

Book Review

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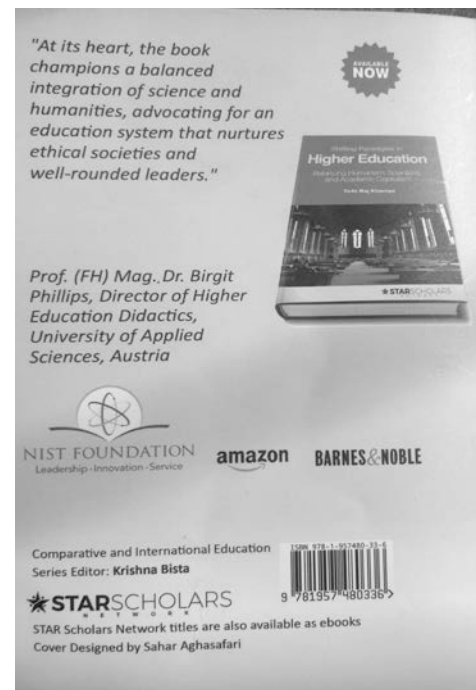
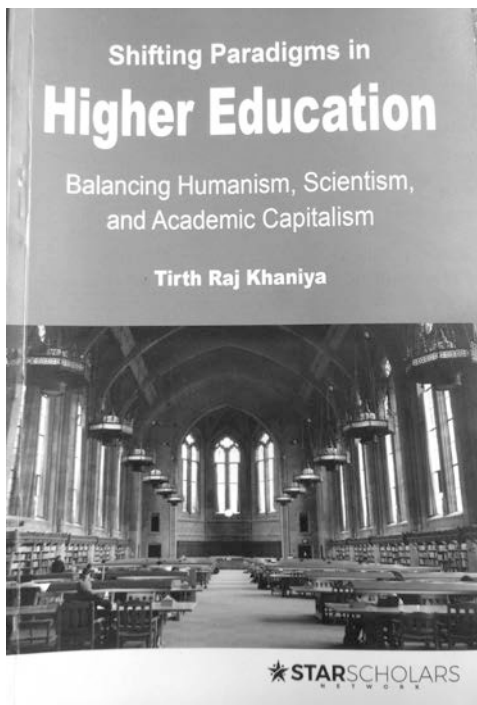
Book: Shifting Paradigms in Higher Education: Balancing Humanism; Scientism, and Academic Capitalism

Author: Tirth Raj Khania

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The author of the book *Shifting Paradigms in Higher Education: Balancing Humanism; Scientism, and Academic Capitalism*, Professor Doctor Tirth Raj Khania, is the former

Vice-Chancellor of Tribhuvan University, TU, (2072 BS – 2076 BS), a former member of National Planning Commission of Nepal and the Vice-president of the then Higher Secondary Education Board currently known as National Examination Board. Furthermore, his academic dynamicity is characterized through continuous activities of higher education in Nepal through national and international different projects. The current creation in the book form is his latest contribution to the human civilization.

This book has been framed into ten chapters. Those chapters are serially 'History and Philosophy of Higher Education'; 'Philosophical Underpinnings of Higher Education'; 'Academic Freedom and Institutional Autonomy'; 'Higher Education, Humanism, and Wellbeing'; 'Utilitarian Perspectives on Science in Higher Education'; 'The Influence of Capitalism on Higher Education'; 'Academic Capitalism and Higher Education'; 'Academic Entrepreneurialism and Entrepreneurial University'; 'Anticipating Future Trends in Higher Education', and 'Summary and Conclusion'. Briefly, their key-points have been discussed below chapterwise.

The first chapter 'History and Philosophy of Higher Education' draws the pictures of the world's first 'university' in different senses like foundational structure; meaning; service provided to different societies in the size of mass; continuity of service from beginning to till date; where-who-how opened certain university and with what fund, and so on. The Higher Education Institution (HEI) are having different namings like 'University' in Europe, 'Academy' and such other in the USA, 'School' in Russia and so on. Historically the Latin word 'universitas' (means collective body or community) is semantically synonymous to 'Studium generale' (the scholarly teaching places in disciplines like Theology, Law and Medicine).

The author argues that Nalanda (functional from the 5th century to the 12th century) and Takshashila/Taxila (around the 7th century) of Bharata in the Indian sub-continent are definitely older than University of Bologna (Italy, 1088 AD), University of Paris (France, 1150 AD) and University of Oxford (England, teaching started in 1096 AD but recorded establishment date is 1167 AD) like European universities. While China dates even the 3rd century for evolution of higher education with establishment of learning centres in Chang'an by Emperor Ping of the Han dynasty, Africa and the Middle East dates 5th-7th centuries. Al-Qarawiyyin University in Morocco was established in 859 AD by Princess Fatima al-Fihri. There were student-led university (like University of Bologna and University of Padua) and the teacher-led university (University of Paris and others) models but the student-led university concept proved to be a problematic in the 14th century and the local government had to pay the teachers through a Charter by intervening the students' strike and also erasing this model.

Referring to John Henry Newman and Wilhelm von Humboldt, Khaniya clearly writes here that teaching and research should go together in the university with academic freedom and internationalization of the course, learner and the faculties.

The second chapter 'Philosophical Underpinnings of Higher Education' opens with the four traditional functions of HEI, viz. generation and transmission of ideology; selection and formation of dominant elite; production and application of knowledge, and training of the skilled labour force and leads into the new functions like national development; democracy; social cohesion, and the use of new knowledge to enhance the economic productivity. It defines fine arts; humanities; science; multi/interdisciplinary like courses and shows the need of entrepreneurial university. It has the legacy with the ideas of the first chapter well.

Likewise, the third chapter 'Academic Freedom and Institutional Autonomy' mentions a legal statutes, the Magna Charta Universitatum, which was signed on September 18, 1215 by some 388 university leaders on the 900th anniversary of the University of Bologna (Italy) on its previous academic charter of 1158 AD which is taken as 'academic freedom' today globally. It ensures an individual of the academic institutions to perform activities of research, teaching and learning rightfully travelling to unhindered passage in the interests of education. It also talks about International Association of Universities' (1998) policy on academic freedom with balancing ethical responsibility to use the freedom only for academic pursuit and for betterment as well as the development of the human society, however, there are political and the financial challenges ahead of scholar while rejoicing such freedom.

The fourth chapter 'Higher Education, Humanism, and Wellbeing' deals with the changing concept of the 'humanism' in the 21st century and advocates that the growing use of technology in the higher education (and advancements like FM Radio, Global Positioning System, DNA fingerprinting and so on) must be ethically used with true spirit to develop human civilization only.

In this series, the fifth chapter 'Utilitarian Perspectives on Science in Higher Education' continues from chapter four. It focuses on the ethical and positive use of technology only for the upliftment of human society. The chapter interestingly pinpoints that only the science is not enough to catch all the metaphysical affairs in the universe so a learning tendency beyond science and scientism with flexibility in us to join the science with humanity and metaphysical ponderings is a must which can help learn more than one expects. Here, Khaniya's language sounds the language of V. S. Ramachandran, a Bhartiya living scientist how he defines science enthusiastically in his essay 'The Making of a Scientist'. Ramachandran says that 'curiosity' is not only enough to make you a scientist rather obsession, passion and almost pathological curiosity are required because science, in his language, is a love affair with nature. Probably this is the reason why a scientist in neurology, Ramachandran also tried cracking the Indus Valley script together with his postdoctoral colleague Eric Altschuller. The field 'neurology' and the 'script of Indus Valley' are entirely different but due to Peter Medawar's 'physical discomfort when

there is incomprehension' and the pathological curiosity in himself, Ramachandran could enjoy linguistic area in Sumerian civilization being himself a Dravidian as well as anthropology and ethnology. In fact, Ramachandran believes that science flourishes best in an atmosphere of complete freedom and financial independence. While talking these things of Ramachandran, they tally with ideas of Khaniya about science shaking hands with metaphysical cosmos affairs with 'pathological curiosity'. Khaniya tries to express this idea in my wit.

The sixth chapter 'The Influence of Capitalism on Higher Education' is very crucial in my vision because it discusses various capitals, viz. academic capitalism, industrial capital, China's State Capitalism and ethical capitalism. It elaborates largely how Chinese State Capitalism is controversial in its rural area to remove the poverty but centralizes the power in the ruler. For university propelling and the stakeholder, academic capitalism is essential for teaching, research and technology so, extra financial sources are always necessary rather than depending only on the government and some donors. This chapter is historically linked with the first chapter because the first chapter clearly writes on page 9 that Nalanda and Takshashila were having no cost for admission, boarding or accommodation but as the technology and the concept of learning/travel grew, the academic capitalism was felt necessary in Europe and America and so is their effect in the world today.

The seventh chapter 'Academic Capitalism and Higher Education' chapter is again the continuation of academic capitalism in the university with the legacy from chapters 1 and 6. The author notes that the British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and the US President Ronald Regan had similar policies on political philosophy and the economic policy so they had started freeing the government from regulating the financial sector to neoliberal economy to discourage unionization (politics at workplace) but increase privatization. From there now and with the advancement of advanced technology to gain higher education, the universities seek now the new financial sources, however, China has still the Confucian state-sponsored traditional in many universities. So, the skill based technology using study has been a need.

Chapter eight 'Academic Entrepreneurialism and Entrepreneurial University' discusses broadly how after facing COVID-19 period amidst the academic capitalism concept and the ethically using high technology, there is a need of entrepreneurial university based on the own skill for financial independence. This concept can kill the unemployment and will grow a sense of humanization for welfare.

The ninth chapter 'Anticipating Future Trends in Higher Education' is a suggestive tool as a token from the author to identify the challenges and opportunities in higher education.

Where there are changing ecology in higher education like new trends; technological advancements; internationalization and marketization of higher education; concept of public-private collaboration and such other, there we have to be prepared to welcome these things to propel the university to satisfy the maximum areas of the society in the future.

The tenth and last chapter 'Summary and Conclusion' chapter is, thus, a summary of the book from historical evolution of the HEIs to the age of Artificial Intelligence where we have to keep morality and to provide the skill based entrepreneurial higher education to the individual so that they can live with peace and prosperity. Therefore, the author seeks the higher sense of climate change and rehumanization in higher education so there is an urgency to revise our higher education to satisfy the climatic issues what the UNO seeks. This positive modeling is essential in other facets of human society also.

Structurally, *Shifting Paradigms in Higher Education: Balancing Humanism; Scientism, and Academic Capitalism* seems to follow all the modern parameters in its structure such as preliminary pages which compose the items 'About the book'; 'New Titles'; 'Contents'; 'Praise for this book'; 'Acknowledgements'; 'Foreword' carefully marked by Stewart E. Sutin, PhD; 'Why this Book?'; readable pages (main text), and some fourteen post pages for 'References' part. The book consults almost two hundred and fifty different book, report, paper and web materials. Each chapter has good uniformity that a reader can encounter: good introduction and opening, well elaboration of the subject matter into different sub-titles without any confusion also in the lucid language and the summary (Key Takeaways from Chapter ...). Such toils of the author compel the reader to say that the book is a meticulous work.

Comparing Khaniya's current book *Shifting Paradigms in Higher Education: Balancing Humanism; Scientism, and Academic Capitalism* with his other creation *Navigating Higher Education in Nepal: Historical Perspectives and Future Directions*, which were launched on the same day July 07, 2024 in Bhrikutimandap of Kathmanducurrent, the posterior one consists of following seven chapters: i) Historical Development of Higher Education in Nepal; ii) Major Issues and Challenges in Higher Education in Nepal; iii) Politicization of Higher Education and University Teachers; iv) Politicization of University Students; v) The Way Forward for Nepal's Higher Education and Tribhuvan University; vi) Fading Human Civilization Causing End Traps, and vii) Humanistic Higher Education at Central Campus, TU Overcoming End Traps. Now, a sensitive reader can get much content of the author (Khaniya) as same stuff in both books but while *Shifting Paradigms...* talks those challenges globally in the higher education, there *Navigating Higher Education in Nepal* scrutinizes the Nepalese higher education's

challenges in the global context. In fact, his *Navigating Higher...* is an attempt to set Nepal worldwide a centre of peace and Hinduism-Buddhism destination through higher education by making Tribhuvan University as a leading one which will definitely operate other subjects too as usual but joining the teaching trends with technology which will make Academic Capitalism. In this sense, his chapters in *Navigating Higher...* deal with history of higher education in Nepal from TU, and all those internal political and curricular challenges of TU within Nepal by tallying with the global emerging new challenges so that TU will assist Nepal to curb the brain-drain in 10+2 level students after their passing out. It also writes how there were legal challenges while opening TU in the beginning inside Nepal and also in India; to retain academic freedom in TU after its establishment during the party-less Panchayat reign, and how the author himself had to legally fight with the Nepalese federal government for autonomous of TU and to save its immovable properties. But Kaniya's *Shifting New Paradigms...* shows the glorious history of higher education in the university form; same stuffs like academic freedom; higher education for humanity; joining education with new technology so that the product will be entrepreneurial, and such others. The commonality in his both books is that they have been textured from the Eastern point of view which is not the chauvinism of the writer rather he is even successful to provide the plentiful strong evidences.

Therefore, I strongly recommend the lover of book reader, educationist, TU and other Nepali universities, planner, the political figure, student, stake-holders of universities in Nepal and worldwide and all curious civil society members to read both of Khaniya's well-textured books at least to save mankind and humanity through higher education to restore peace as well as harmony in the cosmos. The Nepalese any stake-holder student, teacher and staff of TU and other universities and those who seek to lead the university either as authority in the apex part or at local campus level must read these books. I am compelled to ink that I have experienced real knowledge from these two books about HEIs only now in my life as a member of human civilization in the temporal long history. So, I must give due thanks to the author Prof. Tirth Raj Khaniya.

I believe in that the future publication of this *Shifting Paradigms in Higher Education: Balancing Humanism; Scientism, and Academic Capitalism* will assimilate the following criteria in editing representatively pointed out in the further lines to prove more academically pure like: i) *grammar part*: a) *punctuation*: on cover and elsewhere the book name should be as *Balancing Humanities; Scientism, and Academic Capitalism*, not as *Balancing Humanism, Scientism, and Academic Capitalism*; b) *full-stop at wrong place or, two times putting (?)*: the 2nd line of the 1st paragraph. The posterior end-stop is extra/double (page 6); see also pages 40 at quoted part/Italic part and 46 (7th line, 2nd paragraph- remove unnecessary full-stop after word 'geography'); the full stops should be

after in-text citations, not before in-text citations on quoted part of pages 50 and the upper quoted part of page 51); ii) *uniformity*: somewhere double inverted commas (like "Academy" etc) but somewhere single inverted commas (like 'College'), on same page 1; *put comma and available page numbers* for uniformity and clarity in the in-text citation and write like (Hayhoe, 2001:...) but not as (Hayhoe 2001)- 3rd line of 4th paragraph on page 11; allow hyphen while writing 'Al-Qarawiyyin' to maintain the uniformity in the 3rd line of last paragraph on page 13; iii) *direct/continuous in-text citations without at least two general lines*: like there is direct citation, 1st sentence of the 3rd paragraph on page 2, and there are continuous citations like "... (Weik, 2009). Weik (2009) ..." and "... (Durham, 2002). (Alemu (2018)..." on same page 3; iv) *mention the known date to be more accurate*: the sentence '...the first time in the world, started ...', should get clear date like '... the first time in the 4th B.C. in the world, started ...' (5th line in the 4th paragraph, page 11); v) *vocabulary missing*: mention author's name in the in-text citation (, 2009)-last line of page 14; vi) *two times citation and direct quotation in the running line*: same citation (Cowley & Williams 1991: 49) is seen in the 1st and 2nd paragraphs of page 18 (here citation should be in one paragraph only, however, 2nd paragraph's citation is more clear and good. Since quoted part is less than 35 words/three and a half lines so, this quotation should be in the same running line but not in the next line; also see pages 40, 50 and 51 at quoted section); vii) *where to close the court/inverted comma (?) and extra space*: please, note 'salaries, yielded ...' sentence (3rd paragraph, second-last line on page 19- the inverted comma/court is not closed and there is space before the word salaries); viii) *remove confusion*: action happens in during COVID-19 but the citation comes before COVID-19, i.e., in 2008 and 2018 (!) (2nd paragraph, page 25); likewise, 'TU senate has provision of the students but TU is not a student-led university'- this should be clarified for the reader in below part of the 1st paragraph, page 27); ix) *repetition of idea in many pages*: one example, Paris offering education in Arts and Theology but Bologna focusing Law and Medicine (of page 30) comes frequently on many other pages and such are other ideas too; x) use present tense in academic writing: Abraham Flexner, who 'defines', not who 'defined' (4th paragraph, page 35); xi) *no bold/remove bold*: **teaching and research** (3rd line of 2nd paragraph on page 39) because bold is no longer used even in APA style inside general text except title, sub-titles and references so, use inverted commas if needed to highlight something, and book writing itself is a formal/academic writing so its every word is formal; xii) *use three dots only*: put the three dots only for continuing long but unnecessary sentence, the quoted section/Italicized part on page 40, 44; xiii) *put proper space*: the space is missing in the Italicized/quoted part between three dots and word flexibility and also after end of the sentence, in fact, the in-text citation is incorrectly put (page 47), and so on.