ज्ञान–विज्ञान विमुक्तये

An Emblem Symbolising The Future

University Grants Commission
New Delhi

Background

It was something that Prime Minister, Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee, said during his speech on the occasion of the initiation of the University Grants Commission (UGC) Golden Jubilee Year on 28 December 2002 that sparked off the idea of revisiting the old UGC logo. In his speech, Shri Vajpayee spoke of the need to take a fresh look at the UGC Act, 1956 in the light of the new challenges for the education sector emerging in the twenty-first century. He also suggested that the Commission could consider changing its name to the `University Education Development Commission". This name truly captures the changed role of the UGC in recent years.

Traditionally, UGC was entrusted with the task of coordination, formulation and maintenance of the standards of university education. To this end, it engaged itself in, among other things, framing regulations on minimum standards of education, determining standards of teaching, examination and research in universities, monitoring developments in the field of collegiate and university education, disbursing grants to universities and colleges and setting up common facilities, services and programmes for a group of universities in the form of Inter-University Centres.

However, the higher education scenario has changed significantly over the years. The sector is now standing at a crossroads and is faced with multifarious challenges arising from the exponential growth of higher education in the post-independence era, the changing global education scenario, changes in the global as well as domestic economy as well as social and political changes. The five key issues facing the higher education sector today are: access and equity; relevance; quality and excellence; governance; and resources. Addressing these issues requires innovative approaches and this is something the UGC has been attempting in a significant manner over the last few years.

To increase access to education in the face of crippling resource constraints, the UGC has been attempting to transcend geographical barriers by bringing about a synergy between the conventional system of education and distance

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education. It is also working actively to leverage information technology in a big way to help it in this task, with plans to link all universities electronically in a phased manner.

Acknowledging that education cannot remain isolated from the requirements of the job market, the UGC is attempting to take steps to increase the employability of students and encouraging universities to move, as the rest of the world has done, from the core teaching-learning process to a knowledge-linked learning process. One of the approaches being adopted is to collapse the barriers between disciplines and allowing students to pursue a professional degree along with their academic one. This will give students a basic grounding in a discipline and equip them with professional skills as well.

The UGC is also engaged in the task of preparing the higher education sector to meet the challenges of globalisation and the imperatives of the World Trade Organisation regime and the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). GATS would open India's education sector to foreign universities. The role of the public education system will become all the more important in this scenario since the private and foreign universities will not cater to students from non-metro and less affluent backgrounds. Apart from addressing the needs of its own students, India can also take a proactive approach and export Indian education, targeting the South East Asian, West Asian and African countries.

Thus the UGC is now engaged in pursuing a forward-looking strategy which will meet the demand for skilled human resources and safeguard the country's interests at the global level.

Given this changed role, it was felt that it was time to give a new look to the logo as well. The old logo, adopted in 1992, also did not have a motto line that captured the essence of the Commission's goals and objectives.

Capturing the essence of knowledge

The logo and the motto line, **Gyan-Vigyan Vimukte (Knowledge Liberates)**, convey the UGC's philosophy and avowed objective of uplifting the nation's destiny through

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quality education. Knowledge is like both light and sound. Like light, it enlightens and empowers the individual and society as a whole, enabling them to overcome limitations imposed by nature. And like sound, which seeps in through the most impermeable of barriers, knowledge cannot be stopped or barred in any way.

The chakra in the logo symbolises the Indian nation. Its twenty-four spokes represent the continuous and uninterrupted flow of education, which is truly a life-long process. The lines below the chakra portray an open book, the ultimate symbol of learning. The relevance of books has not diminished even in this paperless era of e-learning and online education. The lines are also symbolic of a pair of hands, because it is knowledge that supports and lifts the nation towards development and progress.

The Process

The process of finalising the new logo was a carefully considered one. A conscious decision was taken within the UGC to tap the talent of young India for the new logo. It was felt that since the logo was to represent the future UGC, the task should be entrusted to the country's future – the youth. This was also the view expressed by the three-member expert committee formed to oversee the process. The three experts are well-known names in the field of art: Prof. Jeram Patel, former dean and head of the Department of Applied Art at the M.S. University, Vadodara, Dr Rajeev Lochan, director of the National Gallery of Modern Art and Mr. Nand Katyal, former art director of Span magazine, who is closely associated with the Lalit Kala Akademi at Garhi, in Delhi.

*Prof. Jeram Patel*

Dr Rajeev Lochan

The process was formally launched in May 2003 and twenty-six institutions – colleges, departments of arts/fine arts in universities – were approached and requested to take part in the designing exercise. However, only sixteen of these institutions accepted the invitation (Annexure A). The expert committee had a meeting with these institutions to work out

Mr Nand Katyal

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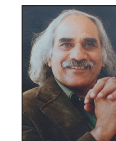
the technical specifications of the Logo Design Competition. The participating institutions were requested to hold competitions among their students and send in the ten best entries to the UGC. So enthusiastic was the response among the students that the UGC received a total of 370 entries against the expected 260.

The expert committee went through all the 370 entries and zeroed in on five (Annexure B). However, it felt that there was scope for further improvement in all of these. A three-day workshop was then organised at the M.S. University, Vadodara in the last week of September 2003. The five shortlisted designers interacted with senior designers. The designers modified their designs in the light of the suggestions received and prepared variations of the selected designs. Thirty entries finally emerged from the workshop.

Meanwhile, the UGC had constituted another committee comprising members of the Commission to decide on the logo and motto line. The five members of the committee were **Prof. V.N. Rajasekharan Pillai, Prof. B.N. Tandon, Prof. B.H. Briz-Kishore, Prof. Vasant Gadre and Prof. (Mrs) Aruna Goel**. This committee and the committee of experts then met to consider the thirty entries. They suggested that each of the shortlisted thirty entries, along with the concept statement, be circulated to all members of the Commission for their comments and that a three-day exhibition of these designs be held so that the UGC officers and other staff could air their opinions and provide further feedback.

Finally, in November 2003, the two committees met again to consider the designs in the light of the suggestions/opinions that were received. The design executed by Ms Priya Jayanand, a final year student of the College of Fine Arts, Thiruvananthapuram was selected as the new UGC logo. The motto line, Gyan-Vigyan Vimukte (Knowledge Liberates), was suggested by Ms Aruna Goel and was accepted unanimously since it was found to capture the essence of knowledge and learning, besides reflecting the UGC's role of promoting excellence in higher education and holistic development of individuals.

The Winning Designer

Twenty-three year-old Priya Jayanand joined the College of Fine Arts at Thiruvananthapuram after completing her pre-degree in history from the Krishna Menon Government Women's College, Cannanore. She has been interested in painting since she was a child, having been taught by her father, a keen painter himself, and had decided on training in the arts after finishing Standard X.
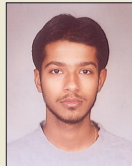
Annexure A

List of participating Institutions/Colleges

1. College of Art, New Delhi
2. Government College of Art, Chandigarh
3. Chamarajendra Academy of Visual Art (CAVA), Mysore
4. College of Fine Art, Thiruvananthapuram
5. Faculty of Fine Arts, Indira Kala Sangit Vishwavidyalaya, Khairagarh
6. Departmentof Fine Arts, Kurukshetra University
7. Government College of Fine Art, Chennai
8. Government Institution of Fine Art, Indore
9. Kala Bhawana, Visva Bharati University, Shantiniketan
10. Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S. University, Vadodara
11. Department of Fine Art, Faculty of Art Education, Jamia Millia Islamia University, Delhi
12. Goa College of Art, Panaji
13. Industrial Design Centre, Indian Institute of Technology Mumbai
14. National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad
15. CN College of Fine arts, Ahmedabad
16. Ipcowala Santram College of Fine Arts, Balabvidyanagar, Gujarat

Annexure B

The Shortlisted Five

Mr. Shashank Jha	Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S.University, Vadodara	
Mr. Nimesh Shah	Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S. University, Vadodara	
Ms. Priya Jayanand	College of Fine Arts, Thiruvananthapuram	
Mr. Lakshay Dharan	Faculty of Fine Arts, Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi	
Mr. Bala Swamy M.	Chamarajendra Academy of Visual Art (CAVA), Mysore	