

Alumni meet held at TISS

By PaGaLGuY.com News Service

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The Alumni meet of the Tata Institute Of Social Sciences (TISS) opened with a tremendous sense of nostalgia in the air as the TISS alumni of even the 40s and the 50s batches were seen; white hair, wisdom and along with it a deep sense of belonging to the TISS family. It took an hour more than the scheduled time to begin with the plenary session, as the alumni were too busy catching up with each other.

The session began with the voice of the institute; the institute song. The anchor, Mr. R.S.S.Mani, an ex faculty, welcomed the audience and introduced the members on the dais ,who were facilitated with bouquets which included the director ,Prof S. Parasuraman, the deputy director, Prof .Usha S.Nayar ,Prof. Armaity S.Desai ,chairperson of the governing board,Mr. R.K.Krishna kumar.Dean of student affairs ,Prof. Nasreen Rustom Fram and the General Secretary of the students union ,Mr. Sanjay Pradhan and the registrar,Mr. Sandeep Chatterjee.

Prof. Usha Nayar addressed the audience greeting them with overwhelming affection. She said that TISS is playing a significant role through research education and influencing the policies towards people centered development. She said that keeping in view of the legacy of the institution, recently the institute has been re structured, re imagined and re-defined in response to the changing needs in the society and in an attempt to address the problems in society and work towards change that reached out to all. Prof. Nasreen Rustomfram then spoke of the genesis of the entire event. The event was a culmination of the efforts made by the institute in the past two years to re connect with its alumni. Its conception occurred with the present students union putting it on the annual agenda and the sustained efforts of a critical mass of student, faculty and administrative staff. She highlighted the expectations from this meet which was to create a forum for a dialogue between the alumni, institute and the students, to set up a process of active participation of the alumni in the future development of the institute, to encourage networking and have an ongoing relationship with them. Sanjaya Pradhan, Gen Sec Students' Union spoke on the occasion about the strengthening of roots that was required for the institute which could do a lot for the students once they pass out.

This was followed by the Director's address in which he spoke about the various new courses that the institute is about to start this year – 2 new M.A. programs and the certification programs in Andaman and Nicobar islands and Ladakh. Prof. Armaity Desai shared her experience with the institute as ex director. Mr. R. K. Krishnakumar spoke of the paradox of the rising prosperous India and the other invisible India, which has turned out to be a social failure .The challenge was to bridge the gap.

A walk down the memory lane followed this with Mrs Grace Mathew re calling her days at TISS as a student. Praseenjit Chatterjee and Dr.Kalyani Sen also shared their experiences with TISS as students.

Mr P Vijayan, VP HR Mahindra Gesco, Dr. Avinash Supe and Ms. Mary D'Souza facilitated post lunch, second plenary session titled TISS-Alumni Interface. The need for alumni contributing in ways other than economical, to the college was stressed. Ms. D'Souza took the session forward by asking the alumni gathered to jot down 2 to 5 areas of concern that they had. Further she asked them to identify the dimensions within each area, which they felt most strongly about. After this exercise was over, the alumni were given a chance to voice their most important concern in public. Ten such concerns came to the fore. The entire lot of people then grouped themselves into 10 groups and brainstormed on a concern and came up with suggestions in terms of what needs to be done and how TISS can do something about it. The increasing gap between the haves and the have-nots, electoral reforms, rights of the disabled

people, cause of dalits and adivasis were some of the issues that were discussed.

The second day of the Alumni Meet was a school wise meeting of the alumni. The alumni belonging to Schools of social work, personnel management, health studies, lifelong learning and Phd, M.Phil met in separate venues and discussed aspects related to their own schools. In general, alumni gave a feedback of the courses, their content and also discussed what needs to be changed to have a better curriculum in place. Apart from issues related to separate schools, alumni across specializations and schools insisted the importance of being connected. There was a general opinion that the institute website needs to be updated and so was the view that the alumni needs to be updated about the happenings in the institute.

The clock was set at 12:38 pm. All good things must come to end; but not without a resolve that the show will go on and will be much stronger next year. With this note, the valedictory function began with a somber but sure note. Representatives from all the schools spoke about what they had discussed which was followed by Director's address wherein he said that an alumni office would be setup as part of the office of Student Affairs with a full time alumni affairs officer. He also mentioned that a working group would be formed with representatives from each school and that it would be the responsibility of the working group to formulate the rules and regulations and take the process forward. The coordinator of the working groups would be the Dean, Student Affairs. The director appreciated the resolve of the HRM&LR alumni to raise \$5,00, 000. Dr.Parasuraman ended the session by profusely thanking stalwarts like Prof. Meenakshi Apte, Prof. Grace Mathew, Prof. A.M. Sharma and Prof. Rane who took time to visit their alma mater. He further thanked the students for their support and coordination. Prof.Nasreen Rustomfram while giving the vote of thanks acknowledged everybody's efforts including the student coordination team in making this event a grand success.