On the Role of Universities in Building Knowledge and Human-centred Societies

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Abstract: This article presents an enlightened and egalitarian framework that evaluates the impact of universities in the infrastructure, governance, talent and culture dimensions of enlightened, neo-humanistic knowledge societies. We will expound the above-stated role of a university by first developing the concept of an enlightened knowledge society. The quality of life and its sustainability is to a large extent fashioned by the society, while society is itself a collective of human thought and ideals. What is implied then is that human talent and society influence one another. How then can this influence be positive or progressive? We need to know what constitutes positive or progressive influence, and hence what role the university has in inculcating this progressive influence. This is a fundamental enquiry, which constitutes the very foundation of the purpose, orientation, course and educational matrix of a university. This enquiry will take us through a panoramic survey of an enlightened knowledge society, of the different sectors of the society, of how these sectors provide creative and/or fulfilling expression for its people, and thereby enrich human life. More specifically, we look at dimensions covering the infrastructure, talent, cultural and governance facets of such a society. The enquiry will also involve a study of how the themes and structures of the societal sectors are to be developed at the university, to be subsequently implemented through its educational and research programs. We will develop this enquiry in stepwise fashion proceeding from our social roots to our climactic desideratum, as we embark on a romantic odyssey of the neo-humanistic knowledge society and the role of the university in enabling this exalted progression.

Keywords: National Intellectual Capital, Learning Community, Knowledge Assets, Relational and Social Capital

Introduction

A UNIVERSITY IS verily a laboratory for the development of a progressive society, by delineation of its ideals in all fields of human thought and endeavour, and by the development of education and research programs for imparting these ideals. A university hence needs to have a pulse of the problems confronting society and a clear delineation of its role in cultivating the requisite ideals for its progress. One of the tasks at hand is to develop a societal framework wherein the said knowledge assets of a society (human, structural and social capital) may be effectively enhanced and sustained through the mission of universities. (Olssen & Peters, 2005).

In this introduction, we shall expound the above-stated role of a university by first developing the concept of a progressive society. The quality of life of a human being is to a large extent fashioned by the society, while society is itself a collective of human beings. What is implied then is that human beings influence one another. How then can this influence be positive? Human beings can influence one another positively, when they can collectively and cohesively progress from the initial expressions of moralism to their macrocosmic desideratum. Such a society can be termed as an enlightened or progressive society (Sarkar, 1999-a). We then need to consider the role of the University in fashioning such a progressive society. This is a fundamental enquiry, which constitutes the very foundation of the purpose and orientation of human life, and how it can be influenced by the educational matrix of a university.

This enquiry will take us through a panoramic survey of human society, of human values that contribute to an enlightened society, of how these sectors provide creative and/or fulfilling expression for its people, and thereby enrich human life (Sarkar, 1998; Sarkar, 1999-b). The enquiry will also involve a study of how the themes and structures of the societal sectors are to be developed at the university (to be subsequently implemented by its graduates), as we embark on a romantic odyssey of the society and its university.

A Historical View of Civilised Society

What is human society? When ancient human civilisation started to realize that it is in the interests of their self-preservation and welfare to come together, human society started with these first expressions of community (Sarkar, 1999-a). Since that auspicious moment, while society has developed considerably in complexity, has it been evolving towards the macrocosm and thereby progressing? In its evolutio-
ary journey, there have been eras when segments of human society in different parts of the world have been very progressive, through their cultural and aesthetic, philosophical and artistic, scientific and engineering expressions. These eras are recorded in history as golden epochs of human civilizations.

The above mentioned expressions have no doubt lessened the hardships of day-to-day living, have contributed to a more pleasurable living, and lifted human existence from a physical to mental plane. However mental development is also accompanied by mental and psychological stresses. In this realm, there have been endeavors in the recent past (over the last 3000 years) to develop the means of lifting our minds to higher states of consciousness. These endeavors constitute real and sustained human progress (to realize higher consciousness states).

Today, the need of the hour is for science to provide both objective (or material and mental) fulfillment as well as subjective (or psychic and psychospiritual) fulfillment, by means of a new integrated science paradigm (of consciousness, matter, mind and body) accompanied by intuitional practice.

The Concept of a University

Among the human expressions that we consider having a soothing influence, based on our own day-to-day experience and interactions in society, are kindness and benevolence. Some human beings may have considerable objective knowledge, (scientific and/or technical), and their endeavors indirectly help society by making the environment more comfortable for habitat. Other human beings may be artistic, and may have the capacity to uplift human minds through their works.

However, only those among them (who are culturally and/or intellectually, artistically, scientifically, aesthetically developed) will have beneficial influence on others who will have a benevolent nature, who will extend a helping hand to others around them and additionally help them to develop and progress, and thereby foster the all round development of the community. This then brings us to the intrinsic concept of a society: where there is a bigger proportion of such benevolent and enlightened individuals to inspire a big proportion of the members of the society to progress towards their cosmic desideratum, only there exists the possibility of evolution of a progressive society or for that matter a society in real terms.

In the days of yore, scholars and evolved individuals (known as rishis) often inspired young people to study under them as residential scholars. Philosophers and scientists had such students around them. As society developed in complexity, the endeavours of these rishis ranged from philosophy and history, to art and literature, to agriculture and ecology, to sociology and law, to mathematics and physical sciences, to engineering and medicine, to astronomy and cosmology. And there evolved the concept of a University, as a place where young scholarly aspirants could study any subject pertaining to the universe under such enlightened individuals.

Role of the University

The movement of a society is pulsatile, from thesis to antithesis. In any one phase, the happiness to the members of a society depends upon their being able to develop and express themselves intellectually, scientifically, technologically, artistically and aesthetically, while being able to have or afford at least the basic necessities of life: food, clothing, shelter, education, healthcare. As Hamdouch and Mouladé (2006, p.27) state: Universities, which are the core components of the I³ through higher education and research, play a decisive role in educating future scientists, researchers and research managers, and are at the same time crucial infrastructures for fundamental research activities.

The university then has the role of educating students to be able to contribute to the community in all realms of human thought and endeavour. While this constitutes indirect fashioning of the society, the university can also directly contribute to the society by researching on and developing (i) agricultural, healthcare, scientific and technological know-how, as well as ecological, judicial, social and economic frameworks for its community. Thereby is cultivated a conducive environment, wherein the members of the community will have ample scope for development of all their faculties and potentialities: physical, mental and spiritual. This is the notion of a shared ba, which Nonaka et al. (1998) and Baqir & Kathawalla (2004) refer to for learning, knowledge sharing and human development.

The university has the role of cultivating the ideals and blueprints of a progressive community, wherein people can develop their potentialities and help one another to contribute to the society in all realms, while having the attitude of extending a helping hand to others in physical or intellectual or economic distress and also helping them to progress (Sarkar, 1999a). However, both university and society have universal connotations, and so let us examine this aspect in order to underline the culminating role of a university in fashioning a universal society.

While human society is made up of different ethnic and cultural communities, all human beings have the same ultimate origin and desideratum. This is the common unifying factor of all human beings, of all cultures, of the entire human society. Hence while advancing the development of one’s community, one
has to also enable the progressive development of the entire human society, economically, intellectually, scientifically, and aesthetically. This is called a universal outlook (Sarkar, 1998 & 1999-b).

A university should hence not only imbibe this universal outlook among its students, but also develop and propagate appropriate international frameworks (trade, economic and legal), in order to foster all-round development of all the nations of the world (especially the developing nations), so as to help evolve a universal society. To this end, a university should provide a balanced curriculum, so that its humanities and sciences student can inculcate and contribute to the ideals of a neohumanist society for collective progress, its professional (medical, engineering, law and business) students can inculcate and contribute to the ideals of collective welfare, its humanities and arts students are at least technologically informed, while all the students are ecologically conscious and have a universal social outlook.

Today's society needs active involvement of the university in: (i) fashioning its universal outlook, (ii) providing the know-how for its industrial development while safeguarding its ecology, (iii) developing art and literature for mental upliftment while channeling technological advancement for improvement in the quality-of-life, (iv) ensuring for all the people of the world requisite purchasing capacity for their basic needs while providing scope for total cultural and aesthetic expression, and (v) developing the fields of parapsychology and yogic science for the development of mind into higher states of consciousness. This scope corresponds to the ideals of a knowledge economy suggested by Dolfsma (2006), Foray (2006), Harris (2001), Kahlil (2006), Powell & Snellman (2004), Soete (2006), among others.

All the learning of today's university students and all the research conducted by its academics can have meaning only when first of all no one in the world is starving or is neglected on the street without any means for shelter and medicine, and then when no one is deprived of learning and education. Only then will human enquiry go beyond body and mind into consciousness realms, in order to fulfill the ultimate purpose of human life—of merging the microcosm into the mainstream and thereby liberating human intellects (Towsen and Ghista, 1966).

1. to provide some basic knowledge of natural processes, human interactions, communication and computational skills;
2. to acquire knowledge of human values and society;
3. to enhance intellectual make-up, in terms of problem solving skills, life long learning attitude and acquired knowledge;
4. develop insights concerning natural phenomena and life processes;
5. acquire know-how for making life comfortable and reduce physical drudgeries and sufferings;
6. develop and understanding of natural environment, and to maintain it conducive for human habitation;
7. acquire knowledge of plant and animal life, and to cater to their existential as well as utility values;
8. acquire knowledge of the means to promote and maintain human physical and mental health, as well as psychological well-being and parapsychic development;
9. learn about the science and methods of food production;
10. develop understanding of jurisprudence based on cardinal values, human psychology, and collective welfare;
11. develop understanding of economic, and political frameworks that are compatible with human psychology, and facilitate all the above nine objectives;
12. learn about human nature, psychology and the faculties of mind, and aesthetic values;
13. learn about how people live, about their collective psychology and culture;

The one-to-one correspondence between the above objectives and academic disciplines yield the following disciplines to implement these objectives:

1. Basic Education
2. Humanities and Social Sciences
3. Faculty of Education
4. Physical and Life sciences,
5. Engineering science and technology,
6. Ecological sciences and Environmental engineering,
7. Biological and Veterinary sciences,
8. Medical and Health sciences,
9. Agricultural science and Food technology,
10. Law and Jurisprudence,
11. Economic and Political sciences
12. Psychology and Political sciences
13. Anthropology, History and Social science,

In this paper, we will concentrate on some key disciplines from among those mentioned above.
Role of Basic Education and Learning

No one can study and specialize in all of these disciplines. Before specializing in a particular discipline, it is useful to have a basic educational background. For this purpose, one needs to have at least some basic education, which entails some basic knowledge about natural phenomena, guidelines for collective living, as well as about behavioral science and human nature—what it is that makes human beings happy, and the social setting required for that purpose. Then on top of this basic knowledge and education, one can acquire specialized knowledge in one or more disciplines.

Natural Science Bloc

Now in acquiring basic knowledge, as defined above, one needs to study synergetic combinations of disciplines at a basic level. Thus Physical sciences, Life sciences, and Ecology constitute one set of synergetic disciplines, under the heading of Natural Sciences (figure 1), to acquire basic knowledge of natural phenomena and life processes, and the values of animal and plant life in human habitat.

![Figure 1: Natural Science Bloc](image)

The first University course in Science has to stimulate the students into appreciating the mechanisms of natural phenomena and processes that they encounter in day-to-day living. All students (even those who are humanities) oriented should have some notion of the science basis behind their daily encounters with natural phenomena and technology. Further, Science should be taught so as to provide a unified base for subsequent specialization studies in physical and life sciences, ecological and environmental sciences, biological and medical sciences, agricultural and energy sciences.

Humanities Bloc

In addition to objective knowledge, subjective knowledge is also necessary to understand what it is that makes human beings happy. Philosophy enables people to understand themselves and to cultivate humanistic values. Then, one needs to also have some basic knowledge of societal structure in order to fulfill their basic needs and express themselves fully. Finally one needs to know one self: what is it that gives one peace-of-mind so as to be unaffected by daily living states of pleasure and pain. Hence, the disciplines of Literature & Arts, History & Sociology, and Philosophy & Psychology are to be integrated and taught as a Humanities bloc (figure 2), to enable people to develop the outlook and means for individual and collective welfare.
As students enter the university, they are filled with idealism concerning the concepts of comraderie and service, of dignified living, and of how to collectively help build an ideal global society. The role of the Humanities course stream is firstly to and to inculcate a code of neo-humanistic values, through epics and biographies infused with sentiments of universalism and concepts of idealism. The second aim of this course is to develop the ideals of a benevolent and fulfilling human society, and how one can contribute to it.

Literature needs to be a bold and powerful expression of the feeling and sighs of the human heart. Only such literature should be adopted for study that can illuminate the minds and lives of students — the children of the soil! Epochal literature is that which expresses, in clear terms, the demand of a particular era, with its psychological and cultural trends. It should help the students to learn about how people have been thinking and experiencing in different eras. Hence, by studying literature, the students must obtain an insight into the collective psychology of the people. Finally, from the Literature portraying the relational flow between the past and the present, students must be able to grasp the theory of sociological cause and effect as it can apply to their times.

History, as it is taught today, is primarily a chronology of events. No wonder it fails to create interest among students. If students are to profit from the study of history (as they should), it should reflect the woes and joys, the aspirations and achievements, the tribulations and triumphs of the masses. Such history books and chronicles must be selected for study that depict (i) the nature and amount of progress in social life brought about by different communities, (ii) how obstacles were overcome to effect social development, and (iii) the success of human beings in developing their noble qualities. From such history books, students would be able to grasp the innate characteristics of human beings who have contributed to social progress.

For History to be a source of inspiration to students, it should represent how the kaleidoscopic variations in spiritual and cultural expressions, social outlook and economic system have influenced societal dynamics. The students must be able to gather, from the study of History, the component factors of collective psychology and how absence or variations in these factors have led to the rise and fall of societies and civilizations. The lessons of History can thus be applied by students in shaping the course of future history.

Philosophy and Psychology needs to be taught (in the Humanities Bloc of Basic Education) at a very basic level, to enable students to comprehend what constitutes the innate characteristics of human beings. What are these characteristics? Firstly, there is a common tendency in each and every human mind to expand one’s mind, to overcome feelings of narrowness, and to love all living beings. Secondly, all individuals have their own characteristic mental flows — of feelings and desires, of ambitions and angles of vision; however, for success in one’s endeavours, one’s individual flow needs to work within the universal flow. Thirdly, all human beings want infinite
happiness and undisturbed peace; for this, one needs to have and work towards the cosmic desideration.

**Communication and Computational Bloc**

We need some skills to communicate and to express oneself as well as to quantify processes and to compute. For this purpose, we need to learn language(s) as a means of expression and communication, to express our inner feelings. Effective communication is a means of bringing people together as well as to express higher and mind-elevating sentiments. An extension of communication skills is in fact basic mathematical skills, which enable one to effect the means of day-to-day transactions. Mathematical skills also enable one to appreciate Natural science by learning about the quantification of its processes, and to learn how to utilize it for enhancing living conditions.

The Language skills are to be developed on the foundations of philology, whereby the students can learn to develop parts-of-speech from the root-words. The emphasis is to be on acquiring colloquial, reading and comprehension, writing and expression skills. In the case of a language being the mother tongue, conversational skill is, implicit. The emphasis, them, is to be on: (i) grammar and its deployment in conversation and writing, (ii) pronunciation and intonation in reading and conversion, (iii) comprehension of literature and scientific matter, (iv) analysis of prose and poetry, and (v) expressing thoughts and ideas clearly and lucidly.

In the case of a second language, which is to be used for communication and/or as an instructional medium, the proficiency levels would be sequentially developed in: (i) the ability to understand written or spoken sentences as well as to respond and communicate, (ii) ability to read stretches of speech at near native-speaker speed, (iii) augmenting vocabulary, and ability to appropriately use it in communicating and writing more effectively, and (iv) comprehending writings on issues and technical matter, as well as answering questions based on the written material.

The Mathematical skills course is deemed to enable students to appreciate and learn the basic “mathematics-in-action”, underlying banking and finance operations, natural processes plants and animal life, mapping and surveying measurements, sociological and biological phenomena such as growth of population and tumor, as well as output response to inputs (such as physiological responses to exercise and drugs).

It is only when the students progress to solving such problems that the value of basic mathematics becomes manifest. Our task is hence how to make the basic operations leading up to these end-stage problems relevant to day-to-day needs and to teach them imaginatively, pictorially and even geometrically.

**Epilogue**

So then, Natural Sciences, Humanities, Communication and Computational skills may be considered to constitute the foundations of Basic Education. However, what do we want the Basic Education to deliver? What kind of Basic Natural Science do we need our students to learn. Are we content to limit ourselves to the present-day materialistic stance of Science, which then limits our vision of cosmology? Do we want our students to study Humanities, to be merely humanistic or to uplift the mind and extend this humanism to animal and plant life, and to be thus neo-humanistic? Do we want to ensure that the benefits of science and engineering are available to all the peoples of the world, in order to eliminate poverty, starvation and physical suffering? This vision needs to be inculcated into the blocs of Basic Education.

Basic Education is the most important phase of life-long learning. It refers to the initial one to two years of university education, before the student decides to specialize. In fact, it helps the student to make a choice, and hence it must provide a proper representation of the range of disciplines. When the student does specialize, the Basic Education must have provided proper grounding and the foundation for any field of specialization.

In constituting the foundation of higher education, the Basic Education program should help build the character and personality of the student. In fact, at the end of the Basic Education program, students must be ready to recognize and carry out their roles in society.

After the Basic Education program of study, the students enter a particular College of Arts or Science or Medicine or Engineering. Hence one of the tasks of the Basic Education Program is to help impart the requisite broad academic base to students, which can enable them to comfortably relate to undertake specialization studies.

The specialization program, following the Basic Education Program, then provides training to students to work in a particular sector of community life. However, the Basic Education Program enables the students to take their place in society, to at least comprehend and relate to the various sectors of community life, and to develop the versatility to relate to the public-policy issues facing the community.

**Role of Humanities in Society**

Today's global society is in the doldrums. It is fragmented by fissiparous geo and socio sentiments, which result in conflicts between social groups and
nations. Materialistic socio-economic theories, inimical to mankind’s innate tendency, have not only caused North and South polarization but also global finical crisis. Hunger and starvation stalk many Third-world countries; in fact, food and water shortages are imminent threats to human survival. Ethnic minority communities have often been persecuted, and their cultures suppressed. All of this is going on, while millions of youth are graduating from universities, while supposedly scholarly endeavours are being pursued in universities all over the world.

Obviously then, the university educational philosophy and system have been unable to address the needs of the era. University graduates fall in line with the status quo and become passively or actively part of the scheme of things, part of the present-day socio-economic order that is making human society bleed today. In turn then, the educational systems (the curriculum and the text books), and all that is imparted to the students have not been raising the consciousness of these graduates concerning the purport and import of human society, its present status, the need and process of its actualization, and their role in it.

**Promoting Collective Welfare and Programs**

A university may be said to have the following roles vis-a-vis the society at large: to educate and train students in order to (i) address local and regional needs of qualified persons in the different sectors of community function, and (ii) help develop the requisite eclectic policies, know-how and infrastructures to enhance the quality-of-life regionally and globally.

Every Faculty of a university has a role to play in society. Humanities, however, has a paramount role, because it has to define the ideals of human thought and endeavour. The other Faculties will then implement these ideals into practical frameworks. But before we can talk about societal ideals, we again need to remind ourselves of the definition of an ideal society. When a group of people are living together to help one another (on an individual basis as well as on a collective level) through a suitable socio-economic framework and eventually to reach their supreme desideratum (to attain liberation from the bondage’s of their propensities), only then can they effectively constitute a society. Humanities’ disciplines hence need to be oriented to direct human society on the path of universalism towards its cosmic characteristics.

In order to attain the supreme stance, human beings have to wage an internal struggle and develop their higher and noble faculties. However while struggling on this inner or subjective path to self-realization, they also encounter obstructions and setbacks in the objective world. These hindrances can be in the form of constraints or persecutions by inimical people as well as due to social or health problems and economic hardships. The role of Humanities is to develop such ideals of inter-personal human interactions (individual and collective psychologies) and socio-economic frameworks that will facilitate individual progress to self-realization, and thereby contribute to a progressive society (Sarkar, 1998).

Based on this idealistic concept of human society, we now need to define the roles of the various Humanities disciplines and endeavours in society - of literature and arts, of philosophy and psychology, of sociology and economics. It is for Humanities to also define (i) the role of science and technology in promoting human comfort for all people and for the Science and Technology Faculty to implement it, and (ii) to declare that proper health-care be available to all persons and for the health-care profession to implement that.

Two types of scenarios exist in the world today. In the countries of the ‘South’, people are struggling to make ends meet, to acquire the basic necessities of life. In the ‘North’ countries, micro-psyche longings for mundane assets have caused psychic diseases due to lack of a synthetic philosophy of life. Unfortunately, the North as well as South countries are guided by materialistic and exploitative socio-economic theories, which have failed to solve both the problems of physical destitution and psychic diseases.

It is the role of Humanities to develop awareness of the problems confronting society, that constitute obstacles in the implementation of the above defined progressive concept of society, to raise the consciousness and the minds of the people to the limits of human development. When Humanities education and research are devoid of this altruistic theme of steering society in the lane of idealism, the society lacks direction and lags behind culturally.

**Social Outlook**

*Quo Vadis* is the primary and universal query of human beings. It is up to Philosophy to clarify the purpose of life and the means of reaching one’s cosmic goal. However, that by itself cannot bring about a renaissance in society. For society to be oriented and aligned along the path to cosmic desideratum, an appropriate collective psychology is needed. This requires, in addition to philosophy, a proper social outlook and a socio-economic environment in which all realms of human thought and endeavour are to be oriented to human service and blessedness.
Human psychology is based on human psychic longings. Generally, human psychic longings are for objects in one's environment that are concerned with day to day living. The impetus for mundane psychic longings constitutes the basis of present-day materialistic socio-economic theories (Sarkar, 1998). Since the objects of mundane psychic longings are finite and since some persons are more skilled in exploiting circumstances, this in turn causes exploitation of some people, communities, and nations by others (Sarkar, 1999-a).

Nevertheless, the finite nature of material assets is unable to satisfy the human for infinite happiness. In comparison, intellectual assets are not finite, but they should be channeled benevolently to uniformly benefit all people and preserve human civilization (Sarkar, 1999). In the pursuit of both material assets and in the course of mental interactions, the mind gets stressed by the reactive momenta of psychic urges and interactions. This is the cause of mental ailments. The solution lies not in suppressing these psychic urges but in transforming and uplifting them onto a higher consciousness plane, and in cultivating a psycho-spiritual approach to inter-personal interactions.

The perpetration of political opportunism and exploitation (resulting from misconceived and selfish micro-psychic longings and attitudes) has often led to cultural imposition as well as suppression of indigenous languages and arts, which in turn creates the psychology of inferiority complex among those who are culturally suppressed. This inferiority complex is difficult to overcome, and results in continued technological industrial and economic dependence on those very perpetrators of cultural suppression and economic exploitation (Sarkar, 1999-b).

In order to prevent these enormously deleterious consequences, individual psychology must involve channeling of one's micropsychic longings towards the infinite and to the pursuit of absolute perfection. Through this process will come about the realization that the global human society is one and indivisible, that different cultures are but different flowers woven into the garland of the universal human society, that the fortunes and destinies of all persons and all communities and all cultures are interlinked.

The Collective Psychology will hence be for human beings of all social groups and regions to assist one another, so as not to be handicapped by the lack of basic necessities (food, clothing, shelter, healthcare and education), and to develop an eclectic societal framework for individual advancement and collective social progress. From this collective psychology is derived the role of Socio-Economics, globally: to ensure that the basic necessities of all human beings are satisfied, that every one has the scope to contribute maximally to the society by having fulfilling tasks and employments, and that there is also scope for cultivation of higher faculties and for unbarred psycho-spiritual expression (Sakar, 1992).

A decent quality of life is to be provide for citizens of all parts of the world; however, no community can do that on its own, without interacting with other communities. For this purpose, our approach should be to form politically autonomous sustainable communities interacting with one another, to form socio-economic blocs and federations, within the framework of a fairer global socio-economic order, based on the earlier delineated premise that the futures of all communities and regions are interwoven. However, in order to develop and maintain a dynamically stable global socio-economic order for sustainable peace, no small community or minority should lag behind culturally, educationally, in natural-resource cultivation or agriculturally or industrially (Sharma et al. 2007).

Cultivation and Retention of Human Resources

Each community in a region is most concerned about its own problems and welfare, and can best address its own socio-economic development. Hence the basis of a strong regional socio-economic order is a sustainable socio-economic community or unit, in which there are appropriate educational employments and health-care facilities and scope for fulfilling work opportunities in all fields of human thought and endeavour. Otherwise, the educated and trained youth will emigrate from that community, which will then lag behind.

The present trend of population migration from rural areas to urban centers (affording professional opportunities) causes antisocial activities, pollution and health problems and unemployment in cities. It breaks up extended-family and those socio-cultural structures, which are so beneficial to social stability. So then, these sustainable socio-economic communities (regional in approach but global in spirit) will help to retain extended family and social relationships, preserve social values and culture (Sarkar, 1992). The concerted involvement of the extended family and socio-cultural structures in raising stable families will in turn also provide scope for introversion and noble pursuits on the part of individuals.

Humanities subjects need a renaissance, based on the above-described guidelines towards the development of an ecletic human society. Today, human society is at crossroads. Reeling under the onslaught of misguided and self-centered micro-psychic longings and materialistic socio-economic systems, it lies tormented and abused, awaiting the soothing touch of benevolence and universalism. 'From the mundane to the supra-mundane and the universal' constitutes
the ideological journey of human advancement and evolution, prompted by the fundamental query of all human beings (Sarkar, 1999). Today’s humanities' academics thus have the sublime responsibility to develop their courses, research and textbooks, which will help to orient human society on this exalted path.

**University – Society Synergetics**

**Concept of Synergetics**

The concept of synergetics is an important aspect of functional effectiveness and harmony, based on integration and balance of the components of a system. In topology and kinetics, for instance, synergetics is represented by triangular and tetrahedral systems. Microbiological structures are based on the icosahedron (figure 3 below).

![Figure 1](image)

**Figure 1**

**Figure 3: Microbiological Structures Based on the Icosahedron**

Human existence is itself trifarious, and synergetic living entails a harmonious blend of the three spheres of existence and a balance among these three spheres of living (Sarkar, 1998). Thus if in a society there is emphasis only on culture and aestheticism, and not on science and technology, the standard of living will be low. Conversely, a technocrat society that ignores aesthetic values and erodes culture will be unstable. Examples of both these societies are found in many regions of the world. Thus technology, culture and aesthetism constitute the ingredients (and a balanced triangle) of a synergetic society (Sarkar 1998) as depicted in Figure 4.

![Figure 4](image)

**Figure 4: Balanced Triangle of a Synergetic Society**

What are the factors needed for economic development of a region? They are agriculture, natural resources, and industrial infrastructure to convert the raw materials into finished goods. There is no way that a single country can have all these three factors required for economic development. In fact, industrially developed countries depend a lot on developing
countries to supply the raw materials for their industrial development and economic growth.

Thus, for economic development and well-being, a group of preferably culturally compatible countries need to come together, to share their agricultural, natural and industrial resources in order to constitute a synergetic socio-economic bloc or region. This is the basis of "synergetic regional economic development within an economic federation", as illustrated in figure 5.

![Figure 5: Synergetic Sectorial Development](image)

In such a synergetic socio-economic bloc, local resources would be utilized maximally through local labour to form an indigenous industrial base. The economic characteristics of such a synergetic socio-economic bloc would be (1) balanced development of agricultural, manufacturing, and service sectors of economy; (2) balance of imported, exported, and locally consumed materials and goods, with an emphasis on indigenous preservation and conversion of raw materials into manufactured goods; and (3) industrial, ecological, and cultural homeostasis (Sarkar, 1992).

For development planning, the balanced triangle of Economic Policy is to consist of (a) People's economy dealing with production and supply of minimum essentials of life, (b) Commercial economics, dealing with monetary and trade policies, for maximum utilization and rational distribution of resources, and (c) Psycho economics, to enhance the intellectual and psychic potentialities of people (Sarkar, 1992 & 1998), as illustrated in figure 6.

![Figure 6: Synergetic Economic Policy](image)

**Synergetics in University**

Academic programs also need to be synergetic, to adroitly combine under-graduate studies, graduate studies, and research in order to promote the effectiveness of each of these three components. Likewise, any particular educational program of study must have a balanced combination of disciplines, so as to educate students who can analyze the multi-disciplinary aspects of different issues confronting the society, and in fact to promote synergy in society.

Now what are the factors of effectiveness of a post-graduate program? Research is of course a prime component of a post-graduate program. However, for research to be in turn effective, it has to be related to and/or influence the community and society. Hence post-graduate studies, research, and community-outreach program all together constitute a synergetic system (figure 7).
**Neo Socio-economics: Progressive Utilization Theory**

**Society at Cross-roads**

The development of Science, catalyzed by the Industrial revolution, has imparted a materialistic stance and institutionalization to Science – to both Natural and Socio-Economic Sciences. This has resulted in maldistribution of the material benefits of Natural Science, resistance to investigate parapsychic phenomena and avenues, as well as to recognize and develop the Science of Consciousness (Towsey and Ghista, 1966).

On the one hand, Science has helped to develop physical amenities, but could not guarantee their fair distribution, due to its institutionalization within a global socio-economic order governed by narrow interests, group and regional sentiments; this has led to intra and inter nation conflicts. On the other hand, Science culture has promoted an analytical faculty of mind, but has locked it up in the narrow confines of materialism; this has resulted in mental stress, because materialistic science has failed to unlock higher states of mind so essential to prevent psychic disorders.

Hence today, human society stands at cross-roads. One choice is a continuation of the present culture, which manifests itself in people being stifled from a full expression of their mental and supramental potentials, while being burdened by economic hardships and/or mental distress. Since Science was expected to rescue people from these problems, but failed to do so, a big segment of society is now unable to feel an affinity with contemporary science, and has become alienated by the societal culture.

If Science continues along this path, it will lead to greater polarization in society. The alternative is for Science to provide for both material and psychic fulfillment. A universal social outlook would make it possible for all people to live in dignity. At the same time, availability of the means for developing and scientifically qualifying higher faculties of mind would rescue society from materialism, enable people to experience transcendental states of the mind, and prevent psychic conflicts and drug abuse. For this purpose, we need:

- development, acceptance, and application of a new Paradigm of Science
- a new concept of Social Outlook: Neo-Humanism
- a new Global Socio-Economic Order

**New Science Paradigm**

In the last fifty years, the Theory of Relativity (special and general), has altered our views of space and time, while Quantum theory has necessitated a new conception of the nature of matter and energy. Even during this period, physicists had started to regard Consciousness as fundamental, and matter to be a derivative of Consciousness. According to them, we cannot get beyond Consciousness; everything we talk about, everything that we postulate as existing, requires Consciousness. Matter, it is said, is only an appearance, whereas Consciousness alone is real and matter is its derivative.

This new paradigm of Science is to provide a common base for development of physical and life sciences, psychology and medical sciences. This would help develop better understanding of the mind, its disorders and rejuvenation. It would also provide the stimulus of a new outlook on Socio-economics. The concepts, presented in a related work, are fundamental to this new Science paradigm (Towsey and Ghista, 1966-a & 1997-b).

**Neo Social Outlook (Neo-humanism)**

Because of Consciousness being deemed to be the fundamental constituent of matter and mind, all human beings can be considered to be bound together by common ties of fraternity. Further, the destinies of all human beings are inter-linked. The important idea, from a social view point, is that human society is one and indivisible (Sarkar, 1999-b). The key to
global peace is, hence, for all people and all nations to accept and imbibe the universal outlook, and develop public policies based on the concept of "one for all and all for one".

**Neo Socio-economic Order (PROUT)**

There are invariably many obstacles in the implementation of such a 'progressive' neo-humanistic social outlook, caused by a great majority of the people in the world not having the basic necessities (food, shelter, clothing, health-care, education), as well as other requisite physical amenities to save time spent in physical chores. This points to the need of a Neo Socio-Economic Order, to enable all human beings to afford the basic necessities of living, to be materialistically comfortable by ensuring emoluments commensurate to the significance of their work in society, and to (at the same time) be able to develop their para-spychic potentialities.

So then, let's enunciate the principles of this neo-socioeconomic order called Prout (Progressive Utilization Theory), propounded by Prabhat R. Sarkar (1992). The first principle is cosmic ownership and individual trusteeship, along with rational consumption and equitable distribution of the physical resources of the universe. The second principle is that, for individual security and societal stability, the minimal necessities of life need to be guaranteed through 100% employment and minimal wage. The third principle is that the remuneration for one's contribution to society needs to be proportional to the importance and value of the contributions.

The fourth principle is that the productivity of commodities be proportional to the collective need, and that prices be kept stable; this will help augment purchasing capacity and standard-of-living. The fifth principle is that the Economic System should foster the development of physical, intellectual and para-spychic human potentialities as well as their implementation for collective welfare.

**Culminating Role of a University in Society**

**A Neohumanist Society**

We will now provide the basis of a Neohumanist society (Sarkar 1992-b).

**a) Bifocal Existence**

Human beings have two sides and roles of existence: individual and collective, which are in a way complimentary. As an individual, it is the intrinsic nature of a human being to seek supreme fulfillment in the quest for undisturbed peace. On the other hand, the collective role of a human being is in fact to help to create such an environment for people to live in, so that their energy is not entirely spent in the struggles for physical existence and psychic fulfillment. Thereby their attention can be turned to liberation of intellect and self-realization. Concomitantly, the role of Education is also to help to inculcate and to teach the means to satisfy these needs.

**b) Universal Outlook**

All human beings have a common heritage and a common destiny. Yet, the conflicts and struggles in different parts of the world today can be linked to the lack of realization that human society is one and indivisible. This has led to suppression of the cultural and psychic expressions and socio-economic exploitations within and among nations. Hence, an important role of Education is to help develop a neohumanistic social outlook, free from the narrow confines of all sorts of groupisms, racism, and regionalism. This outlook also emphasizes that the welfare of all living beings is interlinked. All living beings, including plants and animals, have both utilitarian value as well as existential value. A balanced ecological environment is hence necessary for all of them to develop their full potential (Sarkar 1998 & 99-a).

**c) Indigenous Development**

Economics as taught today is firstly empirical, and secondly has little influence in the economics (of exploitation and monopoly) in practice, which has polarized human society and failed to fulfill the basic living needs for all people. This is because of not recognizing the basic tenet of (regional) economic development: to cater for the welfare of the local people of the region, through maximizing the socio-economic potentiality of decentralized socio-economic blocs by the local people themselves (without being controlled or exploited in the private or public sector domains).

At the grass-roots level, the local residents will ensure maximum development of local resources, by ensuring local conversion of locally available raw materials and produces into manufacturing and processed goods. In order to ensure full-employment to the local people, medium-sized industries could be organized as cooperatives. Therein, production would not be profit oriented, but instead based on consumption demand. Income tax need not be levied, since the parties most able to pay it avoid doing so and also to discourage black-money accumulation and circulation. Instead, excise duty could be levied on the non-essential and luxury items, and the capital generated locally ought to be utilized for local development. In this way, by enabling easy availability of basic needs, guaranteeing full employment, keeping prices stable, augmenting the economic de-
velopment of the region and increasing salaries proportionally, the purchasing capacity of the people and hence their living standards would be continually raised (Ghista, 2004).

d) Economic Liberation
We cannot afford to let academic economics be a theoretical extravaganza, while real-life economics continues to be like the board-game of monopoly where one party systematically liquidates the others. Economics is a practical subject, and by means of well-conceived tutorial simulation and learning systems (taught as practical in economics courses), the application of different systems on the level and variations of the purchasing capacity (as a measure of living standard) can be simulated and studied.

Economists in the academia could make innovations on these aforementioned factors of indigenous development, in order to develop, teach, and foster implementation of the Decentralized Economies of Local regional development, as a means not only for third-world development but also for warding-off economic recessions (Sarkar 1992; Ghista 2004).

e) Know-how for Living Needs
Of course, a prime role of Education is to indeed teach the means for providing the basic living needs, namely natural resources cultivation and food production, housing construction, and the production of clothing, health-care delivery, production of household amenities, individual and public transport. Here too, emphasis is to be placed on local characteristics, indigenous means and cultural relevance.

The above educational roles can together help to develop the know-how for culturing societies with proper living standards for all people, and an outlook that enables them to assist one another to augment the living standards of their residents.

f) Human Conduct
Now, antisocial actions and immoral conduct can stem equally from materialistically guided psychic papula as from socio-economic deprivation and loss of discriminatory sense. From that viewpoint, the cultivation of a neo-humanistic and universal outlook, with proper living standards and intellectual propagation, in a society is very important.

Now human beings can progress from animality to humanity to divinity. Those values that enable transformation from humanity to divinity are called cardinal principles. We need to be careful that misdirected psychic pabula, socio economic privations, psychic stagnancy can also cause violation of cardinal principles and mitigate this psychic expansion and progress.

g) Psychic Liberation
A prime cause of psychic depression is unfulfilled and misguided psychic propensities. Today, majority of the people of the world are suffering from this malady. So the challenge for Science is to develop a means for liberation from one’s psychic propensities.

However, present-day Science is unable to address this need. What is needed (as defined earlier) is a new Science paradigm, which goes beyond matter and mind and are derived from Consciousness. This provides the basis for psychic dilation of the mind and its subordinate psychic plexuses, to gain liberation from the potentialities associated with these plexuses.

h) Human Rights
Violation of legal code can be termed as crime, whereas violation of cardinal values can be termed as sin. While cardinal values remain unchangeable, conceptions of crime undergo transformation with time and society. In a progressive society, the difference between crime and sin will become less and less.

And where does the teaching of Law fit in? Jurisprudence is to ensure that the society can stay progressive. The human rights of individuals to dignified living and minimal necessities of living are to be guaranteed (Ghista, 2004). However, we cannot stop here! We need to also guarantee the fulfillment of the intrinsic nature of human beings for unbarred expansion and expression of the mind (Ghista 2004; Sarkar 1999-a).

i) Bhagvad Dharma
The spirit of Neohumanist society is embodied in Bhavag Dharma. What is dharma? That which controls human conduct and behavior is called dharma. The dharma that leads to the infinite is called Bhagvad Dharma. The real essence of this dharma, its inner import, is hidden in one’s existential ‘I’ feeling. To follow dharma, one needs to practice yoga, to unite one’s unit consciousness with Cosmic Consciousness. Through this endeavor, one acquires true knowledge based on self-realization (the realization of the divinity within one-self).

Responsibility of Educators
Today, human society is in anguish, bleeding from its being subdivided and vivisected, deprived and stifled by dogmatic injunctions. In its dark night of despair and convulsions, who will come forward to give it a healing touch? Neo-humanistic educators have the unique opportunity and the capability to
administer to it the life-generating anurit, for enabling all its entities to live in dignity, to fully develop their psychic potentiality, and to facilitate the exalted progress of one another (Sarkar, 1999-b).

To this end, University educational programs, curricula and research are to incorporate the above-delineated roles of Education and Synergetic society for human welfare, so as to help teach and develop, through the academic programs and curricula, science and technology in tandem with human values and universal outlook of a Neohumanist Society. The educational emphasis on human values will help guarantee appropriate use of science and technology for human benefit. At the same time, inculcating a universal outlook will ensure the cultivation of such public policies, that no community segment in any part of the world lags behind physically and psychically.

In closing, it is clear that the Knowledge Neohumanist society is a desirable state of enlightenment that goes beyond the material progress inherent in a mere knowledge based economy (cf. Sharma et al. 2007). The path to such a state goes beyond the digital divide of securing access to ICT conveniences, most notably broadband Internet where so much content as well as vice co-exist (Sharma & Azura 2005). There is a critical need for information literacy as well as public policy that promotes aspects such as infrastructure, governance, talent and culture.

But we need to go beyond this information literacy to developing higher states of consciousness, to cultivating higher dimensions of the mind, to self-realization of the ‘cosmic I’ within one’s mind. Only then can we culture an enlightened neohumanist society. The role of the quintessential university – from the historic Nalanda and Takshila to the present Oxbridge, Ivies and think-tanks – is to secure such an environment for thought and action that will promulgate the aspects of Bhagavad Dharma based Knowledge Neohumanist society. In this paper, we have provided a pragmatic imposition of philosophy and curriculum that would be expected to engender such a society of people.

References


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As R. S. Kye has written in the article “Professor with a mission”: “[Dhanjoo Ghista] is a professor of professors, a world authority in biomedical engineering and physics, author or editor of 24 textbooks in subjects ranging from Cardiovascular physics to Socio-economic Democracy and the World government (Collective capitalism, Depopervention, Human rights, Template for sustainable peace) and inventor of life-saving implant devices. A pioneer of research into the effect of space travel on astronauts, his work as the founder and leading exponent of the new science of societal engineering has received recognition from academics and institutions alike.” Dr. Dhanjoo N. Ghista has published over 300 works in the fields of engineering, biomedicine, and the social sciences. He is also author/editor of over twenty books on biomedical engineering, engineering physiology, cardiovascular physics, orthopedic mechanics, medical and life physics, spinal injury biomedical engineering, and African
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