

## A PARTNERSHIP OF NATURE, SOCIETY AND TECHNOLOGY : A CYBERNETIC APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION\*\*

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I have great pleasure in having this privilege of being invited to deliver the convocation address at the completion of the fifty-ninth regular course of ISEC & express my thankful gratitude to ISEC management for this invitation.

*ISEC* was launched under the auspices of United Nations Educational & Scientific Co-Operation (UNESCO) and Government of India in 1950 at the initiative of Prof. P. C. Mahalanobis, founder-Director of ISI and is jointly operated by International Statistical Institute and the Indian Statistical Institute. The objective of the centre is to provide courses on statistical methods and applications at various levels to selected participants from about 58 countries of the developing world in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Professor Mahalanobis who was one of the doyens of free India's science, technology and developmental planning considered statistics and related information processing system as the key technology for social and national development in the world, and organised the National Statistical system for India under the Ministry of Planning, Government of India and played a key role in developing the United Nation's Statistical System.

I may mention that I joined ISI in September 1955 in Computer Development & Research Division at the instance of Prof. Mahalanobis and engaged myself in theoretical and experimental research on computer science including design, development, and fabrication of a

laboratory model for 64-track, 16 bit digital memory system that became a part of my Ph.D. thesis. After Ph.D., I was awarded with the United Nations Fellowship as a Visiting Scientist in some important R & D centres in USA and Europe and also did visit the UNESCO offices at Vienna, Paris and New York as a part of the programme.

Secondly, in late fifties when I was working as a young researcher in ISI, *ISEC* trainees were a colourful existence with beautiful multi-cultural young ladies and vigorous young men – in an already picturesque and flowery environment of ISI. Thirdly, in the 8th World Congress of Systems of Cybernetics in Amsterdam, 1978 I received the 1st prize of the Norbert Weiner Award from the Director General of UNESCO. So I have some respectful and sweet remembrance for UNESCO programmes. I understand from my colleagues in ISI who are teachers in the course of *ISEC*, participants both males and females are very committed and dedicated lot. And I have no doubt that all ISI faculty are very serious in their teaching/training activities, Participants who come from different countries with their specific application and experiences for long 10 months deserves to have some useful training in ISI. I am sure that Prof. M. Pal and Dr. P. Bharati of *ISEC* are doing their best to make Training Programmes as useful and comfortable as possible under the supervision of the energetic Director of ISI.

I understand from Prof. S. K. Pal, the present Director of ISI and Prof. C.R. Rao, Chairman Board of Directors of *ISEC* some very specific steps are being implemented to modernise and stabilise the *ISEC* training programme. I have looked at the curriculum of the *ISEC* Regular Course - 60<sup>th</sup> term, which I understand, has been revised in the past in several stages — and is very useful for officials from National Statistical Offices of different countries. May I venture a comment that in the past decades the major

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\*\* Talk delivered at the convocation on the completion of 59th regular course of International Statistical Education Centre (*ISEC*).