

Brief Profile

Prof. Durgesh Pant

Prof. Durgesh Pant is the Director General of Uttarakhand State Council for Science and Technology (UCOST), the apex umbrella organization of science and technology in the state and the nodal agency of DST, Govt of India. He has been widely recognised for his distinct contribution for laying the foundation of Computing and Informatics in the region which is now Uttarakhand.

Professor Pant, a lifelong learner and explorer, is well known for being an extraordinary collaborator and Institution builder. He established the Department of Computer Science at Kumaun University, Nainital way back in 1989 where he served as Professor and Head till 2010. He has been a pioneer of open education system in India and played a pivotal role in the phenomenal growth of Open & Distance education through his long association first with Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) and then with Uttarakhand Open University since its inception, where he continues to serve as Professor and Director of School of Computer science & IT.

Prof. Pant has been working relentlessly for over thirty-four years to ensure universal access of technology and knowledge, especially among the marginalised and vulnerable communities. He has been the force behind taking the new age technologies to the learners, farmers, women, school children and people with special needs across the region, particularly in the remote villages of border-areas in the Himalayan region. At home with diverse and difficult geographies of the state, he has made consistent efforts to motivate, encourage and guide a number of entrepreneurs for setting up universities and technology institutions in the state. Many of these institutions today are recognised amongst the best in various rankings. He has been working towards positioning Uttarakhand on the global map as a hub of climate adaptive clean technologies and disaster resilience infrastructure. He steered 'technology enabled education' program in the state decades back and has always practised, mentored and supported technology in education along with STEM education.

Prof. Pant has also worked as the Director of Uttarakhand Space Application Centre (USAC), Department of Science & Technology, Government of Uttarakhand. Besides many initiatives in the domains of disaster management, planning and governance through Geo Spatial technologies, one of the prominent achievements of Prof. Pant during this term was to accomplish the 'Uttarakhand School Mapping Information System' project. Under this project, over twenty thousand schools run by the Government of Uttarakhand in the state were mapped and a web based Information system was developed.

He has also worked as the Director of Uttarakhand Science Education & Research Centre (USERC), Department of Science and Technology, Government of Uttarakhand. During this tenure, he initiated various programs impacting students from distant and remote areas by bringing the finest aspects of science and technology within their reach at their doorsteps.

In his current role as the Director General, UCOST, he has been instrumental in transforming the council into a platform for harvesting and dissemination of scientific and technological knowledge. He has been exploring opportunities to attract the best of scientific talent leveraging vast network of visionary researchers from across the globe for creating an

environment for high-quality research and grooming scientific leadership in the state. Besides working relentlessly with a passion for the Uttarakhand@25, his focus has been in designing a reference technology architecture for 'Ideal District 'in collaboration with 60+ line departments, the Office of the Principal Scientific Advisor, Government of India, CSIR labs and a host of other organizations of repute, along with keeping the communities and village panchayats at its core.

This model of integrated holistic development would potentially act as a reference model for all the Himalayan states. He also actively took part in the recently held G20-Chief Scientific Advisors 'Round Table Conference at Ramnagar, Uttarakhand role as one of the Indian delegate panellist. At the state level, he is presently steering the pathbreaking Bodhisatva Dialogue Series as Convener, where the Hon'ble Chief Minister of the state is in conversation with citizens and experts, in both online and offline modes, on a variety of significant concerns and developmental issues.

Prof Pant is demonstrating exemplary leadership and administrative acumen in steering India's fifth science city project at Dehradun, besides ideating and executing projects related to science centres, astro-park, lab-on-wheels, AI labs etc. in different parts of the state. Professor Pant has been associated with various committees of apex decision making and regulatory agencies at national level. He is the Chairperson of SCSP Cell, Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India, besides being in advisory and governing boards of many Universities and other institutions of repute.

Professor Pant is an alumnus of Kumaun University, Nainital and Birla Institute of Technology, Mesra. With keen research interests in Quantum and Soft computing, AI/ML, Cyber security, e-governance and public policy framework, he has guided several research scholars and has over fifty research papers and policy documents to his credit. Prof. Pant has chaired, participated and presented research papers at conferences and seminars across the world. He has been invited to deliver lectures, leadership talks, convocation and keynote addresses by many institutions, universities across the country and abroad.