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The Doon School WEEKLY

"I sketch your world exactly as it goes." -Arthur Foot
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Of Pedagogies and Futures

Excerpts from a conversation with Avijit Pathak, Professor of Sociology at the Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Doon School Weekly: Do you think the New Education policy of 2020 holds the promise of Indian education moving closer to the dreams of Ambedkar and Tagore?

Prof. Avijit Pathak: There are two points to this question that I want you to think about but do not get carried away with what I'm saying. First, as a young student — is it a fancy ideal or a real concern? Is the language of the new education policy a fancy ideal or a genuine concern to be practiced through strong political will? Now, for example, with the education policy one thing that often comes up is about child-centric education and it shows that the child is active, talked to, and is nurtured. Now see the debate that took place throughout the world and particularly in our country. Just look at these two minds, Jiddu Krishnamurti and Rabindranath Tagore. They spoke so deeply about it and tried to do something about it through their experimentation with pedagogy, education and schooling. However, what is happening today is that this entire process of 'child-centric' education, where the child is a wonderer, with the teacher engaged in conversation with the child, nurturing and allowing the child to evolve and grow is being so ruthlessly killed by today's schools in the mainstream

battle of education. If the new education policy is engaged, there are two or three things that are very important.

A good teacher comes to class to inspire her students. That teacher does not come to the street and loudly say "I am a patriot, I have taught my student today". Everything happens in silence. It is an age of loudness.

Firstly, you need great teachers. The acquirement of teachers has to be free of the corruption that we see around, the nepotism. Today you will see that the recruitment of teachers is a political issue. Second, you need a beautiful teacher-student partnership. Emerging as a tired, exhausted teacher, tired of senseless duty, teaching 60 children in a broken classroom with a poor toilet. Now

what do you do about it? If we wish to translate those fancy ideals into actual practices, we need that sensitivity in place. Moreover, the second point of caution that is also talked about is critical thinking and critical consciousness. That is a great idea, but also think of it in a way that the idea of critical consciousness is coming from the state, a government, that needs to be comfortable with criticality

DSW: This is with reference to one of the articles you've written, titled, 'Our children don't need a Deshbhakti curriculum'. In that article, you've led us to imagine a school that activates critical thinking, arouses humanistic temper, and softens the soul. In another article, you spoke about the art of teaching is the cultivation of the soulforce and consciousness. Assuming that both of these go hand-in-hand, do you think that this cannot happen with the various curricula across different school boards, where are they lacking the most?

ATK: For example, you love your mother. You are so deeply connected that by looking at her face, or her looking at yours, she knows that something is deeply troubling you. There is so much that is common. There is no burden in that relationship. You and your

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mother are deeply engaged, and this engagement is not mechanically and ritually demonstrated everyday. That is as if every morning, afternoon and evening you have to remind her 'Mother I love you'. There is so much trust in that relationship, it happens in silence, in gestures, and in communication. So what is happening today, as you referred to the Deshbhakti, it is happening in the name of demonstrative patriotism. What I object to is its loudness, its exhibitionist character, as if on every occasion, you have to demonstrate... Your engagement with your country will manifest through your deeds, and many of these do take place in silence. A good teacher comes to class to inspire her students. That teacher does not come to the street and loudly say 'I am a patriot, I have taught my student today'. Everything happens in silence. It is an age of loudness. So that is my problem with that. That's why I always attach great importance to it, and that many of you, growing up in an age of so much visual media, possibly it would be difficult for you to accept and imagine. But think for a second about this line: Is there beauty in working in silence, working beautifully, not in front of a television camera? In the joy of working in silence, the joy of reading a good book? The joy of working for an old grandparent, or the community. The joy of engaging in a conversation with a parent on a certain issue. I think that the ability to derive meaning and joy from the unassuming, simple but extraordinary things in life, this is what Buddhists would call mindfulness, what you do right now, you are listening to your teacher, you are doing it mindfully. That is what I believe is a very meaningful way of evolving and growing and learning. The noise, the loudness, and the irresistible urge to be visible all the time on social media. That I think is creating a lot of psychic nervousness, and restlessness. You are not the number of subscribers, you are a wonderer, you are an explorer, you are a learner. You have something in you that is immeasurable, that cannot be measured by the number of subscribers or likes. You are a flower blooming, a possibility manifesting and unfolding itself.

DSW: On his visit to Doon in 1968, Morarji Desai had said to a gathering of students and masters that he could not approve of schools like Doon till the time education similar to Doon School was available to every child in the nation. Do you feel it is only economic issues that has prevented the nation from providing such education to all citizens?

ATK: To come to the pages of history, Gandhiji had just arrived from South Africa and Gokhale had trusted him. He explained that the more you take part in India's freedom struggle, the more you can see. For the inauguration of Benares Hindi University, Madan

Mohan Malaviya, Annie Besant, all of them were present and there were other big figures. Mahatma Gandhi was also present in the inauguration meeting. The speech that Gandhi gave after Malaviya and Annie Besant, and some of you as you grow up will read that speech. In our history textbooks there was a lot of that speech printed and Ramachandra Guha has written about that speech beautifully. He asked the question, "what should be the goal of a new university in a country like ours? Should the university be a place for the learned scholarly people living in a solitary ideal, or whether the university should connect to people?" Whether the division that Thomas Babington Macaulay brought with him between the English speaking few, and the rest, whether a new university could question that division. In other words, Gandhi did not use that expression, but he wanted the intelligentsia to become like what Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci said: organic intellectuals. Intellectuals who are deeply related to people's struggles and issues. For those people to become involved and take part in their everyday struggle. Now the thing is that irrespective of what I say, I have to live with what DS Kothari was arguing, that it is discernible on the part of an egalitarian society to reduce to a large extent...it is important to move towards a kind of education which becomes a more egalitarian shared public domain. My worry is that the more education would be commoditized, the more the market would be involved in the field of education. Education would not move toward egalitarianism; it would further divide. The way we did it with our health system and the pandemic, you could learn the lesson of investment for the public health system. It taught us that there is a limit to the commoditization of healthcare and education. All of you are so lucky and privileged to be in a school of this kind, with such beautiful landscape and extraordinary infrastructure, the best minds of the country engaging and teaching you, and naturally you are becoming sensitive. So, when you pass out of school, there are two things that you could do. One is that you keep carrying that burden of Doon, that I'm the product of the most important elite school of this country, and the other is that you are lucky to have gained so much and it is your time to share that knowledge. Share your goodness and ideas with individuals, even though a market would want you to do the opposite. Your real treasure grows with sharing. It is like you are walking through the streets of Dehradun and no one is able to identify that you are from The Doon School, because you are so attached to the people. Think and reflect on this point.

A LEGACY CONTINUED

The following is the **Senior Editorial Board** of the *Weekly* for the year 2021-22:

Editor-in-Chief: Armaan Rathi

Editor: Ahan Jayakumar

Senior Editors: Saatvik Anand, Shreyan Mittal, and Vihan Ranka

Hindi Editor: Sudhanshu Chowdhary

The *Weekly* would like to thank its outgoing Editors for their commitment to the publication.

KNIGHTS IN SHINING ARMOUR

The **Scholar's Blazer** was awarded to Advaita Sood and Kabir Subbiah.

Kudos!

DISTINGUISHED DEBATORS

The **Junior English Debating Invitational Cup** began on the **31st of October** and concluded on the **2nd of November**.

Krtin Goel was declared one of the best speakers of the Tournament, with **two Best Speaker** awards and **two Most Promising Speaker** awards in the Preliminary round. Arjun Prakash won **two Best Speaker** awards and **one Most Promising Speaker** award. Vivaan Sood won **two Most Promising Speaker** awards and a **Best Speaker** award, Arjun Mitra won a **Most Promising Speaker** award, and Zubin Dhar won a **Best Speaker** award.

Congratulations!

“

The purely rational economic man is, indeed, close to being a social moron.

—
Amartya Sen

SPIRITED SCHOLARS

Mahindra Search for Talent Scholarship was awarded to the following students:

C Form: Arjun Mitra

B form: Hridayam Tusnial

A Form: IGCSE Board Examination 2021: Devank Agarwalla

S Form ISC Stream: Aditya Saraff

S Form IB Stream: Agam Mohan Singh Bhatia

Jaidev Singh Memorial Scholarship was awarded to Aryan Prakash for scoring highest average marks in Science.

Nikhil Gupta Trust Scholarship was awarded to the following students:

ISC 2021 Examination

Highest marks in English: Shivya Majumdar

Highest average marks in Mathematics and Sciences: Kanishk Parmar

IGCSE 2021 Examination

Highest marks in English: Devank Agarwalla

Highest average marks in Mathematics and Sciences: Harsh Tibrewala

Around the World in 80 Words

Kanpur reported 89 Zika virus cases and dispatched teams to perform home sampling to control the virus's spread. Chilean President Sebastian Piñera was impeached over corruption allegations. Costa Rica became the first country in the world to make COVID vaccines mandatory for children. Canada recorded the world's first patient diagnosed with the disease, 'climate change'. Rohit Sharma was named India's T20i cricket captain for the series against New Zealand. Former player, Xavi Hernandez took charge as manager of FC Barcelona.

Do Sco Doodle

H/K House Blazer School Blazer

Sai Arjun



Change for the Better?

Vivaan Sood *comments on the 26th United Nations Climate Change conference.*

It seems like action should have been taken ages ago, but we have only started making changes now. As we begin to tackle climate change head-on, the fact that it has been allowed to worsen and exacerbate in its effect begs the question: why have we taken so long to react?

The reaction in question is the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, or COP26, being held in Glasgow, in the UK this year. It is an annual summit held by the United Nations, under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), a treaty signed by countries in 1994. Many people see the summit as the most significant climate event since the 2015 Paris Agreement – when all the signatories to the UNFCCC agreed to keep temperatures well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

From the beginning, the goals of the conference were clear: secure global net-zero by mid-century and keep 1.5 degrees within reach, adapt to protect communities and natural habitats, mobilise finance (at least \$100 Billion in climate finance) and finalise the Paris rulebook. With over 30,000 attendees, this conference sees the largest attendance ever, though key countries such as Russia and China are not attending.

While the conference may seem like an active step towards proper climate action, it is nothing more than an idealistic hope for the promise of a utopian future. The actual road towards proper sustainability is far harder.

Coming into the conference, several countries showed unwillingness to take lasting, or even small steps, towards climate sustainability, including developed countries such as Australia and Saudi Arabia. Australia in particular has shown an unwillingness to let go of the usage of fossil fuels. Moreover, with China not in attendance, one of the world's largest polluters, lasting significant action cannot be taken. Leaders such as Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil, and Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President of Turkey, leaders of countries with notorious climate records, are also skipping the conference.

Even the countries that do attend the conference do the bare minimum, despite promising to do much more. Even after 25 such conferences over the course of three decades, greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise, with pollution expected to rise exponentially. The Paris Conference took place six years ago, but countries have failed to commit to their promises, much less enact them. Policies simply fall flat on their

faces when trying to achieve the goal of preventing 2 °C of global warming this century while striving to limit the increase to 1.5 °C. Moreover, rich countries are still tens of billions of dollars short of the \$100 Billion goal for Climate Finance.

While some countries have made strides in the right direction, such as India promising to be net-zero by 2070, and the EU promising to cut carbon emissions by 55% by 2030, these promises are just that: promises. While the policy is made to counteract the effect of climate change, until countries can show us that it does indeed work on the ground, the policy remains largely pointless. The ineffectiveness of countries means that they may do no more than fulfil loose goals that they made under these pledges, meaning that the planet is allowed to warm up by about 2.7 degrees this century. Most treaties that have been signed by countries have been watered down to the point where they don't matter much, due largely to the numerous compromises needed to appease each country. Finally, taking into account the geopolitics involved in climate change and the political strength and international advantage, action is hard to take.

We've heard more than enough about the effects of climate change. So, when we realise that leaders are failing to take action, we must ask ourselves: what can we do?

One possible solution is a model where smaller institutions, ones that don't need global consensus, enforce strict and binding standards in order to bring about lasting and broader change in industry-specific policies. This way they are able to adapt over time and hopefully, by trying a variety of approaches, can set a precedent for others to follow. An example of this is Germany's aggressive renewable-energy policies and investments in R&D, which have helped create an early market for solar panels while driving down costs for the rest of the world.

Another approach that would help in the long term is something known as 'Stakeholder Capitalism', where industries and companies themselves, rather than leaders, benefit their stakeholders, rather than their shareholders, however, they too can use their shares to influence a company into more sustainable practices, or to only invest in companies that have a positive impact on society or the environment.

To conclude, we can see that our leaders often fail to fulfil their promises, much less even enact them. Therefore, if we seek to go into the future more sustainably, either our leaders should complete these pledges or we must look at alternatives that can achieve the same. Either way, action must be taken.

Caught in the Act

Aryan Prakash reviews the Hindi play, *Court Martial* written by Swadesh Deepak.

Swadesh Deepak's classic play "Court Martial", adapted brilliantly by the Rangmanch society over the last weekend, tells a tragic and deeply meaningful story that attempts, and succeeds, in graphically illustrating the deep and fragile faultlines which lie at the very core of our society.

The skillfully crafted plot by Deepak was one of the main features of the play which allowed his message to come forward in an impactful manner. The protagonist, Ramchandra (played by Aryan Choudhari), was a jawan in the army who was accused of one count of murder and one count of attempted murder of two senior officers of his regiment while carrying out his guard duty at night. His defence counsel (played by Katyayan Kanodia), fought vehemently against the accusations on Ramchandra, conflicting at numerous times with the prosecutor (played by Aryendra Pratap Singh). As both the counsels questioned various witnesses such as the Subedar nearby when the incident took place, the military doctor, and one of the surviving victims of Ramchandra's attack, B.D Kapoor, it eventually became clear that it indeed was Ramchandra who had killed one of his senior officers. What was not clear to the audience, however, was the reason why Ramchandra, who was otherwise a quiet person, killed one of his senior officers. The defence did argue that Ramchandra was doing his duty, because they alleged that the two officers on the bike did not give the password to enter when asked to do so by Ramchandra, which, under military law, gave him permission to fire. However, the defence failed to satisfactorily prove this point, which means that the audience is still puzzled on how to judge Ramchandra and his actions at this point because of the lack of a motive. Here, Swadesh Deepak introduced an explanation that would greatly shape the characterization of Ramchandra and the villain, B.D Kapoor. This of course came from the anecdotes about how a drunken Kapoor beat his wife with an ashtray after she refused to sleep with him, about how Kapoor used to force Ramchandra to do many of the menial domestic chores of his house after he found out that Ramchandra was nearing in on breaking his record in the 5-kilometre run and forcibly made him do work at the time when he could have gone for a run, and about how Kapoor would hurl casteist slurs and force Ramchandra to pick up faeces, just because he was from a lower caste. These anecdotes greatly contributed to the characterisation of Kapoor as jealous, spiteful and arrogant and aroused a deep sense of pathos for the oppressed Ramchandra. Swadesh Deepak thus masterfully manipulated the

mind of the audience through the gradual unfolding of the plot to make the audience understand, if not justify, why Ramchandra attempted to kill Bikhari Das Kapoor.

Throughout the play, Deepak attempted to further the idea that injustice was highly prevalent within the system itself. He tries to tell the audience that despite the proclaimed principles of equality in our Constitution, there still lurks an inherent disparity between the upper and lower classes in our society. The fact that Ramchandra was being subjected to such discrimination, and that was known to other people who failed to report this, was the final act to cause the audience to lean towards Ramchandra. Deepak makes the play doubly meaningful in the ending scene, where Bikhari Das Kapoor shoots himself, not out of the shame of knowing what he did to Ramchandra, but out of the shame that his army colleagues would not accept him as a person. In his final act, Deepak took away the satisfaction the audience gained after knowing of Kapoor's death by sentencing Ramchandra to death through the medium of the military court, which he accepted valiantly. The act of sentencing Ramchandra was perhaps the most meaningful in the entire play, as that etched the message that no matter what, the system will not work for an oppressed man fighting for justice, that no matter what, the system cannot give justice to a small man fighting against a larger man.

Apart from the brilliantly crafted plot by Swadesh Deepak, the role of the extremely emphatic and profound acting by the cast, especially by Katyayan Kanodia and Sudhanshu Chowdhry, cannot be ignored. The nuances in their tone, body language, and most importantly, the passion with which they spoke were instrumental in capturing the essence of Deepak's play, effectively conveying his message to the audience.

Even though the play was written 30 years ago, it is still highly relevant to today's India and today's audience for the simple reason that the issues which the play aims to highlight are still highly prevalent today. We still hear of multiple cases of caste violence, discrimination, and of injustice within the system. This play holds multiple lessons for today's Doscocs and, unfortunately, will continue to do so for at least the next few decades.

The Week Gone By

Shreyan Mittal

Ah, yes! Finally, after more than a year-and-a-half, nearly the whole School is back within the walls of Chandbagh. Though the transition from online to offline certainly hasn't been easy, and I think I speak for everyone when I say this, it sure feels good to be back. Whether it be the ear-piercing rising bell in the morning or students running through the corridors of the Main Building, there truly is no better feeling than returning to School.

Speaking of transitions, many of the Boys and Masters alike, are still getting used to the new in-School routine restricted by COVID precautions. Some of the changes, such as eating meals

within the Houses, to listening to the Headmaster's insightful stories during virtual Assemblies, have been accepted rather calmly. Others, such as the exclusion of a Study School and S-ISC students being forced to take six subjects have not been accepted as smoothly, to say the least.

The week was kickstarted with a fantastic play put together by the Hindi Dramatics Society. The feeling of seeing the Rose Bowl full again, combined with moving performances from the cast made for a wonderful night that set the mood for the rest of the week. It seems, however, that the B and C formers were a little too inspired by the play as acts of rebellion were seen all over campus with punishments being doled out generously.

The main highlight of the week, undoubtedly, has been the Inter-House Football competition that

has taken School by storm. The familiar screaming and shouting from the cheering squads, mixed with a new sound in the form of drums, can be heard within a 10-mile radius of the Main Field. Of course, no School competition would be complete without its fair share of twists and turns. Tensions that had been rising days prior to the match between the Nizams and the Gentlemen finally came to a boil on Wednesday in a match that left everybody reeling in confusion. Needless to say, with a mixture of surprise upsets, heated spats on and off the field, and intense matches of football as the one seen on Thursday, nobody was left disappointed (unless you're a Swan that is).

With only two more weeks of the term left, we all will hopefully make the most out of them and enjoy with gratitude our thankful return to School.

What Have You Been Reading This Week?

The Way of Kings (2010)

Author: Brandon Sanderson

The Way of Kings is the first book in a series expected to be ten books long. The author throws the reader in a world of storm and conflict, where even surviving is an act of utmost will, where everything has adapted to life where storms scour the planet. Most animals have shells, plants retract into the ground, and humans build their cities under cliffs and protrusions, facing away from the storms. The book opens with the assassination of a King, who leaves behind a message for his militaristic brother, telling him to read the eponymous book "The Way of Kings" in a cryptic message.

-Yash Adalti

What Have You Been Watching This Week?

Jungle Cruise (2021)

Director: Jaume Collet-Serra

The movie follows how Dr. Lily Houghton cleverly takes the aid of the skipper Frank Wolff to take her down to the Amazon in his ramshackle boat. The action-packed film reaches its peak when they try to look for an ancient tree capable of healing - the discovery that would help change the future of medicine. Therefore, this movie's practical theme and its relation to the science world, as well as its similarity to the movie Jumanji, grabbed the audience's attention. A must-watch for science enthusiasts!

-Krishay Sutodia

The views expressed in articles printed are their authors' own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Weekly or its editorial policy.

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