Knowledge Society should be a Sharing and Cooperative Society[1]

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Introduction

Thank you, CJEN-Bangladesh, for the invitation to talk, or shall I say, for the opportunity to inspire and energize you to further level up on your initiatives toward networking and cooperation among communication and journalism schools at the national, regional, and global levels.

In my presentation, I would like to contextualize networking from a "philosophical" perspective but at the same time, provide concrete rationale and practical suggestions on how to pursue networking amid a growing competitive world, which is indeed very unfortunate.

My key message can be summarized below:

Networking is NOT an option or choice. Networking is the ONLY WAY to grow and survive.

As educators, we are drivers of Knowledge Society. As such, we play lead role in promoting and sustaining a sharing, caring, and cooperative society.

[1] Paper presented at the Communication and Journalism Educators Network (CJEN Bangladesh) Pre-Conference, CJEN Bangladesh – Looking Back, Moving Forward held on 11 March 2022. This is an updated version of an earlier paper presented at the University of Santo Tomas Annual Research Fortnight with the theme *"Daloy-Kaalaman: Research and Innovation towards an Inclusive Knowledge Society,"* 18 February 2019.

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Knowledge Society and Sharing Society

What is a knowledge society?

"A society in which the creation, dissemination, and utilization of information and knowledge has become the most important factor of production. In such a society, *knowledge assets* (also called *intellectual capital*) are the most powerful producer of wealth, sidelining the importance of land, the volume of labor, and physical or financial capital" (Encyclopedia.com)

For Knowledge Society to have meaning in our lives, it has to be operate in a sharing economy and more broadly, a sharing society.

We are a sharing society (economy) before we discovered and adopted the market economy, or worse, "excessive capitalism."

Various literature traces the history of barter to 6000 BC. It was introduced by Mesopotamian tribes, adopted and improved by Phoenicians and Babylonians.

The cooperative is perhaps the first type of business entity engaged in sharing society (economy). According to the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), the origin of the modern cooperative movement can be traced back to Lancashire, England—to the Rochdale Pioneers in 1844.

Fast forward to the present, sharing economy is popularized by Airbnb, Grab, and co-working and shared office spaces.

The impetus to sharing society (economy) today is making "excess" assets or capacity accessible to others thereby leading to efficiency and, at times, income or revenue.

Sharing excess assets is not limited to physical assets but include virtual goods (e.g., open data and free and open-source software, digital commons) as well as knowledge, talent, expertise, and creativity.

A new academic culture must emerge that fits into the emerging sharing society.

In the academe, sharing society in today's digitized sociaty is, among others, manifested in open educational resources (OER) and massive open online courses or MOOCs (e.g., MIT Open CourseWare), transdisciplinary/multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary frameworks, etc.

Coursera has brought in 35 million+ learners, 150+ university partners, 4,000+ courses, and 250+ specializations. It was founded in 2012 by two Stanford Computer Science professors who were driven into transforming the world into their classroom.

It is possible that the sharing society (economy) is gaining more supporters and practitioners not only because of economic interests but due to the rediscovery of communitarian values.

ICT creates the impetus for a knowledge society and a sharing society (economy). Technology makes sharing effortless and costless.

Collaboration and participation are the main features of a sharing society (economy). Everyone contributes to the co-creation of value (wealth).

Transparency, accessibility, sharing, openness and trust are among the core values. The twin end-goals are equity and common good.

Public domain information is as important (if not more important than) as proprietary information (copyright, patent, trademarks).

Sharing society (economy) promotes democracy; it levels the playing

field so that all can be knowledge co-creators, contributors and generators.

It's a non-zero-sum game, i.e., win-win not a win-lose or a lose-lose setting (Game Theory).

Knowledge (information) is an infinite resource, not depleted when you use and share; it is inexhaustible and "renewable."

Both the knowledge society and the sharing economy are borderless in both local and global settings.

Sharing is a precondition to inclusiveness. Sharing is a precondition to UNs goal of "leave no one behind" with priority to the poorest and most marginalized.

Requirements of a Sharing Society

The digital platform is a great enabler. It enables individuals and groups to engage with others in sharing of their assets, time, expertise, and creativity.

To be functional in a sharing society (economy), digital literacy is an advantage.

Media and Information Literacy (MIL) has emerged as the new literacy ecosystem as ICT has become ubiquitous.

The key elements of MIL as defined in *Media and Information Literate Citizens: Think Critically, Click Wisely* (UNESCO 2021). The two other key elements as enumerated in the 1st edition (MIL Curriculum for Teachers, UNESCO 2011) are **media literacy** and **information literacy.**

Digital literacy, as defined in the new edition, covers the following domains:

- Digital use

- Digital identity
- Digital rights
- Data and artificial intelligence
- Digital communication
- Digital emotional intelligence
- Digital security and safety

Challenges, Enablers, and Disruptors in Building or Sustaining a Sharing Economy

VUCA - Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous.

Many rules (laws or policies) may be inappropriate in a Sharing Society because they fit the passing society (industrial age).

We need to redefine our rules from competition, regulation and control to facilitation and engagement.

Wealth is not acquired through greed or the excessive accumulation of profit.

We need new rules to encourage or support start-ups (rather than to protect big structures and systems).

Sharing economy requires a new "business" model for collaborative production, distribution, and sharing.

Tragedy of the commons: When people act solely on self-interest, we deplete the common resources we need for our daily existence (William Forster Lloyd, 1833; Garett Hardin, 1968).

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[3] Adapted from Chase, R. (2015). *Peers Inc*. New York, NY: Public Affairs.

Today's digital divide has led to tragedy of the (digital) commons (GM Greco and L Floridi, 2004).

Digital divide is "generational, geographic, socio-economic, and cultural."

Access to the Internet is a human right (UNESCO). Digital divide is a human wrong.

Greater access, availability, and use may bring about "tragedy of the digital commons" or bandwidth exploitation and an information pollution of the digital environment (Greco & Floridi, 2004).

Information pollution in today's post-truth era: Disinformation, misinformation, so-called fake news, and other toxic content (extremism, hate speech, misogyny).

Reforming the political economy for sharing society (economy) to emerge or expand.

Filter bubble and echo chambers driven by algorithm challenge diversity, differences, and tolerance. Sharing becomes exclusive.

The case of AI and Robotics: inclusive or exclusive? Humans can use technology to build a more humane society.

Doing Teaching, Research and Extension in a Knowledge Sharing Society

Cross-disciplinary paradigms, i.e., inter-disciplinary, multi-disciplinary, and transdisciplinary studies. Disciplinal theories, models, and approaches are "shared" to engage, discover, and create.

Today's issues and challenges are too enormous and complex to be addressed by an isolated (single) discipline.

Unidisciplinary approach cannot explain the root causes of issues and challenges as they have become multidimensional and complex (e.g., information disorder, hate speech and discrimination).

Collaborative research (within and across disciplines) and the breakdown of silo mentality.

Wider research stakeholders as co-creators (including respondents as co-researchers and co-publishers); providing a platform for crowdsourcing and collaborative discussion and analysis.

According to the *UNESCO Science Report 2021*, despite low levels of research investment, the volume of scientific publications in selected South Asian countries grew by more than 160% for all countries between 2015 and 2019. In Bangladesh, the volume of scientific publication was on an uptrend; from 2216 in 2011, 3284 in 2015 and 6362 in 2019.

Scientific publications in Bangladesh(2017-2019) prioritized the following areas: 26 % (Chemistry), 21% (ICT, Math, & Statistics), 17% (Cross-cutting strategic technologies), and 9% (Engineering).

Collaborative research and publications can significantly increase research outputs and publications. But collaboration should begin with in-country rather than outside for various reasons, e.g., accessibility, language, cost,

UNESCO Science Report 2021 reported the following share of publications with foreign co-authors in selected South Asian Countries (2017-2019): Maldives (98%), Bhutan (84%), Afghanistan (81%), Nepal (68%), Bangladesh (55%), Pakistan (53%), and Sri Lanka (52%).

The Top 5 Partners for Scientific Co-authorship 2017-2019 in Bangladesh are: USA (2132), Japan (1513), Australia (1505), Malaysia (1070), and UK (1059).

How can we drive local and international scientific co-authorship?

Hackathons are excellent examples of collaborative research and development. These events engage subject matter experts, computer programmers and graphic designers, among others, to collectively produce software (programming language, applications, and operating system) and/or hardware.

“Most academic work is shared only with a particular scientific community, rather than policymakers or business, which makes it entirely disconnected from practice.”

Working Group on Education and Skills under Open Science July 2017

SciencelBusiness is Europe’s leading innovation community with members from the academe, research, business and industry, and policymaking bodies.

Open Science is being promoted in Europe with support from the European Commission. Its adoptability in Asian context should be critically examined.

Open Science is allowing research to be carried out with a high degree of transparency, collegiality, and research integrity.

“Open Science represents an approach to research that is **collaborative**, transparent, and accessible. A wide range of activities comes under the umbrella of Open Science, including Open Access publishing, Open Data, Open Notebook, Open Peer Review, and Open Education. **Also included is citizen science, where non-specialists**

engage directly in research… A driver for Open Science is the improvement of the transparency and validity of research as well as **public ownership of science**."

Working Group on Education and Skills under Open Science July 2017

"If Open Science is to have any meaning, it must become a fundamental and integral part of open government, engaged citizenship, and the knowledge society."

What new (online) research competencies do we need?

- Cross-disciplinary framework
- AI in research
- Crowdsourcing in data sourcing
- Data mining/data analytics
- Managing open data
- Data privacy
- Fact-checking
- Data visualization
- Online Research Ethics

"The skills needed for Open Science cover a broad span from data management to legal aspects, and include also more technical skills, such as data stewardship, data protection, scholarly communication and dissemination (including creating metadata)."

Working Group on Education and Skills under Open Science July 2017

UNESCO fully supports the concept of Open Science. In her keynote address to the 28th AMIC Annual Conference on 20 November 2021,

UNESCO Director General highlighted the importance of access to science information through open science. DG Azoulay lamented that 72% of scientific publications are not yet available in open access. This limits journalists' source of information. According the DG Azoulay, UNESCO is currently developing a Recommendation on Open Science. She emphasized that by making scientific papers easily available, 'open science' makes it easier for journalists to access scholarly information. In turn, scientists can help to build public trust in science by sharing this scholarly information with the public in a language that can understand, such as by avoiding jargon.

Plan S of the European Commission and 11 top research funders in Europe now require research grant holders to publish only in open access journals and under a license that enables anyone to freely reuse and distribute the published article.

Plan S initiative aims to fast-track the target set by 28 EU science ministers that all publicly-funded research be open, free to readers. As of 2018, only 20 percent of research outputs are of immediate and full access.

Plan S will encourage even highly cited (subscribed) journals to change their policies and offer open access. In Europe, journal publishing is a big business worth *Eu* 10 billion a year globally with operating margins of about 30 percent.

Are we preparing for a Knowledge Sharing Society?

How will the emerging sharing society transform big universities?
Will they embrace and promote the values the sharing stands for?

Social injustice and inequity should be on top of our research agenda in a Sharing Society.

"South Asian scientists (excluding India) published more on the following topics than would be expected, relative to global averages: tropical

communicable diseases, sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, traditional knowledge, help for smallholder food producers, agro-ecology and the genetic diversity of food crops."

"Researchers in Bangladesh are beginning to specialize in climate research, including as concerns disaster risk reduction, its impact on local communities and technologies to mitigate the same, with output doubling in each of these fields, albeit from low starting points."

Is academic objectivity the same as neutrality? Can academics remain "neutral" in situations where clear ethical and moral choices or standards exist?

"The hottest places in hell are reserved for those who in time of moral crisis preserve their neutrality."[4]

Research should contribute to the creation of an inclusive knowledge society and sustainable development in the areas of health, education, environment, livelihood, and disaster risk reduction and mitigation.

"I wish the academy would incentivize scholars to improve society, not to chase citations. I want us to reimagine a PhD that is designed not to win kudos within the academic community, but rather aimed at **discovering something new that will be useful for practitioners and have real social impact**."

Julian Kirchherr, *The Guardian* (9 August 2018)

[4] Many famous personalities such as John F. Kennedy and Theodore Roosevelt have used this famous line and attributed it to Dante. However, Quote Investigator concluded that it did not appear in Inferno and further conjectured that the line may have evolved from a "flawed re-interpretation" of Dante's work (refer to https://quoteinvestigator.com/2015/01/14/hottest/).

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