
Foreword

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1 Introduction

The 2015 Paris Agreement urged that immediate steps be undertaken to prevent the global temperature from increasing, first from more than two degrees Celsius, to more recently, 1.5 degrees, since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. Failure to meet this goal will invite catastrophic and irreversible environmental damage. Unfortunately, ‘once in a lifetime’ weather events have been increasing with alarming frequency, which in turn, has underscored the palpable (and seemingly increasing) gap between what is needed to be done and what we are doing. This gap, however, is only one of many pressing and interrelated gaps: between what is being taught in our colleges/universities and what needs to be taught; between the 1% and the 99%; between developed and developing countries; between public and private sectors; between the market and the commons; between urban and rural; between industry and agriculture; and between economies and planetary resources.

With these introductory thoughts, a call for this special issue was made, and the guest editors received a good response. We decided to split this special issue into two parts. As part one of this special issue, we have selected five papers considering their quality and rationale for the special issue. In addition, they cover a wide ground: awareness, communication and information technology, responsibility, attitude, beliefs, system, ethics, economics, and folk art. Part two will be published in *IJPEE*, Vol. 15, No. 1.

The quest to sustain our planet is the responsibility of everyone. We did not inherit the planet from our forefathers, rather we borrow it from our children. Educational institutions and educators are the architects of future generations, and they need to take more conscious actions to create awareness among our youth. The human race, being quite diverse, needs to bring diverse solutions to the problem of climate change and global warming. Hence the need for pluralism. We believe that this special issue will effectively contribute to the literature and will positively (and multiplicatively) affect the educational institutions responsible for building the future.

2 Contents of the special issue

The paper ‘Pluralist economics education and sustainability: future directions’ by Hesham Magd, Saurav Negi and Mohammad Sultan Ahmad Ansari, examines the role of

pluralist economics education in achieving sustainability and suggests approaches/pillars as a way forward for promoting sustainability. The study demonstrates that pluralism in education can contribute and develop the essential capabilities for easing the transition to a sustainable future. The authors suggest curriculum reorientation towards sustainability, teacher training focus, sustainability-focused competency development, real-world learning applications, and the design of educational resources that includes books, videos, podcasts, graphics, multimedia applications, and curriculum maps.

In addition to the tragic loss of life and the wide-scale human suffering during the COVID pandemic, it also highlighted a technological gap both within and between nations (Karunakar, 2021). Specifically, many instructors were not fully prepared, nor was the requisite technology up to speed. This technology gap has exacerbated both regional and international differences. Sindiswa S. Zondo and Emmanuel O. Adu in their paper, 'Information and communication technology use in the teaching and learning of high school economics: are we there yet?', argue that this gap very well typifies South Africa¹, and like other developing nations, has existed prior to COVID.

Zondo and Adu employed an interpretive case study to investigate the efficient use of technology in teaching and learning secondary school economics in Durban, South Africa. In addition, they examined teachers' and learners' views of technology use in economics education. While the IJPEE has devoted lots of space to pluralism at the university level, it is also important to investigate it at the secondary level and even earlier. Habits learned (or inculcated) at an earlier stage will harden (or become ossified) at a later stage. Zondo and Adu found that the technology gap was influenced by the learner's socio-economic status. And, in addition they found that a dearth of technology skills (primarily by educators), insufficient resources, theft and vandalism of school property, all coalesced to exacerbate the gap. The authors recommended adding a course on computer application technology, as well as a government commitment to ensure the availability of workable and up-to-date computer technology. For pluralism to be effective, both students and teachers in all regions of the nation must be actively immersed in the latest technology.

The paper, 'An empirical investigation of higher education students' intention towards green products usage/purchase: what can educators do?', by Shad Ahmad Khan, Hesham Magd and Madhur Batra, highlights the role of individual attitudes towards planetary sustainability by way of using green products. In achieving planetary sustainability, consumption is just as important as production. Thus, students' attitude towards planetary sustainability and their intention to use green products may help all of us achieve our sustainability goals. The authors suggest that higher education instructors have a critical role to play by creating student awareness about planetary sustainability and the adoption of green practices. This study also advocates how green practices can be adopted so that students can experience the benefits of green products, in order to continue using them post-graduation.

The paper, 'Revival of Nautanki through the agency of north Indian youth to achieve planetary sustainability', by Nitin Mane, Ruhi Lal and Satyabrata Rout discusses the nexus between Nautanki – a highly popular and quite informal folk theatre in north India – and sustainability. Nautanki was quite popular until eclipsed by cinema and television. The authors argue that the association of folk arts with mass culture is essential for its sustenance; and folk forms like Nautanki help construct a society's cultural identity, as well as inspire young artists. And, most importantly, this symbiotic association would foster cultural and economic sustainability, by enabling students to find meaning in their

individual lives as well as in the community, thus setting the stage for a well-connected future based on the past.

Alfred Marshall (1946 [1890], p.5) wrote in the preface to his *Principles of Economics*, “Economic conditions are constantly changing, and each generation looks at its own problems in its own way.” Today, our preponderant problem is climate change. How we look at it, conceptualise it, and solve it, must be pluralist.

These papers underscore that sustainability (which by definition is pluralist) does not happen on its own; rather it must be actively nurtured and implemented. This special issue showcases a little of what is being done across the globe to effectuate sustainability; and that many people deeply care.

References

- Karunakar, B. (2021) ‘India’s education sector: impact and alternatives during COVID-19’, *The International Journal of Pluralism and Economics Education*, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp.89–96.
- Marshall, A. (1946 [1890]) *Principles of Economics*, 8th ed., Macmillan and Co., London.

Notes

- 1 South Africa, a member of the BRICS, hosted the BRICS annual meeting in Johannesburg, August 2023. Incidentally, the decision was made to add six additional members in 2024.