. A person eligible and applying for both is required to fill in separate

applications for each post. Online examination for the posts of Manager and Assistant manager will be different. The last date to apply is March 29.

KC Mahindra Scholarships

KC Mahindra Education Trust has opened this scholarship for Indian graduate students who want to pursue post-graduate studies abroad. The objective of this scholarship is to support deserving and needy students and help them continue their higher education.

Eligibility: Indian students who have secured admission or have applied for admission in reputable foreign universities for courses commencing from August 2020 and have a first-class degree or an equivalent diploma of a similar standard from a recognized university, can apply.

Prizes & Rewards: An interest-free loan of up to INR 8 Lakh will be awarded to the top three K. C. Mahindra Fellows. The rest of the successful applicants will get an interest-free loan up to INR 4 Lakh.

Last Date to Apply: 31-03-2020

Apply online at www.b4s.in/tt/KCM1

Fulbright Teaching Excellence Program

United States-India Educational Foundation (USIEF) and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State have come together to offer this 6-week non-degree, non-credit academic program that will take place at a US university for full-time senior secondary school teachers in India.

Eligibility: full-time senior secondary Indian teacher (Class 6 to 12) in a school with 5 years of experience and a Bachelor's degree, can apply.

Prizes & Rewards: The selected candidates will get round-trip airfare to and within the US, Visa, programme fee cover, insurance, baggage allowance.

Last Date to Apply: 16-03-2020

Apply online at www.b4s.in/tt/FTE3

Ashoka University Young India Fellowship

Ashoka University, Haryana has announced this fellowship for undergraduate and postgraduate students. The aim of this fellowship is to recognize and select outstanding young individuals.

Eligibility: Indian students with an undergraduate or postgraduate degree in any discipline, who are less than 28 years of age, can apply for this fellowship.

Prizes & Rewards: Selected students will get admission to a one-year multidisciplinary postgraduate diploma programme in Liberal Studies and financial assistance ranging from 25% fee waiver to 100 per cent fee waiver.

Last Date to Apply: 31-03-2020

Apply online at www.b4s.in/tt/AUS3

Source: <https://telanganatoday.com/apply-now-latest-job-scholarship-notifications-13>

The innovation conundrum

ISHAAN GERA

LAST MONTH, SAMSUNG launched yet another iteration of its folding phone. Called the Samsung Galaxy Flip Z, the phone has a vertical flip design. More importantly, the new launch comes less than a year since the company launched its first foldable phone. Between then and now, Motorola, LG and have either launched phones with foldable screens or announced plans to do so. Folding or flip phones are the future of mobile phones, tablets, laptops and other electronics.

But is this what innovation has come down to?

In the last decade, we have seen phones with more RAM, better processors and more battery life, but many complain that the industry has stopped innovating. Google's announcement was a big leap in quantum computing, but the idea of quantum computers is an old one, so even that won't count as innovation.

So, is innovation dead? Are we moving to a phase of incremental innovations where there is hardly any change in technology? But then, when was an innovation not incremental? No doubt, we moved from brick-ey feature phones to smartphones within a matter of two decades, but one must realise that it took us the same time to move from smartphones to foldable devices.

Naysayers would point to innovations in the 19th and 20th century. But they also need to consider a time frame of change. It took us six decades to reach from an IBM supercomputer with as much capacity as today's Apple watch, before that it took us 150-200 years to go from a machine to a computer. But from the advent of AI, it has only taken us 20 years to get a self-driving car on the road.

The next spate of innovations won't be visible, but we will still feel them



Woman Holding a Balance (Johannes Vermeer)

Design innovations or product innovations are becoming slow, but people fail to realise that software innovations

are picking up fast. Artificial intelligence develops by leaps and bounds each year. A few years ago, only one or

two robots could clear the Turing test. Now, a software developer in India or Japan can build software that can beat it. We certainly need a new measure, but we also need to understand that not all innovation may be visible.

It may not reflect in a radical design change, but it will surely reflect in our day-to-day life. Job changes owing to technology are a stark reality that humans are facing.

Two, and more importantly, our innovation impatience is growing. For the generation that witnessed a jump from Nokia to Apple, it was a significant leap. Then, there was Samsung with a better camera and more pixels. All within a decade. Now, we are growing impatient for a radically new device. The fold phones have come too late. People have started expecting more and imagining more from companies.

But this innovation impatience is also taxing innovation. More companies promising new products are getting listed on platforms like Indiegogo and crashing within a few years. More Theranos-es are emerging, promising the world to the people and swindling billions.

While we need to stop expecting too much, there is also a need to stop looking for innovation. The next few decades of change won't be visible but will still be felt. Having a powerful computer in your earphone that can mute surroundings is one such innovation. Having to wear a watch or a band or a ring that can track movements more precisely is another idea. More important, having an on-call assistant that can respond to all needs is the most powerful innovation of them all.

Technology innovations have always been incremental. For the impatient ones though, this is the age of incremental innovations.

ishaan.gera@expressindia.com

Quantum Theory Of Ideas

Where two seemingly separate opinions can behave as an inseparable whole

Ashwin Sanghi



It is quite normal to believe that 'cold' is the opposite state of 'hot'. But the state of coldness is merely the absence of heat. Similarly, darkness is the absence of light. Death is the absence of life. And foolishness is the absence of wisdom.

Many ideas can only be described by what they are not rather than by what they are. Dig a little deeper into Hindu philosophy and we find that rishis were in the same dilemma as us. They wanted to define what they intuitively knew as Brahman, the unchanging, permanent, highest reality. But how were they to explain something as vast and all-encompassing as that? The Upanishads thus described Brahman as *neti, neti, neti*. Neither this, nor this, nor this.

These seers also spoke of two fundamental characteristics of the world: *shunyata* (or nothingness) and *maya* (or illusion). Amazingly, researchers in quantum physics are now finding that our world is characterised by empty space. At the atomic and subatomic levels there is no rigidity. What we call 'matter' consists of fuzzy waves that can manifest as particles and switch back just as quickly. Energy and matter are interchangeable. The solidity of our world is illusory. The world is indeed characterised by *shunyata* and *maya*.

The classical physics establishment found these blurry notions of quantum theory a little difficult to digest. Newtonian physics thought of the world as composed of distinct objects, much like tennis balls or stone blocks. In this model, the universe is a giant machine of interlocking parts in which every action produces an equal and opposite reaction. Unfortunately the Newtonian world breaks down at the subatomic level.

In the quantum world, everything seems to be an ocean of interconnected possibilities. Every particle is just a wave function and could be anywhere at anytime; it could even be at several places simultaneously. This hazy view



of the world fits almost perfectly with what our sages said about Brahman: 'It moves; it moves not; it is far; it is near; it is within this; it is outside this.' In fact, many early quantum researchers such as Schrodinger, Heisenberg and Bohr had been exposed to Vedic philosophy.

For a moment though, let us turn from the quantum world to the universe of opinions and ideas. Does every idea need to have definition? Much like the wave-particle quantum world, isn't it possible that ideas could be fuzzy, unpredictable and dynamic? Does every idea need to be absolutely right or absolutely wrong? Does it need to be tightly classified as right- or left-wing? Secular or communal? Capitalist or socialist? Liberal or conservative?

For example, Galileo was condemned by the Roman Catholic Inquisition in 1633 for his view that the Earth and planets revolve around the Sun. Today we take his theories as fact. The notion of monarchy (the hereditary right to rule sanctioned by divine power) remained the norm until the 20th century. In the

In fact, many early quantum researchers such as Schrodinger, Heisenberg and Bohr had been exposed to Vedic philosophy

21st century most of the world discarded that idea. But even today, in countries like Saudi Arabia a hereditary monarch is the accepted norm. In this instance the same idea is treated differently across geography. As the two examples show, space and time seem to have a substantial effect on ideas.

It was Einstein who fused the three dimensions of space and one dimension of time into a single four-dimensional construct called spacetime. His relativity theory was the second great disruptor to the world of physics. In essence, an event that occurs at a given time for one observer could occur at a different time for another observer. When we look at the sun, we are actually looking at the

sun as it had existed eight minutes ago because that's the amount of time it takes light to travel from the sun to Earth. But couldn't the relativity principle apply to ideas too?

Isn't it possible that the entire framework by which we judge ideas, thoughts and opinions needs a revamp? Just like classical physicists were willing to accept that classical laws could not be applied at subatomic level, maybe today's thinkers need to stop judging ideas by outdated constructs. If Einstein saw time as relative, couldn't we look at ideas in a non-absolutist way? Isn't it possible that two individuals may perceive the same idea differently? Isn't it possible that the same individual may perceive a given idea differently over time? While we may hold our opinions dear to us, can't we still view other opinions as equally legitimate?

And if a wave can behave as a particle and manifest spooky action over distance, why can't one hold views that are seemingly opposed? One may want free markets yet state intervention; individual liberties yet social order; modern technology yet respect for tradition; democracy yet a strong state; or soft power yet strong armed forces. Why can't one be rational yet revere one's myths? Why can't one believe in secularism while continuing to appreciate the Hindu ethos that allowed secularism to flourish? Why can't one be Catholic yet gay? Why can't one believe in Allah yet disregard the hijab? Why can't one be Hindu without a caste? Why can't one expect economic progress alongside environmental consciousness?

In recent times, physicists have discovered a phenomenon called quantum entanglement. In an entangled system, two seemingly separate particles can behave as an inseparable whole. Theoretically, if one separates the two entangled particles, one would find that their velocity of spin would be identical but in opposite directions. They are quantum twins. Maybe it's time we looked at opposing ideas as quantum twins?

The writer is an author of best-selling works of fiction

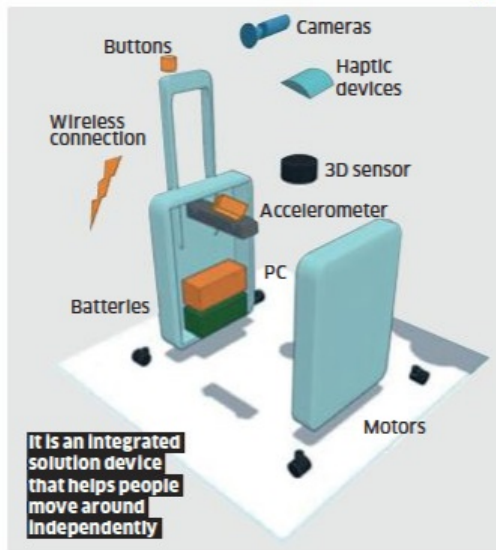
AI suitcase to assist visually-impaired

People with visual impairments, due to age-related issues like glaucoma, face several challenges, including inability to move around freely.

To help improve quality of life for the visually impaired, Shimizu Corporation Institute of Technology in Tokyo has announced the establishment of Consortium for Advanced Assistive Mobility Platform.

Pilot experiment

The consortium will develop an integrated technological solution artificial intelligence (AI) suitcase that will support people's transport and communication with AI and will conduct a pilot experiment and demonstration of implementation.



Wearable backpack

The AI suitcase is a wearable device and suitcase-shaped navigation robot designed for the visually impaired. It can be carried around easily. Multiple companies in various fields of business will bring together their technologies and expertise to develop an AI suitcase.

Real-life application

Through a pilot experiment, the companies will identify the requirement for social implementation. It aims to achieve a solution that resolves transport and communication issues that the visually impaired encounter.

— ANI



No place for bad apples?

You will never see a villain using an iPhone in movies. Why? Tech giant Apple has mandated that the villains or the bad guys in films cannot be shown using its flagship product, iPhone. "They let you use iPhones in movies, but, and this is very pivotal, if you are ever watching a mystery movie, bad guys cannot have iPhones on camera," revealed *Knives Out* director Rian Johnson during a recent interview. Apple, however, declined to comment on claims it bans screen villains from using its phones.

New frontier of reality

A visitor at the virtual reality pavilion of the ongoing Luxembourg City Film Festival. The exhibition offers fans of immersive viewing experience an the opportunity to discover a selection of innovative XR (extended reality) and AI-based installations.



PIC GETTY IMAGES

TECHNOLOGY IS CHANGING THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

A growing number of campuses are testing new ideas in education with blockchain networks, computer simulations and artificial intelligence

Cruising to class in her driverless car, a student crams from notes projected on the inside of the windshield while she gestures with her hands to shape a 3D holographic model of her architecture project. It looks like science fiction. But this scenario is based on technology already in development.

The setting is the Sandbox CoLLABorative, the innovation arm of Southern New Hampshire University. It is one of a small but growing number of places where experts are testing new ideas that will shape the future of college education, using everything from blockchain networks to computer simulations to artificial intelligence (AI).

Testing new ideas

Theirs is not a future of failing enrolment and closing campuses. It's a brighter world in which students learn languages in virtual reality foreign streetscapes with

avatars for conversation partners, have their questions answered by AI teaching assistants and control their own digital transcripts that record every life achievement.

Risk-averse campuses

The possibilities for advances like these are vast. Universities may be at the cutting edge of research into

almost every other field, said Gordon Jones, founding dean of the Boise State University College of Innovation and Design, in Idaho, but when it comes to reconsidering the structure of their own, he said, "they've been very risk-averse".

Harbinger of change

Now, squeezed by the demands of employers and students, some institutes, such as Boise State University and Southern New Hampshire University, are starting labs to help people learn effectively, match their skills with jobs and lower the costs.

College by subscription

One of these would transform the



Southern New Hampshire University, in a collaboration with the education company Pearson, is testing grading by AI



Dakota Kimble, a student in Boise State University's Games, Interactive Media and Mobile Technology program

way students pay for higher education. Instead of enrolling, for example, they might subscribe to a college, for a monthly fee. Students could take whatever courses they

want, when they want, with long-term access to advising and career help. The Georgia Institute of Technology is one of the places mulling a subscription model.

Robot teacher

Georgia Tech has also been experimenting with a virtual teaching assistant named Jill Watson, built on the 'Jeopardy'-winning IBM Watson supercomputer platform. This AI answers questions in a discussion forum alongside human teaching assistants; students often can't distinguish among them, their professor says. The university is working next on developing virtual tutors, which, it says, could be viable in two to five years.

— The New York Times

The End