

Centre for Global Higher Education Futures (CGHEF)

Event Report

Event: Lecture on “Educating (for) Patriotism” (Part of the CGHEF Lecture Series “Educating Professionals for the 21st Century”), 12 March 2019, Big Bang Conference Room, JGU Campus

Speaker: Cecilia Abraham, Independent Poet and Writer

Moderator: Group Captain V. Krishnappa (Retd.), Senior Fellow, CGHEF

Report Author: Raju Karjigi, Research Associate, CGHEF



The Centre for Global Higher Education Futures (CGHEF) hosted a lecture on “Educating (for) Patriotism” with Cecilia Abraham, Independent Poet and Writer, on March 12, 2019 at the JGU campus in Sonipat. Approximately 15 people attended the event, including CGHEF members, faculty, staff and students. The lecture was moderated by Group Captain V. Krishnappa (Retd.), Senior Fellow, CGHEF.

Group Captain Krishnappa began the discussion by noting that in India, people are very passionate and emotional about what it is to be an Indian, a soldier, and a representative to speak for the country. He raised questions surrounding the right to dissent and blindly rallying behind the government and “to what extent our notion of our love for our country should be coterminous with the government of the day” during national crises. “Do we sufficiently complicate the picture so that we could meaningfully speak for or defend that which we hold dear and speak against something that we find objectionable?” he asked. He emphasised that no single agency can claim to represent all voices and in this sense, educating patriotism or educating for patriotism becomes relevant in order to meaningfully express ourselves in times of conflict. He also recalled his past experiences in the Kargil war.

Ms. Cecilia Abraham began her remarks by presenting information about the recent escalation between India-Pakistan following the Pulwama attack, Balakot airstrike, and the capture and

release of the Indian Air Force officer, Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman by the Pakistan Army. Being a veteran's wife, she shared her views on the consequences and presented a number of tragedies that happened in the past during wars and the difficulties of martyred soldiers' families. She also mentioned that she was anti-war but not anti-military and that peace is the only way forward.

Ms. Abraham also observed that patriotism is a dichotomous word, and it is very important to understand the difference between national and global unity. She also pointed out that school education plays a very important role in making children understand patriotism and nationalism, and the relation between citizen and the country. She also mentioned the example of the North-East region of India in terms of social exclusion to point out how the idea of nationalism and patriotism differs within different societies.

Other key issues discussed during the Q&A session included:

- Over the past five years, the idea of nationalism and patriotism has completely changed in the sense that there is very limited space to express opinions publicly.
- Academic approach to nationalism and patriotism in the micro level
- How the value of life and humanity is lost in the struggle between nationalism and patriotism

Mr. Abraham concluded with the thought: 'Peace is the only way forward'.



Watch a recent interview of Cecilia Abraham: [Ravish Kumar, NDTV Hindi Channel](#)

Read an article authored by Cecilia Abraham: [Confessions of a pacifist Indian Army wife: War is a failure, no matter who wins](#)

Read Cecilia Abraham's debut book of poetry: ['Not Just a Housewife'](#)

About the CGHEF Lecture Series “Educating Professionals for the 21st Century”

Professionals practice in a world of irreducible complexity, ambiguity, uncertainty and volatility. The basis of knowledge for such practices is undergoing significant changes where social norms and expectations, rapid technological shifts, and changing political, cultural and legal contexts need to be continuously challenged, transformed and reevaluated. In this context, the paradigms that provided stable bases for educating professionals in the past has been found to be inadequate for contemporary and anticipatory future needs. This CGHEF Lecture Series will explore the key challenges for educating professionals: What are the new concepts, theories and pedagogical practices that would provide a sound bases for preparing professionals for the future? Through interactions with accomplished and experienced professionals from various practice areas, this Lecture Series aims to develop a sound framework, conceptual tools and pedagogical practices for professional education in contemporary contexts.

About CGHEF

Multiple transitions are occurring at the global level and higher education systems across the world are in varying degrees of transformation. National education systems are increasingly becoming interconnected with global and regional trends. They are also highly impacted by dramatic changes in technology, economic development and intensification of the cultural dimension of globalisation processes.

As a consequence, national educational systems and individual institutions are increasingly dependent on development of educational innovations, organisational forms, and practices. The assessment of consequential impacts of technology, demographic shifts, social expectations and intercultural exchanges is becoming ever more critical for policy making and institutional development of higher education institutions both in India, the region, and across the world. Studying the interconnected dimensions of global, regional and Indian higher education systems has become an imperative for fostering excellence at the level of institutions and at the national levels.

The Centre for Global Higher Education Futures (CGHEF) will work towards identifying systemic level trends, developing scenarios at local and global levels, and advancing strategic insights that would have an impact on policy, institution building, pedagogical styles, and research.

Centre website: <http://www.jgu.edu.in/centre-global-higher-education-futures-cghef>