

## CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

With the rise of new technologies like generative AI, it has been anticipated that much of the mental work tasks will become more accessible to perform. This would have created space for harnessing soft skills, allowing individuals to pursue their passion and make their time more fulfilling. However, ill effects of technological progress emerge over time. The creation of deep fakes threatens the reputation and dignity of all and sundry, and the risks associated with the spread of AI are growing exponentially, particularly affecting the student community.

The younger generation is getting encultured in a 'hybrid mode' for the first time in human history. This 'hybrid mode' refers to the simultaneous engagement in physical socialization and the digital multiverse, which can create conditions of anxiety. Additionally, there are systemic issues in the examination system, with several instances of compromise coming to light in recent months. In a malfunctioning competitive environment, young minds with thin cushions to seek succor are exposed to a deepening risk condition. In such a risky society, mental health is of paramount importance, and soft skills such as courage, persistence, patience, and endurance are essential to navigate these challenges. Recently, Wikileaks founder Julian Assange, who was released from British prison after plea-bargaining, has rightly pointed out, "Learning that even *intelligent people* can be cowards and that *courage* is a much rarer attribute than intelligence." There are many intelligent people in the world, but very few intelligent people who are courageous. Mere rote learning or desk jobs will not provide the new generation with the soft skills to fulfill their aspirations smoothly in a highly risk-driven world.

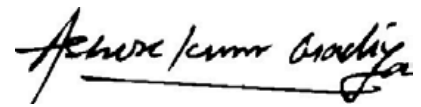
In the current issue of the *Journal of Indian Research*, we are publishing a couple of papers from Bangladesh. There is an in-depth analysis of the interplay between narcotics and insurgency in Myanmar by a senior police officer serving in the state of Assam. Then, we have a very useful paper on applying mindfulness inherited from Buddhism as a management tool in contemporary management and leadership studies by Yashika Sethi. Mindfulness training, indeed, is a way to develop the soft skills that have been described above.

Psychiatrists have made mindfulness practices of Theravada Buddhism as a base for their research work. She writes, "...often it is assumed that nature of the mindfulness, according to Western psychologists, tends to reflect the Buddhist construct. Western scholars and organizational theorists believe that mindfulness removes suffering and enhances wellbeing. In the western psychology literature, the range of mindfulness is influenced by people's ability to describe themselves, accepting experiences, fostering non-judgmental attitudes and awareness towards the present time."

But, in the Sanatana Parampara, mindfulness is quite a different art to understand. Buddhists have promoted mindfulness as a panacea for mental health.

I urge the student community to focus on their mental health in addition to studying and learning new skills. A strong and healthy mind will help maintain personal identity and self-rootedness in an age of artificial intelligence. This 'self-rootedness' refers to maintaining a sense of self and personal identity in a rapidly changing and technologically advanced world. The students must devote half an hour to recourse towards mindfulness activities.

A healthy and courageous generation will have the wherewithal to build India as the Vishwaguru, the mentor of the global community. The sooner we achieve this goal, the better the world will become!



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