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Shaping Futures with Vision,
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Partners in Success

Dr. Amrita Dass

Founder Director

Institute for Career Studies
(ICS), Chairperson and Managing
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Career counselling is where dreams meet direction, helping individuals craft purposeful futures rooted in self-awareness and informed choices.

With this visionary and pioneering spirit, Dr. Amrita Dass transformed the landscape of education and career guidance in India by founding the Institute for Career Studies (ICS) in 1985.

Over four transformative decades, ICS has become the gold standard in career counselling, blending cutting-edge insights with heartfelt mentorship to connect individuals with opportunities that match their unique abilities.

In this exclusive feature, we celebrate ICS's extraordinary journey - from its pioneering beginnings to its significant impact - and unveil the exciting future roadmap, shaped by the vision of its founder Dr. Amrita Dass.

Pioneering Career Guidance for a Purposeful Future

For four decades, the Institute for Career Studies (ICS) has been a driving force in career guidance and counselling, transforming lives globally. From its inception in India, and shortly thereafter in UAE and Bangladesh, ICS has expanded worldwide, empowering individuals to unlock their potential and shape limitless futures.

The ICS story began in the 1980s with a challenge that sparked a movement. Dr. Amrita Dass was faced with a predicament while pursuing her PhD in History at the University of Lucknow: crucial primary sources for her research work were in England, seemingly out of reach. Her determined efforts to find a solution led to a fellowship from the Indian Council of Historical Research and admission to the prestigious School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London.



INSTITUTE FOR CAREER STUDIES

- Career Counselling & Guidance
- ICS Career GPS App for Students & Professionals
- Studies in India & Abroad Support System
- Mentorship & Employability Skills
- Preparatory Courses for Entrance Exams
- Post Graduate Diploma in Career Counselling & Guidance
- Professional Development Programmes for Principals, Teachers & Counsellors
- Consultancy for Educational Institutions

Bringing out the best in you 1985-2025 From Dreams to Destinations - Celebrating 40 Years of Excellence

Her rich academic experience in UK revealed a world of opportunities inaccessible to Indian students, not for lack of talent, but due to limited information, guidance, and vision. This realisation became ICS's genesis, with the motto "a career by choice, not chance," empowering students to make informed decisions.

Dr. Dass' family legacy and encouragement fuelled this vision. She drew inspiration from her grandmother, Dr. Constance Prem Nath Dass, a trailblazing educationist. Her accomplished parents Amarjit and Tehrim Dass, and aunt, Dr. Mohini Dass (FRCOG), championed her entrepreneurial journey.

Today, ICS stands as a testament to vision, perseverance, and the quest to make a difference, igniting thousands of journeys towards global success.

Overcoming Early Challenges

Introducing structured career counselling in India was a formidable challenge. Dr Dass recalls, "The concept was entirely new, and most students, parents, and educators were unfamiliar with it. Yet, the need to recognise its true value was undeniable — students were making ad hoc decisions, often without any credible source of guidance to turn to." The breakthrough came when Sister Teresa, principal of Dr Dass' alma mater, Loreto Convent, Lucknow, endorsed the vision. Having researched career counselling for her Master's thesis in Ireland, she at once appreciated its significance. Based on Sister Teresa's valuable insights and encouragement and her own extensive research, Dr. Dass developed a novel holistic framework: "Know Yourself, Inform Yourself, and Plan for Yourself." This innovative ICS methodology equips individuals with the insights and confidence to make the best-fit education and career decisions. It focuses on 'fine tuning the choices to each one's unique frequency' with the objective of identifying fulfilling and rewarding educational and career paths that bring purpose, meaning and happiness.

With Sister Teresa's unstinting support, the inaugural career guidance sessions for students took place in Loreto Convent, Lucknow. Their remarkable success caught the attention of other schools. Soon after, Ms Saroj Srivastava and Mrs Shanti Varma invited Dr Dass to conduct programmes at the Welham Girls' School, Dehradun. These included workshops for students followed by a professional development training programme on career guidance for IPSC representatives, from schools across India. This sparked a nationwide ripple effect, with many schools partnering with ICS to bring career guidance and counselling programmes to their students.

"There was no roadmap, but with a strong vision, steadfast belief in our mission, constant innovation, and an exceptional team, we built career counselling into a pioneering movement in India, empowering generations of students - transforming lives and shaping destinies."

"As ICS grew, we continuously evolved in response to student feedback. Many students advised careers in accountancy, banking, civil services, law, and management sought additional support for entrance examinations. To meet this need, we introduced expert-led preparatory programmes that achieved outstanding success rates - enabling thousands to launch into their dream careers."



Since its Inception, building a team of experts with a shared vision

From the very beginning a strong focus was placed on building a multidisciplinary team of professionals committed to guiding and empowering students and institutions.

Among the founding members were Dr. Vandana Gupta (Senior Career Counsellor and Director Preparatory Courses), Mrs. Sunita Dass (Dey) (ICS' first General Manager and Senior Career Counsellor), Mrs. Mala Mukherjee (Senior Career Counsellor and Faculty), Mrs. Nupur Wali (Senior Career Counsellor and Faculty), and Ms. Kavita Dass whose exemplary leadership across multiple key roles has remained a cornerstone of ICS for over three decades.

The team was further strengthened with the joining of Dr Monika Modak Dass (Psychologist and Senior Career Counsellor), Mrs. Kiran Kanjani (Senior Career Counsellor and Director, South East Asia), and Mrs. Anuja Kumar (Senior Career Counsellor and Director, Eastern Region). To date, their dynamic and dedicated contributions continue to enrich ICS.

It was a distinct honor to welcome Mr. Hari Pillai, IPS (Retd.) and former Director General of Police, who joined as our Honorary President and Senior Career Counsellor, lending his extensive leadership experience and vision to our mission.

Together, we developed new processes and pioneered pathways, consistently learning, innovating, and advancing our field.

Today, contributing to our growth and success, we are proud to have the expertise and commitment of a large and impressive team of professionals, further strengthened by the joining of Ms Kavita Dass and Mr Ajit Dass as Directors.

Expanding Reach and Impact

ICS's global footprint spans personalized guidance, student and parent seminars, educator training, digital solutions, social outreach, leadership development, research, and policy advocacy. Over 500,000 students have benefitted from ICS's counselling programmes, while thousands of educators and school leaders have been empowered through ICS-ACE (Academic Centre for Educators).

Setting a benchmark in professional development, ICS' Post Graduate Diploma in Career Guidance equips learners with the expertise needed to excel in the field.

Support of iconic school leaders

In our early years, the encouragement and support of iconic school leaders who appreciated our programmes expedited the expansion of our counselling and training services.

Sister Teresa, Ms Saroj Srivastava, Mrs Shanti Varma, Mrs Mary Roy, Mr Terance Phillip, Mrs Farida Abraham, Mr Elton deSouza, Mr John Mason, Mr Darryl Bloud, Ms Shobhna Chatterjee, Mrs Usha Andrews, Mrs Devi Kar, Mrs Hilda Peacock, Mr Richard Mountford, Mrs Jamila Singh, Mr Suresh Mathur, Mrs Abha Adams, Mrs Leena Aparajit, Dr Shyama Chona, Mrs Jyotsna Brar, Brother Dominic, Mrs Shereen Ispahani, Ms Vanita Sehgal, Mr B.S. Bhatnagar, Dr Harish Dhillon, Mr Sumer Singh, Mr Ranjit Dass, Mr Kabir Mustafi, Mr. N.K. Tiwari, Mr Pramod Sharma, and Mrs Kiran Jeremiah

Initiatives such as Project Lakshya deliver career guidance to underserved rural communities, fostering equitable access to opportunity.

Through strategic partnerships with national and international institutions, ICS amplifies its reach and creates a global network of empowered learners and professionals.



Glocal Synergy: Shaping Impact in a Connected World

The vision guiding ICS is rooted in an integration of global and local (“glocal”) perspectives— shaped by engagement with UN summits, State of the World Forums, Global Knowledge Partnership Consultations, International Creating Value Conferences, and collaborations with universities and governments worldwide.

These diverse experiences reinforce a fundamental principle: education and career guidance should empower students not just for employment, but for meaningful, future-ready lives as responsible global citizens.

In essence, ICS is committed to value creation and sustainable nation-building—a mission aligned with the urgent needs of today’s world.



The Proud Milestones

Over the years, Dr Dass has participated and presented papers in several landmark international conferences - historic turning points that have enabled ICS to provide thought leadership and spearhead the next practices while incorporating the best ones.

- 1986, Tashkent & Moscow: Conference on 'Women, Peace and Development'. Witnessing the unfolding of Gorbachev's Perestroika and Glasnost—precursors to globalization—reinforced that education must prepare students for openness, adaptability, and cross-cultural understanding.
- 1995, UN World Summit on Social Development (Copenhagen): The shift from nuclear issues to education, health, and employment underscored how central careers and lifelong learning are to human development.
- 1995, UN Women's Conference (Beijing): Contributing to landmark policies on gender equality shaped ICS's commitment to equity and empowerment through education.
- 1996, Washington, DC (CEDPA Women in Management Leadership Program): Leading sessions for women from around the world validated the importance of women in leadership roles. These interactions emphasized capacity building, cross-cultural leadership, and mentorship—values now central to ICS's leadership training workshops.
- 1998-1999, State of the World Forums (San Francisco): Participating alongside global leaders at this influential platform, deepened understanding of global transitions, the challenges of the new century and economic models of sustainable development, bridging digital divides, and social entrepreneurship.
- 2000, Kuala Lumpur (World Bank's Global Knowledge Conference): Dr Dass's paper on Towards a South Asia Knowledge Network-Reaching the Unreached reinforced how technology and partnerships can democratize access to opportunities—an ethos embedded in ICS's outreach.
- 2002-2023, Universities in the USA, Canada, UK, Ireland, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan: These meetings and talks provided a nuanced understanding of world-class education and demonstrated the power of student leadership in shaping education policy. Inspired by this, ICS integrated student voice into its counselling and training programmes.
- 2019, Nagoya University Japan: Dr Dass addressed students on emerging careers in a fast-changing global environment. She also gained insights on research, innovation, and the development of prototype driverless cars at the university - affirming the need for future-readiness and value-driven design in education.
- 2022-2025, Conferences on Value Creation (Japan, USA, UK): Presenting and chairing discussions on AI, Human-Centric Value Creation, and Value Dominant Learning (VDL) paradigm - a framework conceptualised by Dr. Dass - helped align ICS' mission to champion value creation for the well-being of all in an AI-driven world.



In India, the Institute for Career Studies (ICS) remains at the forefront of the nation's education landscape — driving policy reforms, curating innovative educational practices, and providing strategic insights into emerging career trends. Its versatile endeavours span multi-stakeholder roundtable discussions, conferences, and conclaves, fostering meaningful dialogue and collaboration across sectors. Among its recent thought-leadership initiatives, the Education 4.0 and Careers 4.0 Conclaves exemplify the institute's steadfast commitment to preparing individuals and institutions to thrive in the rapidly transforming landscape of education and the world of work.

Through the design and delivery of high-impact, national and global programmes, ICS empowers students, educators, and communities to thrive as future-ready, value-driven global citizens. As it celebrates 40 years of transformative impact, ICS continues to innovate and chart new frontiers.



Institute for Career Studies

ICS Education Summit 2025

LUCKNOW | 23 NOVEMBER

Reimagining the Future With AI

Opportunities and Challenges



As shared by Dr. Amrita Dass, “ICS proudly celebrated its 40th milestone anniversary. To mark this occasion, we hosted a multi-stakeholder, ICS Education Summit 2025 on ‘Reimagining the Future with AI: Opportunities and Challenges’ on November 23rd at the Taj Mahal Hotel, Lucknow”

As humanity navigates unprecedented technological disruptions affecting millions of jobs, the distinguished gathering of eminent educators, industry and business leaders, policymakers, students, and parents explored the possibilities of shaping a brighter future. The summit served as a catalyst for co-creating a vision and strategies in which AI enhances – rather than replaces – human potential, uniting all stakeholders to empower learners, institutions, and communities alike.

The Panel Discussions Centred on Three Critical Themes:

- **Envisioning the AI Tipping Point in the Future of Work:** Evidence-based scenarios and strategic insights on job evolution in an AI-driven world.
- **Real Intelligence Matters:** Future-Proofing Humanity Beyond Algorithms: Preserving and amplifying human creativity, intuition, and wisdom amid AI transformation in life and learning.
- **Bridging Learning and Work for an AI-Driven Future:** Fostering synergy among schools, higher education, industry, and policy to empower real intelligence and prepare a resilient workforce.

ICS Career GPS App 2020 and the Launch of AstraMind AI First Career App 2025

ICS marks this milestone with the evolution of its acclaimed digital platform - the ICS Career GPS. Designed to help students navigate their career pathways with clarity and confidence, the Career GPS App and Web App have empowered thousands through personalized guidance grounded in the decades of expertise of ICS career counsellors.

Leading change in the Age of AI, ICS unveiled AstraMind - the next transformative leap in its digital ecosystem. The current platform will metamorphose into a semi-autonomous, AI-guided mentor that seamlessly blends the warmth of human wisdom with the precision of technology. AstraMind embodies the ICS ethos of “high touch before high tech,” transforming digital career guidance into a personalized, responsive, value-driven, and deeply human experience - empowering learners to navigate their journeys with clarity, confidence, purpose, and future readiness.



Keynote address on “Creating Value Through Transforming School Education” delivered at the student led summit in The Millennium School, Dubai.

Words of Wisdom shared by Dr Amrita Dass

- Connect with your Swadharma – your true calling in life.
- Tune into your profound ‘inner net’ that links you to universal consciousness and intuitive wisdom.
- Believe in yourself, follow your heart, and pursue your passions. Remember: if you can dream it, you can achieve it.
- Give priority to your physical and mental well-being, and nurture strong, uplifting relationships. Create an atmosphere of care, love, and support. Research, including a landmark Harvard study, shows that these are the most crucial ingredients for a long, joyful, and healthy life – far outweighing wealth or fame.
- Cultivate an attitude of gratitude and mindfulness; nurture an optimistic outlook and growth mindset; and commit to lifelong learning for continuous personal and professional growth.
- Enjoy your journey and strive to create meaningful impact, shaping your legacy each day.

Carpe Diem – Seize the Day!



ICS KALEIDOSCOPE: CELEBRATING 40 MOMENTOUS YEARS OF GUIDING FUTURES, SHAPING CHANGE

ICS SILVER JUBILEE: 2010



Principals' Conclave 2017, Education 4.0,
Nath Valley School, Aurangabad

Career Counsellors' Conclave: Careers 4.0, 2018, New Delhi



Consultation of Edu-Leaders 2015

Global Conclave, Singapore, 2007



40th Landmark Anniversary: ICS Education Summit 2025