

Crisis in Higher Education: A Symptom of Systemic Decay

In a move aligned with the New Education Policy-2020, the discontinuation of the two-year MPhil degree in 2020 aimed at streamlining the education system and reducing the time and cost for students pursuing a PhD. While the intent was commendable, the implementation has sparked confusion, leading to unforeseen challenges for many research scholars. A recent warning from the University Grants Commission (UGC) sheds light on the disconcerting revelation that some universities continue to offer the now-defunct MPhil program, potentially exposing unsuspecting students to an invalid course.

The apparent misdemeanor by these universities raises questions about their motives, seemingly driven by the desire to collect fees ranging from Rs 30,000 to Rs 1 lakh per annum from students enrolled in the obsolete program. Equally disconcerting is the UGC's reactive response to the situation. A more proactive approach, involving strict enforcement of the new rule and the issuance of regular, prominently advertised cautionary notes since 2020, could have curtailed this malpractice much earlier.

Editorial

However, this development is not an isolated incident but rather a symptom of the larger crisis afflicting the country's higher education system. Public universities, once bastions of academic freedom, have become tools for dispensing favors by ruling governments, openly interfering in academic affairs and appointment processes. The erosion of autonomy is palpable, manifested in the escalating intolerance towards dissent and the suppression of free debate on campuses.

Underfunding compounds the challenges faced by the higher education sector, adversely impacting both teachers and students. The lack of financial resources stifles innovation and compromises the quality of human resources. The consequences of this systemic decay are far-reaching, hindering the sector's ability to adapt, evolve, and provide a nurturing environment for intellectual growth.

It is imperative for authorities to address the root causes of these issues. Stricter enforcement of policies, transparent governance, and increased funding are crucial steps towards revitalizing the higher education landscape. Additionally, fostering an atmosphere that encourages intellectual discourse, respects academic autonomy, and safeguards the rights of students and scholars is essential for the long-term health of the education system.

The current scenario calls for a comprehensive and concerted effort from policymakers, educational institutions, and the broader society to restore the integrity of higher education in the country. Only through collaborative and sustained initiatives can we hope to overcome the present challenges and build a future where education serves as a beacon of enlightenment and progress.

Love, Loss and Redemption : 'Girl on the Beach'

The doyen of the Indian film industry, Sashadhar Mukerji, who initially joined Bombay Talkies and went on to create Filmistan and Filmalaya Studios, had launched his son Joy Mukerji many decades ago who went on to create history in the Hindi film industry. The legacy continues as Joy's eldest son Monjoy Joy Mukerji enamored us with his maiden venture, Hai Apna Dil Toh Awara, and his award-winning short film Footnotes. Now, Monjoy is ready to transit you on an exhilarating journey of romance, grief, and life per se...

In this Exclusive Interview by S.K.De, conducted in the winter of 2023, Monjoy Joy Mukerji delves into his passion for cinema with music as the silver lining, his preferences and what's presently keeping him engaged in Indian cinema.

My Heartiest Congratulations to you, Monjoy for having won the Best Director Award at Rome and Bhutan's Druk International Film Festival 2023 for Girl On The Beach Short Film.

Your short film also won the Best Short Film at Rome, Tokyo, Rome Women Film Festival, Singapore, Hong Kong and Dubai International Film Festivals. How does it feel?

It feels wonderful when your work is appreciated and applauded with a token of these laurels.

What inspired you to pen a script like this and later make a short film like Girl On The Beach which strikes a universal chord?

My good friend, Prem Thakur dropped by my place with this vivid story of his in his mind, I kinda liked what he narrated to me and I then decided to pen it down.

What I truly liked about the Story was the conflict with mother nature (the Sea) and the girl, she is unable to accept the death of her love, the Naval officer and her inability to move on in her life.

This itself is an universal emotion as we all lose our loved ones and have this bitterness towards everyone and the Almighty. We do not feel like connecting with the world. We all carry emotional baggage that weigh us down and make us slow or even stuck and we find it difficult to move forward in our lives.

But then we all have to move on as its our life that matters too.

The story was there with me to be told to the world. I delayed it by a year due to my work commitments, come February 2023; my restless mind and heart decided to make a go for it; as the sunlight during winters from mid November to end of February gives you a warm light from the sun which is ideal for the story as the whole film is based on the beach under sunlight.

There has been no artificial light used in the film. The



magic hours of early mornings and evening light from 4pm to 6pm was ideal for the film and when you have a maestro, Director of Photography, Anil Singh, you can expect sheer magic with your frames.

Ajay Singha has done a brilliant job with the music of the film, I like the way Ajay has used the felt piano and the strings that completely melt your heart. Debojit Changmai and Amrit Pritam have done wonderful work with the sound design of the film. Manoj Nool was brilliant with the edit and my dear friend Irfan Khatri dazzled with his costumes for the film.

How is writing a short film different from a feature film and why?

In a short film - the time frame is quite stipulated so one does not beat around the bush and comes to the point which

one is making in the story. In a short film, a film maker can experiment with new wave of thinking and writing.

In a feature film, which is a longer format of over 75 minutes to 180 minutes the task of writing becomes more challenging. Its a daunting task for working on the script and sometimes it may even take years in writing. the script and the filmmaker evolve simultaneously on the story line. In both formats short and long feature films, the screenplay has to be intriguing and tight to captivate the audience. The Girl On The Beach is a metaphor of love and grief, what has been your thought as a filmmaker when you made this?

Love and grief are two sides of a coin - my thought was to strike a universal chord with the audiences and am glad that

the audiences have appreciated it as well.

How and why did you decide to cast Prithvi Hatte for the main lead?

I was looking for an artist experienced, talented and beautiful and then Irfan Khatri, the costume designer of the film recommended her to me. I met her in my Film Studio, Filmalaya Studio, Mumbai.

She seemed promising, I did see some of her work links and was confident that she can deliver the performance. she is one fine talent and will go a long way in the field of acting.

What are your expectations from this short film? What are your forthcoming projects?

If my work can touch a chord with the audience, I feel my film has conveyed the message well.

The film has taken its flight and will be orbiting around its audience, as for my future projects, I have written some scripts and I hope to begin work on it in the new year.

How easy or difficult was it to juggle between being the Writer Director and the Hero of the film?

Writing and Directing is something which I have done in the past, so it is something that I am used to. With my first feature film, "Hai Apna Dil Toh Awara" (2016) and short film Footnotes (2021) in both these films I played a little cameo role.

In "Girl on the beach", when I decided to play the naval officer, I had to look the part - so I had my own test look ;

for which I lost 4.5 kilos in 11 days and toned myself up for the part.

Once Irfan the costume designer got the costumes to the Studio and I wore it, we both had that grin on the face. I knew I would now be able to play the part well.

But yes, its quite a task as I was directing the film too.

Girl on the Beach Short Film :

https://youtu.be/SHW_JD5b2bY?si=n82JpuY4wgePR0n

Cast - Monjoy Joy Mukerji Prithvi Hatte. Music - Ajay Singha. D.O.P - Anil Singh

Monjoy Joy Mukerji had interacted with the media in Punjab recently and here is the link of Monjoy Joy Mukerji's City Home News Channel Interview

Dunki: Who dreams it – A Country or its People?

Just a week before new year 2024, the time when the world sets itself to celebrate Christmas, 'Dunki', a movie by Rajkumar Hirani is released. The film is made with some of the skilled and most expert actors of Hindi Film Industry, taking Shah Rukh Khan for leading the show accompanied by Tapsee Pannu, Vicky Kaushal, Vikram Kochhar, Anil Grover and Boman Irani.

What we can watch here is the life-on-bet illegal trespassing of people of big dreams having less or no scope of making it happen. Of course, it is well proven that movies on chasing dreams and achieving its goals is a secure concept.

And it certainly catches attention of the audience. For 'Dunki', made with around 120 crores has already collected

more than 360 crore from its global release till date.

India, one among many other countries of the world is consisted of people of modest income, low eligibility and less chances of getting elite livelihood options.

In our society, where we evaluate even intelligence and intellectuality in terms of money, competition and demarcation are certain things that happen.

There is crisis of growth everywhere that we find in our nation. If we score good, we're tagged as secure, if we have money, we're safe, if we've influential connections, we're regarded and known. Our society has accepted this protocol and following it without any discontent. But, those who fit inside this safe margin of security is a countable number. Whereas, uncountable



people are there to struggle for their existence.

The movie shows some such figures, who lack in education, money, family background and don't have any influential contacts to get any better scope of fulfilling their

life's goal.

Finding nothing to satisfy their needs, they finally opt for the 'Donkey Flight' path. This is a process to most dangerous illegal migration through difficult routes to reach to the Western countries.

In this movie, we can see five desperate individuals to take this route and come to London, the place that they think as a place of making fortune. When they reach there, they come to know the reality in store that awaits for the poor and low-skilled immigrants.

It's extreme humiliation and immoral options that they're forced to choose to stay in that place. Finally, they follow a similar illegal trail to return to India and live in peace that they're missing so badly while staying in abroad.

But, where is the dream and the light that we expect from a dream chasing film? As long as it goes, we can see a pain and urge seeking for relief and retrieval fuming out of the heart and speech of the poor and people who need security and safety in their life.

A nation, India, that we

know to be dreaming big, making so many progresses in various areas fail here.

A populous country that we are has still sparse in its provisions to utilize manpower and human resources. Quite natural that human capacity differs and people need facilities to survive. Not only that, they need comfort, peace and safety.

In our country, are we to dream of trespassing to get all these? Isn't there any other ways to change the landscape? Won't India, a free country of our dreams resolve this shortage? It takes time, may be to say that we're progressive in true sense.

If what we watch in 'Dunki' is the real fact, then where is that place to provide safety, peace and comfort to all its people? We need to search on this.

-Arkaprava Das

Udaipur's Burger Mania

Udaipur: Swiggy, India's leading on-demand convenience platform, today shared Udaipur's top trends in food delivery in 2023 with the How India Swiggy'd report.

Udaipur's food aficionados showcased their love for diverse cuisines, with Punjabi Thali, Aloo Tikki Burger, Daily Meals, Special Thali, and standard Thali emerging as the top five most-ordered dishes in the city. This eclectic mix demonstrates Udaipur's love for both traditional and contemporary flavors. Panchmukhi Restaurant, Dil Punjabi Dhaba,



McDonald's, the Dhaba Sec-14, and Mr. Sandwich secured their positions as the top 5 restaurants receiving the highest number of orders in 2023.

Culinary Chronicles - What Udaipurites ordered from Swiggy in 2023

The most popular food categories, based on user preferences, are Thalis, Burgers & Wraps, Main Course, Pav Bhaji, and Paratha. Interestingly, dinner emerges as the prime time for most orders. Paneer Butter Masala stands out as the local favourite, while the top snacks feature the Aloo Tikki Burger, Mexican Pizza Sandwich, and Veggie Burger.

Chocolate Truffle Cake, Belgium Chocolate Truffle Cake, Rasmalai, Jalebi, and Gulab Jamun took center stage when it came to the city's top five desserts.

Speaking on these order trends, Sidharth Bhakoo, VP, National Business Head at Swiggy, stated "As Udaipur gorged away on Burgers the most this year, Swiggy is proud to be the leading convenience platform for the city's food enthusiasts, reflecting our commitment to delivering exceptional culinary experiences. With our focus on convenience and delight, we are dedicated to serving Udaipur's vibrant culinary landscape and quick commerce needs."

Fun fact, in 2023, the highest bill paid through Dineout reached Rs. 49,000. Thanks to Swiggy Dineout, users collectively saved Rs. 18 lakhs while spending a total of Rs. 81 lakhs, underscoring the platform's influence on dining experiences.

V Launches International Roaming Campaign

Udaipur: Renowned telecommunications service provider V has initiated its International Roaming campaign for the current travel season, offering unlimited free incoming calls at just Rs. 133 per day in over 100 countries. As part of the truly unlimited international roaming experience, V has included the Maldives in the list of covered destinations. Under the Truly Unlimited International Roaming plan, subscribers traveling abroad this season can benefit not only from unlimited free incoming calls but also unlimited data and outgoing voice calls.

The campaign reflects V's dedication to offering seamless connectivity and cost-effective international roaming plans, ensuring that travelers enjoy a hassle-free and enriched communication experience during their journeys.



Elevating Sportswear: Adidas Joins Urban Square Mall's Stylish Lineup



Udaipur: Urban Square Mall, the premier shopping destination in Udaipur, proudly welcomed the inauguration of the Adidas Store, a dynamic addition to its diverse retail offerings. This new retail space is set to redefine the shopping experience for footwear enthusiasts, sports fanatics, and active lifestyle enthusiasts.

Spread across 1278 sq feet, the Adidas Store, designed in a cutting-edge stadium format, showcases a curated collection of premium category sports shoes, sportswear, activewear, and accessories. This latest addition reflects Urban Square Mall's commitment to providing a world-class shopping environment where visitors can explore and indulge in their passion for sports and fashion.

Mr. Uddhav Poddar, Managing Director, Bhumi Group, expressed excitement about the new venture, stating, "The Adidas Store at

Urban Square Mall is not just a retail outlet but a destination for sports enthusiasts and fashion-forward individuals. We are thrilled to bring this iconic brand to our mall, enhancing the overall shopping experience for our visitors. The carefully curated selection of premium sportswear and footwear aligns seamlessly with our commitment to offering the best in class to our customers."

The Adidas Store at Urban Square Mall is poised to become a go-to destination for those seeking the perfect blend of style and performance in their activewear. Visit Urban Square Mall today to experience the fusion of fashion and sports at its finest.

Sardar Patel University Honors Theater Director Sunil Tank



In a three-day event organized by the Hindi department of Sardar Patel University in the Anand district of Gujarat, National Hindi Theater Workshop was conducted. Renowned theater

director Sunil Tank from Udaipur was invited as a specialist and guest to impart theater training. The workshop witnessed the participation of 76 students pursuing postgraduate and doctoral degrees from Gujarat and various states, including Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Nepal, and Bengal. The training covered intricacies of Natyashastra, stagecraft, and acting principles. As part of the culmination, a theater presentation directed by Sunil Tank was showcased.

Notably, Dr. Niranjan Patel, the Vice-Chancellor of Sardar Patel University, honored Sunil Tank with a memorial symbol for his exceptional contribution to Indian theater. The recognition was presented in the presence of Dr. Dilip Mehra, the Head of the Hindi Department, Dr. Parvati Gosai, Dr. Hansmukh Parmar, Dr. Anila Mishra, and Dr. Seema Rathod, along with esteemed theater practitioners from Gujarat Rangmanch, including Kanubhai Patel, Kumar Bhoi, Suresh Patel.

The event showcased Sunil Tank's significant contributions to Indian arts and theater, and he also delivered a lecture on Indian arts and stagecraft during the program.

Udaipur Speaker Vasudev Devnani Extends Courtesies to President and Vice President

-Gopendra Nath Bhatt



extending New Year greetings.

In the approximately 20-minute meeting, the President congratulated the Assembly Speaker on his new responsibilities. Following this, Devnani also met Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar at his official residence on Maulana Azad Road, extending New Year wishes.

This visit marked Devnani's first trip to Delhi after assuming the position of the Assembly Speaker.

Visit to Tripura Sundari Mata Temple

On Wednesday, Assembly Speaker Devnani is scheduled to visit the Tripura Sundari Mata Temple near Banswara Dungarpur in Southern Rajasthan. During this visit, he will seek blessings at the temple. Devnani is expected to spend the night in Udaipur on Wednesday and depart for Jaipur on Thursday morning.