

Fifteenth Dr. C.N Purushothaman Nair Commemorative Lecture

Fifteenth Dr. C.N Purushothaman Nair Commemorative Lecture was held at Tennis Clum, Trivandrum on 5th November 2025. Dr. Jayashankar Prasad C, Director Centre for Management Development (CMD) delivered the commemorative lecture. Dr.G. Sasikumar of SCMS was the Chief guest. Dr. Simon Thattil, Dr. P.N. Harikumar and Dr. D Mavoothu were felicitated in the function. The function was presided over by Dr. K. Sasikumar, Chairman IMDR. Dr. C. V. Jayamani welcomed the audience and Shri Sanalkumar has given the vote of thanks. The function was attended by the students and well-wishers of Dr. C.N. Purushothaman Nair



Dr. Jayashankar Prasad C, Director, CMD, Trivandrum delivering the commemorative lecture

THE CHANGING PARADIGM IN EDUCATION AND LEARNING

Commemorative Lecture by

Dr. Jayashankar Prasad, Director, CMD, Trivandrum

It is an honour for me to pay tribute to the late Dr. C. N. Purushothaman Nair, whose vision and commitment to quality management education continue to inspire generations of learners and educators. I am a personal beneficiary of the institution he founded for higher studies in Management. I am referring to IMK, The Institute of Management in Kerala, which provided a credible and affordable option for a professional management degree within Kerala's established university system. The early 1990s marked India's major economic liberalization and this created a rapidly increasing demand for professional managers skilled in finance, marketing, and human resources. The Vision of the University and the key players like Dr CNP to initiate such an institute gave a much-needed impetus to the management profession in the state and the region. Today his legacy compels us to re-examine the urgent and imminent transformation confronting higher education in the context of changing technological and global business scenarios.

Contemporary Business Environment

The contemporary business environment is characterized by relentless technological disruption, volatile global markets, and an urgent demand for corporate social responsibility which has rendered the traditional, hierarchical management model obsolete. Management is no longer an exclusive function reserved for a few supervisory echelons, but a pervasive, agile competence that must be embedded across all levels of an organization. This fundamental structural and philosophical transformation, where every employee is expected to manage their own outcomes, collaborate horizontally, and lead change, necessitates that management education evolves beyond teaching mere mechanics of resource optimization. The future demands that institutions cultivate leaders equipped with the mindset and skills to drive sustainable value creation, understand complex stakeholder ecosystems, and integrate organizational purpose with societal impact. This calls for an overhaul of management curricula, a critical imperative for developing the next generation of responsible, adaptive professionals.

At an under graduate level, the model of the three- or four-year degree as the base credential is undergoing a reckoning. Designed for the industrial age, with its time-bound syllabi, standardized testing, and hierarchical structures, this model is increasingly ill-suited to the needs of a dynamic, interconnected world. We are moving from an era of "Education as Transmission" to one of "Learning as Transformation." The Multidisciplinary Undergraduate Programme (Clause 11) of National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) proposes a flexible 3 or 4-year degree with Multiple Entry/Exit Options (MEEEO) (Certificate, Diploma, Degree), this could fundamentally restructure the traditional rigid degree system.

While the two-year MBA will remain common, the NEP provides a framework for diplomas after one year for those who exit early, and also encourages integrated 5-year Bachelor's/Master's programs. Going forward one needs to blend functional depth with digital literacy, interdisciplinary knowledge, and ethical consciousness. The functions will be more data and technology driven.

The crisis at hand is not a lack of information. Data/information is abundant today in digitized, searchable, and often free form. What is scarce is our ability to filter, interpret, and apply that information or knowledge bits within ethical paradigms and creative intelligence. The NEP also stresses the importance of creativity and critical thinking and the development of ethics and human & Constitutional values. The task before management and social-science educators will be to cultivate a new human capital capable of thriving in a world defined by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity called the VUCA world through a multidisciplinary approach.

Convergence of Artificial Intelligence

The most powerful forces shaping this transition is the convergence of Artificial Intelligence, Automation, and Data Analytics. These are not merely tools that enhance efficiency, they are in fact redefining what constitutes valuable human work. The digital dichotomy in harnessing the technology tides often leaves the management professionals at cross roads, when management is redefined by the algorithm.

The traditional manager, valued for gathering, organizing, and directing information, is rapidly becoming redundant in a data-driven age. Routine cognitive functions are now performed by algorithms. The modern manager must therefore evolve into an AI Interpreter a professional who

can frame the right questions, critically evaluate algorithmic outcomes, and translate data-based insights into human-centric strategies. This calls for the integration of AI Ethics, Data Governance, and Digital Strategy as core components of management philosophy rather than standard functional electives.

When technology provides the engine of efficiency, the social sciences offer the compass of purpose. As organizations are increasingly evaluated on their social impact and sustainability, the insights of sociology, psychology, and anthropology become indispensable. These disciplines enable future managers to understand culture, motivation, and the human consequences of policy and decision-making. Hence, we must learn to use data for value maximization and apply social insight to maximize well-being and equity.

The emerging paradigm requires us to replace the pursuit of content mastery with the broader development of competencies. The new educational currency lies in what learners can do with what they know. At the core are five interdependent skills, we could call it the Five C's, these are competencies that no algorithm can replicate at least in the near future and without human in the loop.

1. **Critical Thinking:** The ability to challenge assumptions, identify bias, and evaluate information sources is a crucial defense against the global "infodemic."
2. **Creativity and Innovation:** The capacity to move beyond established solutions and generate novel, non-linear and non-patterned responses to complex challenges is still a human forte.
3. **Collaboration:** The aptitude for working effectively across diverse, global, and virtual teams with empathy and cultural sensitivity.
4. **Communication:** The art of storytelling with data translating quantitative complexity into clarity and persuasion to get intended results.
5. **Complex Problem-Solving:** The skill to integrate technological, economic, and social perspectives to craft sustainable, holistic solutions.

Developing these abilities requires treating education not as a theoretical exercise but as a continuous cycle of problem-solving, prototyping, and pivoting.

Need Educational Transformation

The Institutions in management education be it IMDR or CMD or any other management / social sciences school needs to develop structural agility and ecosystem leadership to respond to this paradigm shift.

1. **Micro-credentials and Stackable Learning:** The future degree will be modular. Learners must be able to acquire accredited, industry-endorsed micro-credentials in emerging fields-such as ESG Compliance, HR Analytics, or Digital Transformation-building competencies incrementally and continuously. I have personal experience in using the micro learning very effectively in management education using the LinkedIn learning platform, even while following the regular university curriculum and syllabus.
2. **Industry-Integrated learning:** The classroom should evolve into a simulation lab. Mandatory credit-bearing consulting assignments guided by industry mentors can replace routine internships, making learning simultaneous with application.

3. The Educator as Architect: Faculty must transition from content deliverers to Learning Architects and ethical mentors who curate resources, design challenges, and guide individual growth trajectories. This in accordance with the NEP and will be possible only with continuous professional exposure and development for the faculty.
4. From Pedagogy to Andragogy to Heutagogy: Pedagogy is the teaching of dependent personalities. Andragogy is the facilitation learning for adults, who are self-directed learners. Heutagogy is the management of learning for self-managed learners. Elevate your learner
5. Embracing Frugal Innovation: Drawing on Kerala's experience with digital public infrastructure, educational institutions should champion Frugal Digitalization deploying cost-effective, scalable technologies that prioritize social impact over mere scale or glamour. I can cite an example of a movement that is happening in our backyard, mostly in technology frontier but spreading to other domains as it is multidisciplinary, called μ Learn (Mu-Learn) and the associated Purple Movement. These initiatives also embody the NEP's vision of personalized, skill-based, and technology-enabled learning, through what one may call "hyper-personalized Learning Paths".

The educational transformation of our time is not merely a challenge; it is an extraordinary opportunity for a systemic renaissance. We are not just training workforce we are shaping the next generation of leaders, policymakers, and citizens who must navigate the disruptions with resilience and purpose.

Institutional success should not be measured solely by the placement statistics of graduates but by their capacity for self-directed, lifelong learning, their adaptability, their integrity, and their commitment to advancing collective well-being. Let us therefore commit to an education that keeps the human elements of creativity, empathy, and wisdom firmly at the core while harnessing the power of the algorithms. I conclude, expressing my gratitude to the organizers for the opportunity given to express my views at the remembrance lecture of Dr CNP.



Sanal Kumar, Education Secretary, Dr. C.V.Jayamani, Vice Chairman IMDR, Dr. G. Sasikumar, Director Research, SCMS, Dr. K. Sasikumar, Chairman IMDR, Dr. Simon Thattil, Professor Department of Commerce, Dr. P.N. Harikumar, Professor, Department of Commerce, University of Kerala