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**HARMONIZATION OF SCIENCE & EDUCATION IN MODERN CONDITION
OF & INTEGRATION**

Hon'ble Rector, Distinguished Participants, Invited Guests, Academicians, Learned Faculties, students, Ladies and gentlemen.

I feel privileged and honoured for being invited to this conference to share with you my views on the theme. In such a broad theme, my discussion will be limited to only one aspect, TOURISM, which I believe can bring a sort of integration of Kyrgyzstan with the world, now

30

Вестник Иссык-Кульского университета, № 40, 2015.

perceived as a global village, thanks to Globalization.

Before I say something about the topic I intend to speak, I would like to get myself introduced to you. I am from India and I represent a unique university which is the brightest example of social integration, and where one finds a complete harmonization of science and education.

This University started with only \$5000 way back in 1993 with the strong determination of a young man AchyutaSamanta now stands over 25 square kilometer as a State of Art Grade 'A' University of India with subjects ranging from Technology, Medical Science, Dental science, Humanities, Management, Bio-Technology, Law, Languages, and many others having 25,000 students studying in 23 lush Green Campuses. (www.kiit.ac.in) This is perhaps the only university in the world which has been trying to create an equitable world sans poverty, hunger and ignorance. Driven by the passion to see the most deprived child of the society getting education to become an asset to the society, the founder of the University AchyutaSamanta (www.achyutasamanta.ac.in) established Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) (www.kiss.ac.in) simultaneously in 1993 with just 125 children. This has now grown into world's largest residential institute for 23,500 poorest of the poor indigenous children, where they are being provided food, accommodation, health care and education from kindergarten to post graduation absolutely free. At the end of my talk, I will take 10 minutes of your time to show you a video which can make you understand how there has been complete harmonization of science and education in modern condition of Globalization and Integration.

Now coming back to the topic on which I would like to share my views, I would like to inform as to why did I decide to speak about Tourism. I strongly believe that Tourism has now impacted our lives, our economy and our very existence. My coming to here and speaking before you is a part of tourism, your participation, your listening to me is also a part of Tourism and in a broader sense it is also a part of globalization and social integration.

When we will be sharing our thoughts on various topic during this conference, it is pertinent for us to know what these terms 'Globalization' and 'Integration' mean.

Globalization, as I understand is a process of international integration. It arises from the interchange of world views, products, ideas and other aspects of culture¹. It is also seen as a process by which the peoples of the world are incorporated into a single world society². The term Globalization is used to denote the emergence of an international network of economic system³. In 2000, the international Monetary Fund (IMF) identified some basic aspects of Globalization like trade, Transportation, Capital and investment.⁴ Globalization also means the intensification of world wide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa⁵.

Globalization is not a new concept, rather it started long before when there was trade links between Sumer Mesopotamia and Indus Valley civilization in 3000 BC. Globalization existed in the Hellenistic Age when the commercial activities between Greece and India were going on. The Silk Road was also a very significant factor in connecting China with Europe via Indian sub-continent, Persia and Central Asia. In addition to economic activities, the Silk Road served as a means to carry out cultural trade along its network.

The second term 'integration can be explained from a very wider angle. The term Integration is described as an act or an instance of combining into an integral whole, behavior as an individual that is in harmony with the environment, 'the act or instance of integrating an organization, place of business, city etc, 'the act or an instance of integrating a racial, religious or ethnic groups'.⁶ Integration can be social, physical and natural. Integration is thus an action or process of integrating which has many synonyms like, Combination, Amalgamation, incorporation, unification, Consolidation, Assimilation, Homogenization etc. All these speak about a process of bringing two things closer enough to be a combination.

With this background, let us examine how tourism can integrate Kyrgyzstan with the globe and what benefits Tourism can bring to Kyrgyz economy in the present era of

Globalization. I am not going to discuss what 'Tourism' means but the dictionary meaning of it makes us to believe that it is a travel for recreation, leisure or business purpose. It is a collection of activities, services and industries that deliver a travel experience comprising of transportation, accommodation, shopping, entertainment and hospitality to individuals or groups travelling away from home. Over the decades tourism has emerged as one of the fastest growing economic sectors of the world. It has become a thriving global industry with a power to stick developing countries in both positive and negative ways.

In 1990s, Kyrgyz Republic was an Oasis of liberalism and democracy in central Asia dominated by despotism. President Askar Akayev presenting his vision to the world expressed Kyrgyzstan to become a 'Switzerland of Central Asia'. It is rather unfortunate that nothing has been done so far to further this cause. The tourism sector contributed only 4.2% to the GDP in 2011. About 2 million tourists visited the country contributing US \$63 million in 2011 though it has potential to be a major player in Tourism.

It has been accepted that tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing industries of the world, being the largest employer (UNWTO-2012). In many developing countries tourism is a development strategy. As per the Tourism satellite Accounting (TSA) research released by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) and its strategic partner Oxford economics in March 2009, the Travel and tourism sector is expected to be the second largest employer of the world employing 40,037,000 by 2019.

Kyrgyzstan with so much to offer to the world continues to remain poor with average monthly wages less than 200\$. There are several factors like the fall of Soviet union resulting in the loss of Soviet subsidies, high inflation, rising unemployment, reduction in real income, increase in external borrowing which remains outside my discussion, hence I will not discuss those. Despite all these, Kyrgyzstan can still prosper and can still become a major economic power if it could integrate its vast natural beauty with proper planning and present the end product to the globalized world.

I still do not have the answer as to why Kyrgyzstan with so much of mountains, lakes, beautiful county side, Nomadic culture has not become a major tourist destination. The reasons are many. Tourism was never a priority sector under the Soviet regime. People were allowed to travel within USSR. Each Republic had a central council for tourism and excursion with the sole purpose to encourage patriotism and promoting regional studies. The Central government was running subsidized social tourism programmes. In 1945, Kyrgyz SSR established a tourism and Alpinism department under the Republic Committee of Physical culture and sports. The Central council for Tourism and Excursion established in 1959 developed camp sites in Frunze (Bishkek), Ulan, Kyrchyn, Issyk-kul, Sary-Chelek, Arstanbap and Osh. The Republic and the state tourism federations were created. All these appeared to be very controlled activities under lot of bureaucratic intervention. This directly impacted tourism as all union travel routes were dissolved as independent governments started formulating their own plans within their territories. Though the Soviet Union collapsed, yet the laws, the rules continued to remain the same. Inadequate regulatory framework, out dated laws, licensing processes, bureaucratic hurdles, came on the way for both foreign and domestic investment in tourism sector.

The absence of a clear public policy in tourism sector, the cumbersome process of Visa issuance for countries with potential tourists (Kyrgyzstan has a Visa-free policy for 44 countries), inadequate infrastructure, inadequate literature in foreign languages describing huge tourism potential make Kyrgyzstan a close country for many like me.

Absence of quality service and infrastructure limits, the economic viability of the tourist attractions in Kyrgyzstan. If Kyrgyzstan is to be an International destination, then it must meet the international standard. I am tempted to quote T Kojokmatov's study 'Matters

Branding in Tourism' published in the University News I, 2012 (UCA), where he says, 'In the vast majority of cases, the tourism infrastructure in Kyrgyzstan is inadequate and does

not meet the needs of tourists' international requirements. The tourism infrastructure does not offer the necessary comfort, it is obsolete and significantly worn out. Massive investments are required into rehabilitation, modernization and renovation.'

The potential of tourism to contribute to economic growth of any country can not be negated, since it represents an opportunity for economic diversification particularly in marginal areas. Tourists are attracted to remote areas, wildlife and landscapes, flora and fauna of any country. Rich cultural heritage, natural beauty of the mountains continues to attract rich tourists. It can therefore be said that tourism can enable communities, which are poor in material wealth but rich in cultural heritage to leverage their unique assets for economic development⁷. This is what can be called an integration of the local communities with the perspective tourists from across the world thus making it a part of globalization process. Tourism also is the only export sector where the consumer travels to the exporting countries, which provide opportunity for the poor to become exporters through the sale of goods and services to the foreign visitors. Being labour intensive, supporting a diverse labour market, tourism helps small-scale employment opportunities to men and women. Besides, tourism has several other indirect benefits for the poor. The market access for remote areas through development of roads, infrastructure and communication network can be seen as attempts to have national integration. The country being united presents itself to the outside world to be explored.

It is rather unfortunate that the cultural assets, the historical heritages, the traditional values of Kyrgyzstan have not been properly showcased to the world. Even the heritage sites and archaeological treasures have not been prioritised in any plan of action of the state. It is high time that the Petroglyph sites at Cholpan Ata and in Saimaluu_TashJalalabad be preserved and marketed. "The combination of cultural assets with high economic values, abundant labour resources, a bright outlook for tourism growth and critical development challenges provide Kyrgyzstan with an opportunity to integrate tourism into a strategy for economic growth and poverty reduction'. Though cultural richness, rich cultural heritage and tradition are important components of tourism in Kyrgyzstan, yet their significance and importance have not been properly projected. In the age of information, when every single thing in any part of the world is being there for public view, the absence of information about the rich cultural heritage of Kyrgyzstan make us to believe that the country is yet to get benefits of Globalization, since there has not been the real integration of its richness with the world's perspective of tourism.

More and more people around the world are now showing interest in some unconventional tourism. With rapid industrialization, pollution, expansion of traffic and congestion, people in developed world are looking for some places where they can spend some time in the midst of nature. Eco-tourism has been their answer. There has been any number of definition to describe co-tourism but that is not within the purview of my discussion, hence without going into the definition of Eco-tourism, I can say that it is a kind of tourism with nature at its base. It is also called Nature Tourism. This kind of tourism is designed to promote local economy and the major stake holders are the local communities. People from outside come to stay in the midst of nature and spend sometime with the local communities being their guests. Kyrgyzstan has been bestowed with a great nature. Here one gets unpolluted air, lush green forest, snow clad mountains, pristine lakes, captivating valleys, but not many people, at least in my part of the world know about it.

Of late, tourism coupled with some real adventure has become quite popular with a section of high-end tourists. This form of tourism called Adventure Tourism and it is one of the fastest growing trend today for which countries in all stages of economic development are prioritizing it for market growth, for these countries recognize the ecological, cultural and economic values. We have no definite definition to describe this tourism, nor the UNTWO literature speaks anything about it. However the Adventure Travel trade Association (ATTA) defines Adventure tourism as a tour that includes at least two of the elements like Physical activity, Natural environment and

cultural immersion. This Adventure tourism can be both domestic and international.

If we would examine why such a tourism is becoming popular then we will find that people with extra money to spend do not want to spend time in a place with environmental and political stress. Besides, people interested in adventure tourism choose destinations off the beaten track to have authentic travel experience. It is estimated that each of the tourists spend more than 3000\$ for a 8 days trip to a destination⁸ it is also a fact that with every 100 \$ spent on a vacation, only an amount of 5 \$ actually stays in a developing country destination's economy.

Despite great forest, picturesque valleys, great lakes, snow clad mountains, world heritage sites, and many more attractions, Kyrgyzstan is still not getting benefits and no wonder that it is still very poor.

The most attractive places of Kyrgyzstan are Tash-Rabat in Naryn oblast, Jeti-Oguz valley, Issykkul lake, tien Shan mountains, Arabel valley situated at 3600 -4000 meters above the sea level, Son kul lake, Son-kul valley, National Park Ala-Archa only 45 kms. From Bishkek, Chon Kemin valley, KeukAyrik pass, Jalpak pass, Naryn river, Lenin peak, Suleiman-too mountains, Suimaly-Tash, Silk Road sites, Khan tengri peaks and many others.

Through its cultural attraction, Kyrgyzstan can attract the whole world. Based on Nomadic traditions dating back to Mongol hordes, Kyrgyzstan can give the people of the world an experience of lifetime. Living in a Yurt with herds of sheep, goat, horses around, drinking khumis can be a life time experience for many a people of the world. Kyrgyz women with their captivating beauty and infectious smile can give the tourists a feeling of warmth and affection. The Kalpaks and the colourful carpets, Shyrdaks can find a good market with the foreign visitor.

It is indeed a matter to ponder about as to why with such a great potential for the growth; Kyrgyzstan has not yet been able to reap the benefits. The reason seems to be the lack of trained human resources and high quality educational institutions in tourism sector. Technical skills and vocational trainings are important to make tourism, a game changer in Kyrgyz economy. Surveys on tourism skills inventory of Kyrgyzstan revealed that “ tourism employees have been exposed to very limited training and education for the job, which they undertake. Less than 15% of tourism employees of Kyrgyzstan have undergone professional training in 2004”⁹. The study recommended that tourism training should focus on relevant generic skills. English language skill, interpersonal and communication skill have been identified as deficient in Kyrgyzstan.¹⁰

When speaking about Globalization and Integration in the context of harmonization of science and education, we must try to get ourselves integrated with global culture, global education and the progress made in science. There should be a global language to link us with one another. Whether you like it or not, you must familiarize yourselves with English, spoken and understood by majority of people in the world. With the disintegration of Soviet Union, we are in a unipolar world. With the Soviet union market and Russian economy in a bad shape, there is a need to find a wider market to sell our expertise and products.

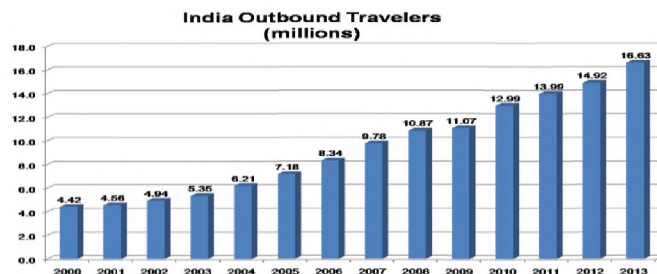
Kyrgyzstan from outside still looks a closed country. There has not been enough Research publication on tourism of Kyrgyzstan. The National committees of the state collect official statistics on tourism. These are not consistent. Kyrgyzstan must consider using Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) which has been developed by UNTWO.

Kyrgyzstan has started taking some steps to invite foreign tourists by making it Visa Free for nearly 44 countries. But for the countries like India, which are traditional friends of the Republic, it is still a very difficult country to come. Today lot of Indians are going out to spend their holidays, but for a country of 1.2 billion people, Kyrgyzstan still remains a sort of out of bound, because of the difficult visa procedure.

India is one of the fastest-growing outbound travel markets in the world. With more than 1.2 billion inhabitants and GDP increasing by more than eight per cent every year, India offers enormous potential for future growth in outbound travel. Whether it is to meet a relative settled abroad, a shopping trip, a global sport event or just for leisure, Indians are

НАРОДНОЕ ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ. ПЕДАГОГИКА. МЕТОДИКА ПРЕПОДАВАНИЯ

increasingly travelling abroad. The UNWTO predicts that India will account for 50 million outbound tourists by 2020. Industry experts talk about the Opportunities and Challenges in Outbound Tourism in India.¹¹



Historically, India has had close contacts with Central Asia especially countries which were part of the Ancient Silk Route, including Kyrgyzstan. During the Soviet era, India and the then Kyrgyz Republic had limited political, economic and cultural contacts. Former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visited Bishkek and IssykKul Lake in 1985. Since the independence of Kyrgyz Republic on 31 August 1991, India was among the first to establish diplomatic relations in 1992; the resident Mission of India was set up in 1994. India being a developed country now can offer many things to Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyz students can get benefits of world class education being offered by India. In the field of science, Kyrgyz scholars must explore the possibilities of working together with India.

The last but not the least thing, I would like to highlight that India's strong relationship with USSR and now with Russia has not prevented it from establishing strong relationship with other countries. Kyrgyzstan must take a leaf from India's progress and it must look beyond Russia while still maintaining strong relationship with it. It can be the right step in harmonizing science and education in modern condition of globalization and Integration.

Thank you ladies and gentlemen for giving me a patient hearing.

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