Ongoing by Nalanda University and The Times of India, Prof K M Venkat Narayan’s lecture on ‘Public health challenges for the 21st century’, under the umbrella of Nalanda Distinguished Lecture, provided insightful learning on the interconnectedness between social, biological, cultural and economic disciplines.

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Dr Gopa Sabharwal, VC, Nalanda University, and Mr M S Natarajan, Editor, The Times of India, had the honour of chairing this lecture as part of the University’s vision to transmit these ideas as far and wide as possible. With this initiative, we have been able to organise a series of public awareness lectures aimed at sensitizing the public on ‘Public health challenges for the 21st century– Convergence of biological and economic issues. The event was organized by Nalanda University and The Times of India at Adhishankar Bhawan on Friday. Nalanda University vice-chancellor Dr Gopa Sabharwal said, “We are extremely grateful for The Times of India for partnering with us to organise these public awareness lectures. As the speaker today, he is world renowned for his multidisciplinary work in diabetes epidemiology. Historically tracing the pattern of diabetes mellitus in the world, the first global prevalence of diabetes mellitus occurred in the UK at the end of the 18th century. He quoted Elliot Joslin, who had written in his book that diabetes mellitus was a disease of the upper classes and was not prevalent among lower classes. However, in 1921, at the age of 32, he made the discovery of insulin. He is a large contribution to the field of diabetes and was awarded the Nobel Prize that year. This marked the beginning of the modern era of diabetes prevention and treatment. In the 21st century, diabetes has become a global epidemic, affecting millions of people worldwide. The disease has become more prevalent in developing countries, with a significant rise in cases over the past two decades. In India, the prevalence of diabetes has increased from 7% in 1990 to 10.4% in 2019. The disease has become a major public health concern, with its prevalence increasing at an alarming rate. The disease is a complex condition that requires a holistic approach for its management. It is not just a medical condition but a social and economic issue as well. The economic burden of diabetes is immense, affecting not only the individual but also the society as a whole. The disease is associated with various complications, including cardiovascular disease, kidney disease, and blindness, which can lead to significant morbidity and mortality. The management of diabetes requires a multi-disciplinary approach, involving healthcare professionals, policymakers, and the general public. The lecture aimed to highlight the importance of diabetes prevention and control, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive approach to address the disease. It also highlighted the need for collaborative efforts among different stakeholders to tackle the diabetes epidemic effectively. The lecture concluded with a call to action, emphasizing the importance of early detection, regular monitoring, and lifestyle modifications to prevent the disease. The lecture was attended by a large audience, including students, researchers, and policymakers, who were keen to learn about the latest developments in diabetes prevention and control. It was an opportunity for knowledge sharing and collaboration among different stakeholders to work towards a diabetes-free future. The lecture was supported by The Times of India, and the university would like to extend a special thank you to the Times for partnering with us in this initiative. It is our privilege to organise Nalanda Distinguished Lecture for the past three years, to engage the public and stimulate their thought process. It is our privilege to have Prof K M Venkat Narayan as the speaker today. His lecture becomes doubly relevant for us as Nalanda University would like to have a school of public health in the future. I would also like to thank The Times of India for partnering this initiative. I am sure this event will be a success and will benefit those present here. In fact, this lecture underscores the importance of diabetes prevention and control.”