

“Knowledge democracy: Opening our doors to all knowledge systems”

Under its Futures of Education initiative, UNESCO has published a report titled *“Humanistic Futures of Learning”* which provides different perspectives and views held by representatives of the UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks from all disciplines. Contributing to this publication, Dr. Rajesh Tandon (UNESCO Co-Chair on Community-based Research and Social Responsibility of Higher Education, Founder-President, PRIA) and Dr. Budd Hall (UNESCO Co-Chair on Community-based Research and Social Responsibility of Higher Education, University of Victoria) co-authored an independent piece titled *“Knowledge democracy: Opening our doors to all knowledge systems”*.

In this paper, the authors discuss the cultural injustices attached to the modern education system. With a history of colonization across the world, there has been a destruction of local knowledge and the loss of native language. This gradual disappearance of local cultures has led to the foundations of the modern education system being based on the Eurocentric knowledge. It is this cultural injustice that highlights the need for the practice of knowledge democracy in the existing education system.

With its core belief of acknowledging diversity, knowledge democracy encourages the spread and exchange of cultures and languages. It appreciates the ancient knowledge that has sustained with the people and recognises the importance of the same. For there to be a peaceful co-habitation of humanity on Earth, the future of knowledge, according to the authors, should entail respectful co-construction and co-habitation of a diversity of experiential, practical, local and indigenous knowledge systems with ‘modern science’.

Turning to the incorporation of knowledge democracy into the present education system, the authors share some practical methods. At the primary level, a step towards interactive learning in the real world could be adopted. The secondary level could entail an adaptation in the education syllabi such that it is framed around societal problems. In the post-secondary level, both teaching and research could be linked to developing socially responsible professionals and experts. In this manner, appreciation of the local knowledge can be fostered into the students and teachers.

Through these methods of blurring the boundaries between formal education institutions with everyday life, knowledge democracy allows an individual to learn how to become an active future citizen. As the authors state, *“While individuals do benefit from all systems of education as they learn to do, earn and prosper in their own lives, learning to become active future citizens of humanity requires education to serve a greater holistic purpose.”* It is in this aspect of imbibing a societal commitment in the futures of education that knowledge democracy plays a critical role, thus, preparing humanity for a sustainable future.

To read the full publication: ["Humanistic Futures of Learning"](#)

The piece on **"Knowledge democracy: Opening our doors to all knowledge systems"** by **Dr. Rajesh Tandon & Dr. Budd Hall** can be found from Pg 21-23.