

Geeta Wahi Dua

LOOKING IN, OUT & BEYOND

Broadly speaking, professionals are experts with specialized knowledge and practical and literary skills in the field which they practice. Every profession works like a human body – a complex system of interconnected sub systems, all working in consonance with each other. It can be imagined as a multitude of smaller parts, each with its own identity and character, working together in an organized manner for the benefit of the total being.

For any profession to stay healthy and long lasting, it is important that it first identifies and follows certain traits that it has learned from the rules of nature, past histories and experiences.

Ever Evolving

Every trend or “movement” of a profession works well in a certain time period or era. It has a context of certain existing social, cultural, political and economical situations. The dynamics of those times defined by the driving forces and boundaries characterize the identity of profession at that point of time. So immediately after independence, in the decade (50s–60s), we had new institutional buildings,

research centers and agricultural universities coming up when the time was marked by an enthusiasm to work for nation building with a socialist agenda. In later decades, with more technological advances, opening economy and economic disparities, the priorities of the society and governing institutes have changed. Within this time we have seen the growth of new townships, commercial and recreational hubs, and transition of domains from rural to urban.

Professions created specially to address new topical issues usually do not survive for long and neither do those which address the obsolete concerns of past times. In the long run, only those survive which have a solid knowledge and practice base and are able to change, reinvent and update themselves with the new realities of the changing times. The latest buzz words today include interdisciplinary practices, technology, public-private partnerships, large scales and infrastructure works. Those practices survive which are able to address these ideas and concerns without losing their basic grain. There will be some constants and some variables. An intelligent profession is able to distinguish between the two during each time.

It is convenient to stay with what's worked in the past even if it's no longer working well. The real challenge is to break the routines and get out of one's comfort zone. In India, the Information Technology sector has responded to the ever changing contexts of technology, user demand and skills. Till the 1960s the only source of communication was telephones, wireless cables and telegrams; now we have the most sophisticated communication modes in our hands. The technology has updated itself from telephone to pager to cell phone to smart phone and now artificial intelligence. The future possibilities are endless.

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus commented on the transient nature of everything, and a modern version of the saying goes, "Change is the only constant". Any profession's ability to constantly redefine itself in tune with the profound economic and social changes is the key to its survival and staying relevant in the long run.

Explore

A healthy profession challenges its own boundaries in terms of knowledge base and projects. Changing goals is an evidence of learning. Once a profession is established, it constantly explores new avenues. It experiments with new ideas and treads new unexplored paths and sets new standards. It contributes to the global advances in its respective field. It also examines the relevance and working of global trends and tries to learn lessons from other sources and contexts. On the way, it also collaborates with like-minded organizations, groups, communities and individuals to broaden its vision of under-

standing and working in its field and exploring the new opportunities to make its mark. The profession is content only to expand its reach.

Variety

A healthy profession is seen as working at various scales and types, addressing diverse issues, targets, amongst wide group of communities. The key is to keep it fresh. Each situation is unique; each solution exclusive. All the literary and practice works advancements offer speculative new ideas, cutting edge content, and inspirational and innovative works with engaging experiences. For a new profession, it should be on the path of creating such a body.

Wider recognition

Numbers do matter. Recognition of profession beyond its own boundaries, across a diverse area of population is one of the signs of its health and vitality. It is not celebrating its exclusiveness but trying to reach out to wider users without compromising on its identity and value. There is a steady increase in the growth rate of number of credible institutes where the knowledge of the respective field is imparted. It has an evolved and sustainable system of education spread across the country comprising of competent and experienced educators.

Research

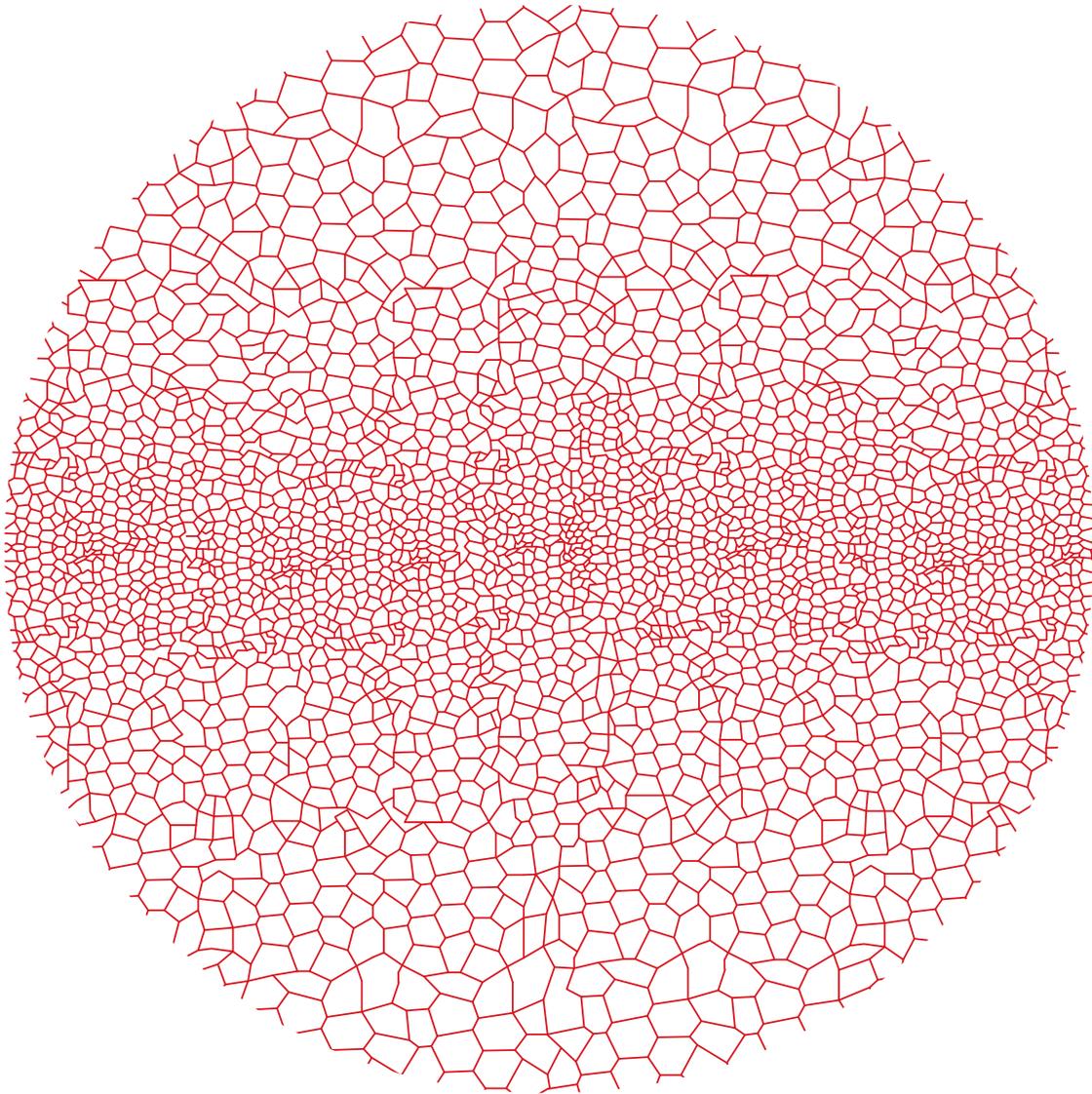
Striving to push its own boundaries and expanding its theoretical and experiential knowledge of the field, is a must.

Members undertake creative works in a group or individually, to increase the stock of knowledge, both theoretical and practical. This teachable and referral knowledge serves as a data reservoir for all the future works. So the reservoir needs to be ever filled with studies, works which are intellectually stimulating and inspiring.

Agent of social change

Professionalism means commitment to the client, community and one's own work through ethical practices. With strong ethical and moral values of conduct, professionals have the advocacy and a strong sense of belonging to the profession. They are also conscious of their larger role of contributing to the society that lies outside their set boundaries of 'profession'. Public exhibitions, design competitions, seminars, discourses, discussion panels, broadcast and telecast of related activities all that involving not only professionals but also people from other walks of life are few of the forums that are taken up for the objective.

Moreover, the profession cannot exist in a vacuum, in isolation. It needs support of the government, policy makers, and other allied professions to push its agendas and long term vision at local and national level. It requires the services of the industry. So it tries to work in a collaborative manner for the well being of itself.



Vision for sustainable future

The profession is equipped intellectually and otherwise to address the new turns of events (at times unpredictable). At each point of time, it leaves behind a legacy for future generations to look up to. A forward-looking profession will chalk down a sustainable future for the coming decades.

An evolving profession celebrates freedom of thought, cultivates a long term vision and also inculcates human values and concern amongst its members for the environment and the society. It nurtures the desire to excel in performance without compromising on its values, both ethical and intellectual.

A profession can be imagined as a multitude of smaller parts – cells, each with its own identity and character, working together in an organized manner for the benefit of the total being.

Associate Editor **Geeta Wahi Dua** can be contacted at lajournalindia@gmail.com

