

Making India A Knowledge-based Society

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For a citizen of any country to
protect his rights
and discharge his responsibilities,
he/she needs to have
a certain minimum amount of
knowledge.

For anyone to survive gainfully
in the wake of
ever-increasing competition,
and maintain his self-respect
and escape exploitation,
he will, today need to be
both a specialist
and a generalist.

The hierarchy of data, information, knowledge and wisdom:

- For information you need data
- For knowledge you need information.
- For conversion of information into knowledge one needs wisdom.

Knowledge requires collation of information from multiple sources and of multiple kinds.

Conversion of knowledge into wisdom requires weaving of experience (own and collective) into the fabric of knowledge.

- Ignorance comes as a package.
Knowledge comes in bits.
- Ignorance is thrust on people. Knowledge is
acquired.
 - Ignorance is like sand.
Knowledge is like rock.

Today, knowledge knows no
boundaries, and is a continuum.
Man compartmentalizes
knowledge
as an alibi for ignorance.

There is a direct
relationship between
a knowledge-based society
and good governance –
neither have any relationship
to affluence.

There is no country in the world today that has a truly knowledge-based society, implying that
in no country, governance is anywhere near ideal.

2005 Rain Storm

Population	New Orleans	Mumbai
Population : total	< 0.8 m	> 12.5 m
Population : poor	0.3 m	5 m
Death in 48 h	100	37
Evacuation required	Whole city	10,000
Shooting and violence	Countless	None
Time for army to react	48 h	12 h
48 h later	No relief	Normal

The higher we go up in the hierarchy of power, greater is the demand for knowledge – not of just one discipline but of the whole continuum – but, generally, the lesser is the knowledge-base.

This opens up doors for exploitation by self-interest groups operating nationally or internationally.

It is not enough
to be knowledgeable
or have access to knowledge:
it is more important to use it
when required, to ensure equity.

Religious fundamentalism
and terrorism,
obscurantism, superstition, and
irrational practices,
are a consequence of
vested interests that insulate people
from knowledge.

A knowledge-based society
is easier to govern,
provided the Government
intends to be honest, fair,
transparent and people-oriented.

On the other hand,
a selfish and/or totalitarian
Government does not want its people
to be truly knowledgeable.

Today, knowledge distribution,
not only in the developing countries
but also in the developed countries
is extremely uneven.

This unevenness provides,
perhaps, the largest base
for exploitation.

Mechanisms of knowledge generation, dissemination and use around the world are faulty to various degrees, creating a fertile ground for growth of exploitation.

Knowledge evolves and
multiplies when shared.

It remains stagnant and
decays when kept confined.

Knowledge equity within a country
and between countries is essential
for world peace.

Knowledge inequity is the most
important avenue of exploitation
and neocolonialism.

Globalisation of knowledge equity



Globalisation of rights and responsibilities



Globalisation of access, of employment,
and of facilities



Breaking of barriers that divide people
arbitrarily



Globalisation of peace



Progress towards one world

How do we do it?

EDUCATION

- Decommmercialisation
- Appropriate regulatory systems
- Adequate quantity
- Adequate finances
- Democratisation of access
- Ensuring quality (teachers, infrastructure, students, management)
- Appropriate interface with society
- Assessment of performance

- Develop and disseminate information packages to
 - Panchayats
 - Industrial workers
 - Housewives and rest of the civil societyin a way that the excitement of knowledge is shared
- Use our assets to develop our traditional, cultural and creative industries
- Encourage and utilise innovation
- Make our governance and services (such as health) knowledge-based

- Make the knowledge-base of our industry wider
- Identify and remove impediments (such as superstitions, irrational practices and beliefs) to generation and use of knowledge
- Take steps to be a leader in this generation of new knowledge
- State what kind of citizens we wish to have

The need for knowledge empowerment of Panchayats and Rural Communities

To claim their rights and discharge their responsibilities, elected representatives of local self-government would need to

- understand the provisions of the Act
- understand implementation methodologies
- possess information, knowledge and skill to
 - prevent exploitation
 - generate additional resources
 - lessen the gap between rural and urban development

Functions, Powers and Duties of Gram Panchayats (1993 onwards)

1. Power to make general order
2. General functions
3. Construction, repair, maintenance of community assets
4. Agriculture including agricultural extension
5. Animal husbandry, dairy and poultry
6. Fisheries
7. Social and farm forestry, minor forest produce, fuel and fodder

8. Khadi, village and cottage industries
9. Rural housing
10. Rural electrification including distribution of electricity
11. Non-conventional energy sources
12. Poverty alleviation programmes
13. Education, including primary and secondary school
14. Adult and non-formal education – promotion of adult literacy
15. Cultural activities
16. Fairs and festivals

17. Public health and family welfare
18. Women and child development
19. Social welfare, including welfare of the handicapped and mentally retarded
20. Welfare of weaker section, particularly scheduled caste
21. Public distribution system
22. Judicial powers

How can Panchayats be empowered with knowledge ?

- Developing and testing appropriate knowledge / information package
- Training of trainers —→
Core group (local) —→ Panchayats
- A 5-year programme
- Updating mechanism (ICT)

Examples of specialised information

- Panchayat Raj Act
- Pesticides and alternatives
- Fertilizers and alternatives
- Seeds
- Understanding business needs (e.g., marketing)
- Farmers rights
- Water harvesting and water conservation
- Soil

- Food storage, preservation and processing
- Disaster management
- New materials
- Importance of statistics
- Wasteland and grassland development
- Techniques to improve breed of cattle, poultry and other livestock
- Fisheries development
- Fuel plantation

- Forestry
- Indigenous and low cost construction
- Non-conventional energy sources
- Development of dairy/animal products
- Prevention and management of epidemics
- Marketing of our creative, cultural and heritage industries
- Additional employment

Examples of general information to be covered

- Hygiene, sanitation, nutrition and disease
- What is electricity? The need for earthing
- What is electronics? How does a radio or television operate (why an aerial)?

- Various materials available today
- Our origins and evolution ; reproduction
- What is a satellite: its uses?
- How does our banking system/stock market operate?
- The globe and us
- Landmarks in our history
- Landmarks in world history
- Basic issues relating to environment.

- Conservation versus development
- Major issues that relate to population
- How is our country managed?
- Our assets (natural, human, man-made, social)
- Our problems and weaknesses
- Human Rights and Civil Liberties
- Consumer awareness
- Art and culture
- Human body

- Scientific method: conflicts with superstition
- Natural marvels
- Man-made marvels
- Extraordinary lives
- Key technological innovations
- Religions of the world and communal harmony

Examples of desirable messages to be conveyed

- Education: why, what and how
- Freedom versus constraints
- Rights versus responsibilities
- Scientific temper and decision-making
- Accountability
- Equality amongst people
- The need to narrow the gender gap
- The need to fight and eliminate corruption

- There is no hierarchy amongst professions – from cleaning to agriculture to electronics. What the society needs are high-quality professionals in all fields.
- The need for courage, integrity and confidence
- The various linkages in contemporary society
- The need to have a vision and to be able to peep into the future
- The need and mechanisms for keeping up-to-date

- The hierarchy between information, knowledge and wisdom
- The need to network with higher levels of administration, both horizontally and vertically
- Resourcefulness: the need to raise resources on our own
- The need for long-term developmental programmes

I N T E G R A T E

- Information package delivery
- Village schools
- 50000 Knowledge Clubs
- 250000 Village Resource Centres
- Krishi Vigyan Kendras
- National Horticulture Mission
- Other government rural development programmes

LEVERAGING OUR TRADITIONAL WEALTH

- Employment
- Additional employment
- Revenue for the country
- Enhancing country's prestige
- Research leading to one or more of the above
- Products, services
- Creative endeavours, places of tourist value
- Knowledge

DOCUMENT

MARKET

PRODUCTS

- Handicrafts (R)
- Handlooms / Textiles (R)
- Building materials
- Paintings
- Sculpture
- Calligraphy
- Vegetables, fruits

- Traditionally processed foods
- Flowers / orchids
- Culinary arts
- Validated plant-based drug formulations
- Cosmetics
- Jewellery
- Organic food

SERVICES

- Design, decoration, fashion
- Architecture
- Traditional agricultural practices
- Water-harvesting

CREATIVE ENDEAVOURS

- Dance (classical & folk)
- Music (classical & folk)
- Theatre and drama
- Circus/magicians/puppetry
- Street entertainment
- Story telling

**WHAT KIND OF CITIZENS DO
WE WISH TO HAVE?**