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From the Editor

The world's largest democratic election in India concluded recently, setting a new benchmark in the annals of global democracy. The election, spanning 44 days and 7 phases, saw 642 million people, including 312 million women, casting their votes. Despite a slight decline in overall turnout to 66.25% (from 67.4% in 2019) and a decrease in female voter turnout to 66.1% (from 67.18% in 2019), India continues demonstrating its commitment to democratic engagement.

The logistics of this electoral exercise were nothing short of extraordinary. To manage this democratic extravaganza, 68,000 monitoring teams, 4 lakh vehicles, 135 special trains, 1692 air sorties, and 15 million polling and security officials were deployed. Over 1.05 million polling booths were set up, utilising 5.5 million electronic machines. Assuming each political party typically deployed three workers per booth, over 3 million workers well-versed in the electoral process supported and monitored the voting process and crafted communication materials in over two dozen languages to ensure comprehensive voter engagement.

This election, the most expensive in the world, cost the exchequer approximately \$14.4 billion, more than double the expenditure of the 2019 elections and comparable to the 2020 US presidential and congressional races. A staggering 2,660 political parties fielded 8,360 candidates, among whom 797 were

women. Notably, 74 women MPs were elected, slightly down from 78 in 2019.

India's electorate of 969 million people, representing 10% of the world's population, surpasses the population of Europe (approx. 745 mn) and is comparable to that of Africa (approx 1.3 bn spread across 54 countries). The logistical feats were remarkable; in Arunachal Pradesh, election workers travelled 300 miles over four days to set up a polling booth for a single female voter. Himachal Pradesh saw a polling station established at an altitude of 15,256 feet, the highest in the world. In Odisha's Malkangiri district, polling staff trekked 15 kms through forests to safeguard electronic voting machines from Maoist rebels. Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state with 200 million people, held elections all seven days due to its vast population, which rivals Brazil.



Vimlesh Prabhu Desai

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Editor, NIRMAN

Shri Narendra Modi's re-election for a record third consecutive term as the PM of India signals a continued push for reforms and development in the construction, infrastructure, and real estate sectors. NICMAR's focus on excellence in education and research positions us to contribute effectively to the national agenda. By equipping students and industry partners with advanced knowledge and the latest technologies, NICMAR is committed to building a stronger and more resilient India. With the rechristening of the erstwhile National Institute of Construction Management and Research, Hyderabad, to AICTE-affiliated NICMAR Institute of Construction Management and Research, Hyderabad, we are poised to embrace the new opportunities and possibilities that lie ahead.

Appointment of Officiating Director



Dr. Indrasen Singh

Officiating Director,
NICMAR Institute of Construction
Management and Research, Hyderabad

Dr. Indrasen Singh has been appointed as Officiating Director of AICTE-affiliated NICMAR Institute of Construction Management and Research, Hyderabad. Dr. Singh has worked as Dean - NICMAR Delhi campus, NICMAR Goa Campus and Dean of Academics at Hyderabad campus and brings a wealth of experience.

Dr. Singh holds an M.E. in Urban Engineering from the College of Engineering, Guindy and a PhD in Civil Engineering from IIT Roorkee.

Dr. Indrasen Singh brings over 36 years of extensive experience in teaching, research, administration, strategic planning, institutional reforms, accreditation, and consultancy across various organizations. With 26 years of administrative experience, he has served in roles such as Senior

Engineer, Consultant, Deputy General Manager, General Manager, Associate Director, Professor, Professor-in-Charge, Dean, and Senior Professor. He is a fellow of the Institution of Engineers (India), Life member of Indian Roads Congress, Indian Building Congress, and Institute of Urban Transport, New Delhi.

Events

Bidding adieu to ACM 36th batch, QSCM 20th batch and HSEM 21st batch

On an eventful evening of April 20, 2024, the Department of Student Affairs, in collaboration with the spirited ACM 37th batch, threw a spectacular farewell bash for the graduating classes of the ACM 36th batch, QSCM 20th batch, and HSEM 21st batch. The Farewell Bash kicked off at 7:00 p.m., setting the stage for an evening brimming with excitement and emotion.

The Open Mic Night stole the spotlight, with graduating students taking centre stage, sharing poignant memories and life-changing experiences from their time at NICMAR Hyderabad. As the open mic drew to a close, the night only heated up with live music that had everyone grooving to the beats.

The MDC Lawns transformed into a culinary haven for the Farewell Dinner. Laughter and tears flowed freely as they reminisced about the highs and lows of their journey.

The ACM 37th batch, with mixed emotions, extended their warmest wishes to the departing graduates. Their heartfelt speeches were tinged with both joy and melancholy, encapsulating the bittersweet nature of farewells. It was a night to remember, filled with music, laughter, and a sense of camaraderie that will be cherished forever.





Godrej Properties' HR Business Partner visited NICMAR city office in Hyderabad



On 30th May'24, Ms Hanitha Sitamraju, HR Business Partner at Godrej Properties, visited the NICMAR city office in Hyderabad to discuss student engagement and training programs for Godrej executives. Dr K V Prasad and Mr Srikar S V S provided an overview of NICMAR's long-standing industry-academia partnerships. They outlined various student engagement activities with industry partners and detailed the executive development programs conducted by NICMAR.

Academic Outreach Activities

Career Opportunities in Civil & Mechanical Engineering - Talk by Dr. V. Srihari and Dr. P. Muralidhar

Dr V Srihari and Dr P. Muralidhar delivered a talk on 'Career Opportunities for Civil and Mechanical Engineering Students' at IARE College of Engineering, Dindigul, Hyderabad



Faculty Recognition



Dr. P. Ammani Wins Special Appreciation Award from ISTD Hyderabad

Dr. P. Ammani received the Special Appreciation Award for her contributions to the Learning and Development field from the Indian Society for Training and Development, Hyderabad Chapter, at the 2nd L&D Awards on May 4, 2024.

Certifications

- 1** Dr K V Prasad and Dr Arun Chandramohan successfully cleared the 'IGBC Accredited Professional (IGBC AP)' examination conducted by the Indian Green Building Council (IGBC).
- 2** Dr. P. Ammani successfully completed certification in 'Advanced Life Coaching Training in the Speciality of Law of Attraction' from Transformation Academy
- 3** Dr P Muralidhar completed the NPTEL Swayam FDP on 'Digital Supply Chain Management'
- 4** Dr P Muralidhar completed the NPTEL Swayam FDP on 'Operations Management'

Faculty publications

- 1** Vijayeta Malla, **Prasad K V** and Venkata Santosh Kumar Delhi (2024), Analysing inhibitors to BIM implementation: a social network theoretical perspective, Construction Innovation, Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of-print. <https://doi.org/10.1108/CI-06-2023-0128> (ABDC 'B', Scopus 'Q1')
- 2** **Vikrant Sopan Yadav, Onkar K. Chothe.** (2024). Effective Management of Construction Disputes in India. European Economic Letters, 14(2), 8 4 1 – 8 4 5 . <https://doi.org/10.52783/eel.v14i2.1410> (ABDC 'C')

Papers presented at conferences

- 1** **Prasad, K.V.** and Vijayeta Malla. (2024) presented a paper titled 'An investigation on the benefits, obstacles and solutions for BIM adoption in the Indian Construction Industry' at the International Conference on Structural Engineering and Construction Management (SECON'24), organised by the Department of Civil Engineering, Federal Institute of Science and Technology (FISAT)®, Hormis Nagar, Mookkannoor, Angamaly, Ernakulam, Kerala, India - 683577 (held on 5th and 6th of Jun'24)



2 **Dr. Vikrant Yadav** presented a paper titled 'AI powered Social Communication: a Qualitative Investigation in to Social and Ethical Concerns' at the 11th International Conference on Human Interaction and Emerging Technologies (IHiet-AI 2024): Artificial Intelligence and Future Applications organised by IHiet and Lausanne University Hospital, Switzerland. (April 25-27, 2024)

3 **Dr P Muralidhar** presented a paper on 'Warehouse safety risk assessment through safety mapping methods' at International Conference on Logistics, Supply Chain and Transportation (ICLST) 2024 at NIT Calicut held from 24-26, May 2024

4 **Dr P Muralidhar** presented a paper on 'Cold supply chain Supplier selection Using MCDM methods' at the International Conference on Logistics, Supply Chain and Transportation (ICLST) 2024 at NIT Calicut held from 24-26, May 2024



External engagement

1 **Dr P Muralidhar** chaired a session on 'Industrial Engineering' at the International Conference on Logistics, Supply Chain and Transportation (ICLST) 2024 at NIT Calicut held from 24-26, May 2024

3 **Dr Vikrant Yadav** was invited to deliver a session on 'Enhancing Research Paper Writing and Publication Skills' at Faculty Development Programme organised by the Dr D Y Patil Law College, Pune (May 4, 2024)

2 **Dr Vikrant Yadav** was invited to deliver a session on 'Use of ICT in Teaching Health Laws' at Faculty Development Programme organised by the DES Navalmal Firodia Law College, Pune (May 9, 2024)

4 On June 26th, **Dr P. Muralidhar** delivered an invited session on 'Supply Chain Optimisation and Logistics Management' at the Faculty Development Programme of the School of Planning and Architecture (SPA), Bhopal

New paradigm in Higher Education Institutions – Time to change?

Part one of a two-part series

As per Ministry of Higher Education of India, the country has the world's second largest higher education system with over 58,000 higher education institutions. According to the All-India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2019-20, more than 70 percent of the institutions in India are managed by private players. World, and so is India, witnessing dramatic changes in higher education. A new era of 'learning beyond classrooms' is emerging rapidly in education. With the advent of internet, social media, AI/ML, IoT, chatgpt etc., there is information overload available at finger tips. Top-it-all, free and paid online courses make education accessible at doorstep. The conventional education system is being challenged. **Letting go of outdated beliefs, old style classroom teaching, silo-based learning and exam-based evaluations and allowing ourselves to embrace new ideas, paths and technology is the new normal.** The advent of technology has redefined skills thus altering the landscape of talent demand. Higher education institutions (HEIs) need to align themselves with industry requirements and students' expectations.

Given this changing dynamics, HEIs need to transform themselves. One of the critical component that needs attention is 'Leadership at HEIs'.

Leadership

In the new age era where information is available at a press of a button, learners are seeking change in the learning methods. **The majority of current leadership in HEIs hails from a generation that predates the internet era.** This generational divide results in



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substantial differences in mind-sets, making it challenging to align the aspirations and expectations of senior leadership with those of the younger generation. Consequently, realizing the vision and mission of educational entities has become increasingly difficult. Significant discrepancies exist in various institutional activities, such as recruitment, promotion, operational methodologies, marketing, and internationalization. Employees often find themselves unmotivated by the leaders' rhetoric and are frequently surprised by their outdated perspectives. Many institutions continue to function primarily due to their historical achievements, with little to ensure similar future progress.

HEIs need leaders who are able to transform themselves, adopt and adapt to new ways of working. **Existing leaders must embrace a forward-thinking outlook or be prepared to pave way for new cohort of leaders who are visionary and have a forward-looking mind-set.** Unlike industry, most HEIs prioritize seniority over capability and competency for

leadership positions, aligning more closely with a government-style approach. Another noticeable trend in some HEIs is the repeated selection of the same individuals for leadership roles, akin to politicians being re-elected despite not delivering results or proving their mettle. Such self-decorated leaders focus too much on staying in power. These leaders often get allured to their positions leading them to avoid taking risks, reject newer ways, continue with outdated methods of operation to protect themselves from scrutiny and criticism. They act as mere intermediaries between top management and their teams, driven by the fear of losing their positions. The reluctance to think out-of-the box and challenge the status quo discourages and demotivates employees and thus hinders organizational growth and adaptation. This antiquated approach has caused HEIs to lag in adopting new methodologies, ideas, and technologies because of leaders' inability to match with changing dynamics of future requirements. **Leaders who have advanced based on seniority often perpetuate similar norms when developing the next rung leaders.**

Workplace culture of any institution or firm is fundamentally shaped by the top management. The beliefs, practices, norms, and ways of working within an organization often mirror the leaders' thinking and actions. When leaders are incompetent or ineffective, it casts a negative shadow on the workplace culture at HEI. In an era where thousands of HEIs compete for student enrolment to remain viable, this ideology is detrimental and can lead to decline in institutional growth.

It's time for HEIs to revisit their leadership to bring about a change. It is imperative to shift towards selecting leaders based on their abilities and proficiencies. By doing so, HEIs can foster a culture of innovation and responsiveness, better positioning themselves to meet contemporary

challenges and thrive in a competitive market. **HEIs in India require visionary leaders who can drive change, adopt futuristic approach and advocate for EdTech to enhance learning experiences and improve operational efficiency.** A leader should be the voice and face of the people she / he leads. A good leader is the one who is professionally driven, creates mechanism to find the best in all, is flexible and promotes inclusiveness. Fostering a positive culture that emphasizes progression, innovation, risk-taking, and collaboration necessitates the selection of leaders based on qualities, skill, knowledge, potential and aptitude.

One of the greatest leaders in the United States history often signed off as "Your obedient servant, A. Lincoln". Some research has suggested servant leadership as good for HEI. **Servant leaders put others ahead of themselves. Servant leaders honor and appreciate the faculty's expertise and diversity, enabling them to practice their academic freedom and autonomy.** They empower faculty members to explore different methods of teaching, pursue research, collaborate with academia and industry, and experiment with uncharted paths. They also supply the necessary resources, feedback, and recognition, fostering opportunities for their professional development and career progression.

Taking cue from their counterparts in the Industry, HEIs leaders should enhance their knowledge, capabilities and skills to remain pertinent. As HEIs struggle to remain relevant and prove their worth, it's time to see through forward looking lens. If small, mid-sized, and large corporations can be successfully led by young brigades, why can't the same be true for the education sector?

To Be Continued.....

A Year in UAE – My Journey So Far



Debaditya Ghosh

Senior Engineer - Quantity Survey,
Shapoorji Pallonji Mideast LLC, Dubai.
ACM 35th batch (2021-23)- Hyderabad campus,
Silver Medallist - ACM.

Relocating to an international location for professional purposes is a dream many candidates cherish, myself included. This aspiration became a reality in September 2022 when Shapoorji Pallonji International, the international division of the renowned Indian conglomerate, announced its placement results. Despite the gruelling interview process, which felt akin to being grilled, baked, roasted, and toasted, I received an offer letter in October 2022, confirming my relocation to Dubai, UAE—a destination admired for both work and leisure.

As we approached this significant transition, we prepared diligently. In March 2024, our engineering degree certificates were attested by the Foreign Ministries of both nations, a process completed within a couple of weeks. After concluding my journey at NICMAR in April 2023, I bid farewell to friends, faculty, and support staff and returned home. The mixed emotions of joy and sadness accompanied my final preparations. With our visas and air tickets in

hand, I embarked on my journey to Dubai on May 31, 2023, leaving behind my dear family and hometown.

Upon arriving in Dubai, often compared to New York City in terms of opportunities and dreams, I experienced firsthand the city's vast and modern infrastructure. The experience at Dubai International Airport, including the metro ride for terminal transfer and baggage collection, was remarkable. The efficient immigration and customs process, supported by advanced monitoring systems, led to a warm welcome from the company driver at the arrival lounge, marking the beginning of my UAE journey.

Dubai, one of the seven emirates of the UAE, is a beacon of advanced technology, rivalling China and Japan. Expatriates often arrive with preconceived notions shaped by social media, showcasing only the city's opulence. However, Dubai offers much more. The driverless metro, with minimal waiting times and ample vending machines for ticket purchases, exemplifies the city's efficient public transport. The etiquette on escalators and the seamless connectivity provided by RTA buses enhance the commuting experience. The fare system, with travel zones and a cap of AED 7.50 for extensive travel, ensures affordability and convenience.

Dubai's shopping malls each provide a unique experience, with distinctive fragrant ambiances that elevate the shopping experience. Additionally, traditional markets, such as the Gold Souk and Spice Souk, offer a glimpse into the city's rich cultural heritage. During festivals like New Year and Eid, the city hosts spectacular drone and fireworks shows. The culinary scene is diverse, featuring Arabic and Lebanese delicacies

alongside cuisines from around the world, reflecting the city's cosmopolitan nature.

While the cost of living in Dubai is high, comparable to cities like Singapore, Hong Kong, New York, London, and Munich, the city offers something for every budget. Dubai ensures a safe, sustainable, modern lifestyle with necessary amenities. Its advanced surveillance system and strict law enforcement contribute to a secure environment, particularly for women, setting a global standard for safety.

Dubai's offerings are vast, and this account provides a glimpse of my experiences in the city. There are many more stories and experiences to share, which will be reserved for future updates. Until then, take care and enjoy.

UPCOMING EVENT

Induction of new Batch of 2024-26
(July 25-August 2, 2024)

