

Cultural Colloquium

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

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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" crisis 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.*

About the Speaker: Prof. Sabyasachi Bhattacharya is a C.V. Raman University Professor at Ashoka University. He is a physicist and works on dynamical aspects of disordered condensed matter systems. He is a Distinguished Professor at the TIFR of which he was the former Director. Apart from Physics, he is interested in higher education policy in India related specially to science and technology research.

Friday, Feb 22nd 2019

4:00 PM (Tea/Coffee at 3:30 PM)

Auditorium, TIFR-H