



Message from IACLP's New President

Dear Colleagues,

Warm greetings!

I am deeply honoured and privileged to take the baton from Dr Gideon Arulmani, the founder-president of the Indian Association for Career and Livelihood Planning (IACLP). Under his visionary leadership, IACLP has gained formidable ground. Over the last seven years, IACLP, as an active affiliate of International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG), has secured international recognition as a contact point for careers work in India. At the same time, our association has also gained national credibility as a collective of researchers and practitioners committed to ensuring decent jobs, fulfilling careers and sustainable livelihoods in small yet impactful ways. The academic front of the association, the Indian Journal of Career and Livelihood Planning (IJCLP), has emerged as a respectable publication and is poised to become a platform for researchers from the developing world. It publishes unconventional and varied content, follows rigorous standards and provides space to both established experts and new entrants, from India and other cultural contexts, to publish their work.

The noted French litterateur Paul Valéry once quipped: *the future is not what it used to be!* We are undoubtedly living in volatile and uncertain times which defy predictability and thus impede preparedness, making our work more challenging than ever before. It is said that we are living in an exponential age and on the cusp of the fourth industrial revolution. Technological advances in nanotechnology, quantum computing, robotics, digital automation, artificial intelligence, biosynthetics, genetics are changing labour markets in unprecedented ways. New terms such as technological unemployment, deglobalisation, digital capitalism, reshoring, financialisation, precarization, casualisation, contractualisation, sub-contractualisation, on-demand economy have entered our lexicon. These developments have obvious ramifications for our practice. At the same time, recent initiatives of the government of India signal a growing realization of the vital role of career and livelihood support services in India. For example, the National Career Service has been launched, National Rural and Urban Livelihood Missions have been merged and renamed as Deen Dayal Upadhyay Antyodaya Yojna, and a number of other missions, projects and schemes are being implemented to reinvigorate the employment sector. These initiatives have presented us with new opportunities we need to capitalise upon.

The IACLP aims to gear itself up to understand and confront these challenges and leverage new opportunities effectively in order to remain relevant and meaningful. This endeavour needs concerted and synergised efforts from all the members. Any association derives its power from its members; their contributions and their enthusiasm is vital for its success. The associational power we would be able to harness would help us secure discursive power which, in turn would assist in ensuring institutional power crucial for developing a robust and responsive career support system functional at multiple levels in various contexts. Like any other group of professionals, our survival and relevance rest on three pillars of theory, practice and policy. The fourth pillar, namely, a social justice orientation has emerged as a potent rationale for professional practice more recently. In order to strengthen these pillars, we intend to: form working groups on different themes relevant for development of the discipline of career and livelihood planning; document and disseminate best practice in career service delivery; devise a framework to establish quality standards and

benchmarks; engage in building grounds for pushing government for an all-age career policy; and, organise capacity-building programmes on recent theoretical and methodological advances in the discipline. We need to expand our membership base through sustained efforts, bring in professionals and academicians from a broader spectrum of disciplines, and leverage the power of internet and social media to enhance our visibility. We are shortly going to announce the IACLP's national conference and present a plan for regular events at various levels.

I urge you to come up with ideas and suggestions for taking the IACLP to greater heights. I am confident in the strength of the collective power we wield as a group of work, career and livelihood professionals. We are all set to make a difference through our competence, commitment, connections and contributions.

I conclude with a hymn from one of our most ancient texts, the Rig Veda. It reads: *aa no bhadra kratavo yantu vishwatah* (1.89.1). Translated in English it would mean: *Let powers auspicious or noble thoughts come to us from all directions.*

Please do write in with your ideas and suggestions.

Sachin Kumar

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