


SWACHTA THROUGH SPECIAL CAMPAIGN

The Government of India has announced Special Campaign 2.0 from 2nd October to 31st October 2022 with a focus on Swachhta and reducing pendency in the Government. The Special Campaign 2.0 places a greater emphasis on field/outstation offices in addition to the Ministries, Departments, and their subordinate offices. The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) oversees the implementation of the campaign. As part of the special campaign 2.0, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) is giving special attention to institutionalizing Swachhta, including finalization of campaign sites, sensitization of nodal officers, identification of pendency in identified categories, scrap disposal, and record management as per laid down procedures. MSDE has made efforts to ensure effective execution through intense engagement with the field staff and close monitoring of the campaign. Daily progress is being uploaded on the SCPDM portal hosted by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances. So far, 32 public grievances have been disposed of during the implementation phase (October 2, 2022 - to date), and 12 references from Members of Parliament cases have been resolved. Furthermore, 12,830 e-files were reviewed, 2,115 files were disposed of and weeded out, 6,954 cleanliness campaigns were conducted, 5,783 sq ft of space was freed, and revenue of Rs 3,73,175 was earned. Additionally, Jan Shikshan Sansthan, a subordinate office of MSDE, has implemented certain 'best practices' throughout all JSS in the country for showing promising results through the campaign. The Cabinet Secretary addressed all Secretaries of the Government of India on 23rd August 2022 and DARPG Guidelines note for the same was issued on 25th August, 2022. All wing and division heads of MSDE were also directed to closely monitor and ensure the successful implementation of the campaign in all ITIs, JSS, PMKK, offices of MSDE, NCVET, DGT, Autonomous Institutes, RDSDE, CSTARI, NSTI, etc. Addressing Special Campaign 2.0, Atul Kumar Tiwari, Secretary, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship said that with a special focus on institutionalizing cleanliness in government departments, digitizing government records, and freeing up blocked resources, Special Campaign 2.0 has been launched under the leadership of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He further said that MSDE is committed to this Special drive by Government of India, and it is in best of our interest that we are all jointly working towards the success of this initiative. MSDE has been conducting several activities and has made excellent progress and we will continue our endeavors in ensuring maximum participation and outcome-based activities, he added. The special campaign consists of two phases: the preparatory phase from 14th September 2022 to 30th September 2022; and the implementation phase from 2nd October to 31st October 2022 covering 11 parameters for the successful execution of cleanliness campaign.



OFF 'D' CUFF

How To Create Your Own Mental Sunshine

Fear something that characterises us, as we are children of a sceptical age. We are afraid of the future, afraid of poverty, afraid of unemployment, afraid of dishonour and disgrace, afraid of disease and death – it seems to me that sometimes, we are afraid of life itself!

We live in fear; we work in fear; we walk in fear; we talk in fear. We move through life from one fear to another, crushed beneath the weight of a woeful existence!

Fear casts its dark shadow over our lives at one time or another. We are prone to fear almost instinctively. Neither the highest nor the lowest of us is exempt from fear. The most powerful nations fear their rivals and neighbours. Politicians are afraid of losing elections. People fear for their future. Students are afraid of failing in examinations. Mothers are afraid about their children's safety... the list is endless.

Fear is at the root of all our problems. Fear gives rise to all our misfortunes. Living in constant fear saps our vital energies, leaving us too drained and exhausted to savour the joy of life. Fear paralyses the mind, even as a stroke paralyses the body. It strikes at the nervous system; it causes stress and tension. It undermines our well-being. Worst of all, it robs us of happiness and destroys our peace of mind.

“The mind is its own place,” wrote Milton, “and in itself, can create a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.” The mind can create fears and phobias; it can also create security and self-confidence. If we are to live life to the fullest, we must be fearless.

There are two options open to you. One is to submit to your fears,

-Dada Vaswani

Diwali & its significance in Hindu mythology

■ GOURAV SABHARWAL

The victory of good over evil, light over darkness, and wisdom over ignorance is symbolised by the 'festival of lights.' Deepa Pratipada Utsava, often known as Diwali, heralds the start of festivals honouring light. Deepa denotes a torch, Pratipada denotes an initiation and Utsava denotes a celebration. It is seen throughout a number of days. Diwali is celebrated against a variety of historical backdrops that come from diverse civilizations and religions. Although largely recognised as a Hindu holiday for adherents of ancient Vedic culture and tradition, Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists also participate in celebrations of the event around the globe. Hindus commemorate the day that Lord Krishna killed the vicious monster Narakasura. After 14 years, it's thought that Lord Ram, Sita, and Laxman made their way home. The people of Ayodhya welcomed the holy three by lighting diyas in the city's streets. On the days of the celebration, this tradition of burning lamps has persisted to this day. Jains and Buddhists might back their celebration with their own historical occurrences. It is observed by Jains as the anniversary of Mahavira's enlightenment, their 24th Guru. Like they did when they welcomed Lord Gautam Buddha back to Kapilavastu after 18 years, Buddhists celebrate by lighting lamps. Sikhs commemorate it as Guru Hargobind's release from prison and return home.

Hindus have celebrated Diwali/Deepawali since ancient times. The word 'Diwali' is made from the Sanskrit words 'deep' and 'aavali.' The word 'Diwali' denotes a string of Diyas. The Diwali holiday is also known as the Diyas festival or Dipotsav. It is particularly lauded for cleanliness and illumination.

For the Lakshmi Puja Vidhi festival, the homes and the areas around them are also cleaned. This event also helps us recognise the strength of our inner spirit by reconnecting us with our heritage. It serves as a reminder that goodness and truth win out in the end. Diwali has a major significance for a number of mythical causes. This ceremony might teach us all something to keep walking the path of truth. People start preparing for the event months in advance. We do Diwali Lakshmi Puja on this auspicious day because diya lights have illuminated the entire area. Similar to how diyas remove the night and spread light, it is thought that Diwali rituals would remove the darkness from our lives and replace it with the light of the new dawn. This occasion brings us a lot of joy and instructs us on how to live a good life. On the day of Diwali, we distribute gifts and sweets to our friends, relatives, and neighbours. Send them a lot of well wishes as well. Because of this, little arguments between us dissolve and are replaced with sweetness in our relationships.

1. Diwali marks change of Temperatures: Diwali festival often falls in October or November, and that is the time the temperatures start to drop in the tropical region. With these many lifestyle changes taking place, Diwali is the perfect time to reset your home items so that you can easily access necessary items. Such as heating devices like water heaters, room heaters, covering all the open areas.

2. Reshuffle Wardrobe: As the winters start approaching one needs to pack all the summer clothes and make way for

the winter clothes. Though summer clothing takes less space we need to make space for winter clothes as they are bulky, and one may need layered clothing to keep oneself warm and comfortable enough. The dust accumulated in the wardrobe gets cleaned in this process and the moistness that the rainy season sets in the wardrobe is brushed off.

3. Preparing for winter season: As we brace ourselves for the chill weather, we also all need to pack the thin blankets and make a place for the rugs and thick blankets that keep us warm in the winter season. Skin and hair care are also required for the winter season. By this, one is making sure that all the blankets are washed and then pulled up in the bag to store for the next few months.

4.Get rid of bacteria and fungus: In the deep cleaning of the house, we not only get rid of the dust particles but also the bacteria that gets collected on the items. Few household items are vulnerable to fungus formation on the surface also can be taken care and cleaned thoroughly. The bacteria and fungus are responsible for many lung diseases and allergies therefore, deep cleaning ensures healthy environment at home.

5. Welcome Visitors: Diwali is the time when we host extended family and innumerable guests and spread happiness and joy on this occasion. Everyone likes the place clean and upkeep, so this is also one of the reasons your house needs an extra shine and the glitter all over the house and of-course the spark beaming in the family's smile too. Deep-cleaning is a manganous task and maybe a tiresome job, so one must do it step by step and with the help of the family and helpers. You can read the post, Festive Mantras for Glowing Diwali with family. Also, one must keep the emotions at bay while collecting the items which are no longer required.

Each religion marks a different Diwali story and historical event. In one of the main stories in Hindu mythology, Diwali is the day Lord Rama, his wife Sita Devi and brother Lakshmana return to their homeland after 14 years in exile. The villagers lit a path for Rama, who had defeated the demon king Ravana. Reenactments of this story are part of celebrations in some regions. Another Diwali story in Hindu mythology is that Diwali marks the day Lord Krishna defeated the demon Narakasura and freed the people of his kingdom. After he slayed the demon, Lord Krishna declared it a day of festivities. In some parts of India, people burn effigies of the demon kings in both stories as part of the celebration. People also celebrate the Hindu Goddess Lakshmi during Diwali. As the goddess of prosperity, wealth and fertility, the romantic Diwali story says that she chose Lord Vishnu, one of Hinduism's most important deities, to be her husband on the night of Diwali. In other cultures, Diwali coincides with harvest and New Year celebrations. No matter which Diwali story you celebrate, it's always a day of new beginnings and light over darkness.

Many consider Diwali to be a fresh start, similar to the Lunar New Year in January. Many people clean, renovate, decorate their homes and buy new clothes in preparation for the upcoming year. Diwali is also a time to settle debts and make peace. It's common for people to reach out to loved

ones who may have lost touch and organise family reunions. In the past, Indian and Pakistani soldiers have exchanged sweets along the disputed border; as a gesture of Diwali goodwill. The dates for Diwali change each year; as they are based on the Hindu lunisolar calendar. The festival usually falls between mid-October and mid-November. Rangoli is a timeless tradition that is followed all over India. Rangoli is also known as Alpana, Aripoma, or Kolam. It is an ancient art, practiced by almost all households. In many cases, designs are passed down through generations with some of them being hundreds of years old. The word 'Rangoli' is said to have been derived from the words 'Rang' and 'Aavali' which refers to a row of colours. Rangoli designs and colours vary between different regions but they all follow some basic patterns. A Rangoli usually has a geometrical structure that is also symmetrical. The design patterns often consist of natural elements like animals, flowers, etc. After successful initiatives such as water-free Holi and Eco-friendly Gansesh Chaturthi, majority is going for Green Diwali. This Green Diwali is way to celebrate the festival with minimum consequences to the environment. With the bursting of loud fire-crackers, the pollution in the country rises to the dangerous level causing discomfort to the elderly people, children and pets. More number of asthma cases gets reported with this increase in the pollution.Let's come together and a do a bit for the society on this diwali. It's our basic and most important faithfulness to understand the importance and essence of the traditional diwali celebration. Let's take some steps ahead to make this diwali an eco-friendly one:

Use locally made, earthenware Diyas for decoration: Eschew the cheap plastic lights for home decoration and go for the artisan handmade earthen ware and diyas for the decoration. This will not only help the environment but will also help the poor artisan families.

Shun burning fire crackers: We all get mesmerized and entertained by the lights of the crackers. But the sad fact is that we don't pay any attention towards the bad effect of the loud noise and pollution on the environment. Due to bursting of crackers huge quantity of toxic gases release in the atmosphere, which is one of the major health concerns for everyone in the world. Birds and animals suffer the most due to the high level of noise generated. Majority of teenage children are involved in the making of firecrackers. We roughly look over the fact that these young children are exposed to these toxic substances, which put their life and health in great danger.

Noise pollution due to the use of fire crackers should be avoided: There is no logic in burning those firecrackers which produces more than 65 decibels of noise. Even the law has banned the burning of noisy crackers but it seems that many of us are not interested in following these rules and regulations. Various hazardous health problems are caused by the burning of noisy firecrackers, include problem in hearing ability, high blood pressure, heart attacks, sleeping disorders, provisional or even eternal deafness. Circumvent the use of chemical based rangoli colors. Make maximum use natural colors and dyes like rice flour, turmeric power, kumkum, lime, petal, coal and leaves.

Women Farmers-Pillars of Food Security

■ DR BANARSI LAL

Women farmers work hard to grow and process the food. In order to reduce the rural poverty and achieve the food and nutritional security, there is dire need to promote the gender equality and empower the rural women. The women farmers play the key role in achieving the sufficient food grain production. If women are empowered with the same opportunity as men have, then food security can significantly improve. It is a complex problem but with the comprehensive approach, it can be achieved. In agricultural sector diverse opportunities can be created to empower them. They have less access of land and machinery. They are heavily involved in the domestic activities which are hidden economically. Empowering women is key to food security. Empowering women by strengthening a range of assets is critical for enhancing their welfare and improving the status of future generations. There is need to enhance the land rights of women. India is predominantly an agrarian economy. Women are the backbone for the rural development and they are considered as the vital part of the Indian economy. Women farmers contribute enormously to the Indian agriculture and allied sectors such as livestock production, post-harvest operations, horticulture, fishery, forestry, sericulture etc. This has been proved by various studies. Women comprise the largest percentage of the workforce in the agricultural sector but they do not have control over all the land and productive resources.

Women constitute the 43 per cent of the world's agricultural labour force which increases to about 70-80 per cent in some countries like India. Women are the major producers of food in India. Around 70 per cent of the agricultural work is performed by the women. Women farmers contribute enormously to the Indian agriculture and allied sectors such as livestock production, post-harvest operations, horticulture, fishery, forestry, sericulture etc. Agricultural extension is one such effort taken by the government and non-government organisations that aims at reaching to farmers. The efforts include bringing about a positive change in knowledge, attitude and skills of the farmers by providing training and technical advice and also assisting them in taking decisions in adoption of new research results. Importantly, the clientele of such programmes and efforts is inclusive of both farmers and farm women. Managers of these programmes often consider men as farmers and

women as farmer's wife thereby systematically marginalizing and underestimating women's productive role in agriculture. The agricultural extension service in India mainly focuses on male farmers and it has failed to tackle the great structural problem of invisibility of female farmers. Women farmers are bypassed by male extension workers. It would be correct to state that women farmers in India have failed to get their due share in extension services apropos their contribution to the Indian agriculture. Extension services in India need to be refined, modified and redesigned so as to reach farm women effectively. The purpose of agricultural extension services can be achieved for sustainable rural development only if sincere attempts are made to provide and improve farm women's access to the available extension services thereby leading to their technological empowerment. It has been observed from the last three decades that both the male and female labour force in agriculture is declining .The number of men in agriculture has decreased from 81 per cent to 63 per cent and women from 88 per cent to 79 per cent. The extension machinery in India can be classified in four heads namely (a)Extension services offered by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), (b)Extension services provided by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, (c)Extension services provided by the Ministry of Rural Development and (d) Extension services offered by Non-Government Organisations (NGOs).Out of four extension systems, training and visit is the major extension system operating in India under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare for more than 30 years. Although this programme is in operation for so long, it still lacks necessary inbuilt structural arrangements for reaching female farmers. Contact farmers involved in this very programme are mostly male farmers and the numbering of female farmers is very low. It was reported that the extension needs of women were often perceived by the extension agents to be in the disciplines of home science, nutrition, childcare, tailoring etc. The information regarding to new farm technologies was seldom passed on to them. Various rural development programmes were launched in India from community approach in 1950s to special target group approach in 1970s.None of these programmes addressed to the specific needs of women farmers and remain concentrated on male farmers. In 1980s integrated approach was started that attempt to integrate women in the mainstream of develop-

ment by structurally making them beneficiaries up to an extent of 40 per cent. A number of services supportive for women's socio-economic empowerment were implemented. These approaches were not directed towards fulfillment needs for agriculture-related services and concentrated mainly on the issue of employment and social empowerment. In 1993-94, a project aimed at gender-gap reduction among women farmers of the Northern India was launched by the government of India. The limited coverage of this project shortens its impact. Such programmes need to be appreciated for being the pioneering one in this regard. ICAR is another important system for transfer of farm technologies all over the country. This system has operated through various frontline extension programmes, all of which now have been merged with the Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) since April 1996.In KVKs, provision for special training programmes for women are made. These programmes restricted mainly in the areas like home economics and ignored women's productive role in agricultural operations. The efforts made so far in this direction appear to be localized and remain largely invisible. Involvement of women in agricultural development process by ICAR has been further strengthened when the concept of Farming Systems approach to research/extension was institutionalized by several ways including assessment and refinement of agricultural technologies through institutionalizing village linkage programme. Still these efforts are very limited to make a substantial dent on the overall agricultural scenario. From the very beginning Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) have involved women component in their mandate. They too have given more emphasis on issues related to social empowerment of women. They also have given little attention on women's role in agriculture. Therefore, all the major extension systems in India, the participation and benefits accrued to women farmers are minuscule.

There is a need to delineate and discuss the reasons attributable to poor access of farm women to extension services in India. The causative factors found were-lack of approach of farm women to extension centres, less communication channel of farm women, less income to purchase farm inputs by farm women, lack of land, inconvenient time and location of meetings, gender biasness by extension staff, lack of gender-appropriate technology and lack of authority to them. The other factors were low farm women literacy,

lack of tendency to innovate and make decisions in farming, less women workers in extension services and lack of structural arrangements for women farmers in extension programmes. Indian women despite playing an important role in agricultural production, processing and storage, generally lack the right to property and the control of resources usually pass on from men to men keeping women out of the chain of inheritance. This makes them the largest group of landless labourers. Certain structural changes need to be done in the existing extension machinery of India. Changes in attitude of professionals towards women need to be done. In order to improve the access of farm women, it is prime importance to sensitize the concerned extension workers, extension managers, development administrators and policy makers with the realities of farm women, so that they can be considered as an equally strong force for agricultural and rural development on the same footing as men. Attitudinal changes of extension workers, extension managers and all other concerned with agricultural development efforts cannot be ruled out in order to bring significant improvement in the women's access to extension system in India. In India, where these functionaries are mostly males, gender sensitization training can be one of the methods to bring out these attitudinal changes. The efforts for improving the women's access to extension services need to be directed towards bringing out some institutional changes in the present machinery of extension in India. Farm women should be provided with greater access to credit facilities and other inputs by simplifying the existing procedures suiting to the educational levels of women folk. Flow of credit, inputs and marketing facilities to farm women can be done through women's cooperatives and Mahila Mandals. Different extension agencies are focusing on a limited scale to integrate farm women in mainstream of development efforts. The efforts of these agencies need to be managed more efficiently so as to have a synergistic effect to solve the problem of poor women access to extension services. The planners should give due recognition to women farmers in designing the development programmes. There is also the need to recruit more extension functionaries in all levels of agricultural extension system. Certain institutional adaptations in the present extension system should be made for a positive step in this direction.

(The author is Head, KVK Reasi SKUAST-J).

YOUR COLUMN Festival of lights

Dear Editor,

Diwali - the 'festival of lights' represents the symbolic victory of good over evil, light over darkness, and knowledge over ignorance. India is the land of different cultures, traditions, faiths and festivals. The festival of Diwali is the biggest festival of Hindus and is celebrated throughout the length and breadth of the country. However, various cultures and religions have var-

ious historical stories as backgrounds to celebrate Diwali. While primarily known as a Hindu festival for followers of ancient Vedic culture and tradition, the festival is also celebrated across the world by other faiths like Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists.

This great festival comes in the month of Karthika as per the lunar cycles, on the 13th day, which is called trayodashi. Traditionally, on this auspicious day everybody is supposed to worship Dhanavantari - the deity dedicated to health and well being.

For celebrating Diwali, the Hindus clean and paint their houses as they believe that on this day Goddess

Laxmi visits their house and gives blessings to the inmates.

The business community performs Laxmi puja on the evening of the festival of Diwali. Let us resolve to celebrate the festival of Diwali with great enthusiasm and traditional manner and not turn this festival of lights into festival of doom but celebrate the festival in eco-friendly manner so that the importance of the festival is not affected in any manner and there is no loss of precious lives.

Vivek Koul, Jammu