

ICTS Colloquium

Title : Memories of underdevelopment: Higher Education and India's Universities**

Speaker : Shobo Bhattacharya, Ashoka University, Haryana

Date : Monday, March 13, 2017

Time : 3:00 pm

Venue : Emmy Noether Seminar Room, ICTS Campus, Bangalore

Abstract : A consensus in academic circles in India seems to be that India's universities have not played – since Independence - as significant a role in higher education, especially in science education, as was both needed and achievable. The state of higher education is widely criticised as a policy failure of a bumbling bureaucracy. In this lecture, an alternate approach would describe a different, and primarily historical, perspective of a complex social, political and economic reality as well as foreign policy imperatives during and immediately after India's independence. Rethinking India's pre-independence past is useful in understanding the present and making guesses about the future. It is unlikely that the educational framework – the institutions and their governance structure - will change significantly anytime soon even though coherent, sustainable and pluralist policy alternatives are urgently needed to address the looming "human-climate" calamity in the country. One, among many such alternatives, is a return to a not-so-distant-but-scarcely-remembered past, with selective refinements.

(“Anything one can rightly say about India, its opposite is also true.”
Joan Robinson, Economist, University of Cambridge)

** “Memories of underdevelopment” is the title of a Cuban film, directed by Tomas Gutierrez Alea.