

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is playing a big role in our lives today. It has become an integral part of today's society. Detailed information is available to us at the press of a button. Social media is a very powerful medium and its impact is visible on every person. It is unbelievable to imagine life without social media today.

Today social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn etc. are being widely used. These have become quite popular among teachers, professors and students. It has made studying and finding a job easier for everyone. Social media plays a very important role for a student as it helps them to share information, get answers and connect with teachers.

Social media has an important contribution in positivity. It helps people as a marketing and advertising platform, where they get information about products and services and merchants get an opportunity to establish contact with new customers. Through social media people can learn about and be influenced by various businesses, trades and innovations.

Empowering Rural Women for Food and Nutrition Security

■ DR. BANARSI LAL

Women are considered as the vital part of the Indian economy. Women farmers contribute enormously to the Indian agriculture. They comprise the largest percentage of the workforce in the agricultural sector but they do not have control over all the land and productive resources. There is need to make efforts to bring about a positive change in knowledge, attitude and skills of the women farmers by providing training and technical advice and also assisting them in taking decisions in adoption of new research results. Generally women role in agriculture is systematically marginalized and underestimated. Many times 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. There is need to refine, modify and redesign the extension services in India so that the latest technologies can be reached to the women farmers effectively. Women can be considered as the best caretaker of the children and farming sector. Rural women play a crucial role in agriculture from sowing to harvesting to post-harvest management. Women farmers make significant contributions to agricultural production, food security and nutrition, land and natural resources management and building climate resilience. They play multidimensional role in agriculture and can play a significant role second green revolution in India. Government of India is giving preference to rural women under various schemes such as organic farming, self-employment schemes, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana etc. Although remarkable progress has been made in India in various sectors but still the gender inequalities remain pervasive in every dimension of sustainable development. Women comprise 43 per cent of world's agricultural force which rises to 70-80 per cent in some countries such as India. Rural women in India are enhancing agricultural production, improving food security and eradicating poverty. The Indian rural women face the significance inequality in farms even they do more agricultural work than men. According to FAO report, if women are given equal access to resources as men, agricultural yield can be increased by 2.5 to 4 per cent in the developed countries enough to feed at least 100 million more undernourished people. If rural women get opportunities and facilities, they can propel the country towards second green revolution and can change the landscape of the development. Rural women play a significant role in labour supervision and participation in post-harvest operations. Women farmers can be productive and enterprising as their male counterparts but are less able to access land, credit, agricultural inputs, markets and high value agrifood chains and obtain lower prices for their crops. Women and girls in rural areas lack equal access to productive resources and assets, public services such as education, health care and infrastructure including sanitation while much of their labour remains invisible and unpaid even as their workload increases due to migration of their men. It has been observed that rural women face more difficulties than the rural men and urban women. They disproportionately experience poverty, exclusion and inverse effect of climate change. Government of India have launched various rural development programmes 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 focussed on male farmers. In 1980s' integrated approach was started that attempt to integrate women in the mainstream of development by structurally making them beneficiaries up to an extent of 40 per cent. A number of services supportive for women's socio-economic empowerment viz., Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP), Rashtriya Mahila Kosh, Indira Mahila Yojna, Mahila Samridhi Yojna, Self-Help Groups etc. 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. Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) is an 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, a provision for special training programmes for women have been made and more and more rural women are trained under these programmes. 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 not sufficient to make a substantial dent on the overall agricultural scenario of the country. 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. There is need 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 the recent agricultural technologies in India. Women farmers 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. The planners should give due recognition to women farmers in designing the developmental and training programmes. There is also the need to recruit more female extension functionaries in all levels of agricultural extension system. Emphasis should be given on women Self Help Groups (SHGs) so that they can be connected with the micro-credit. There is need to promote the structural, functional and institutional measures to empower women farmers, to enhance their abilities and increase their access to the new agricultural technologies. There is also need to develop new agricultural technologies so that drudgery reduction among the women can be made. More agricultural institutions should be developed for the rural women.

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Cultural Diversity: The Unifying Essence of the Indian Subcontinent

■ DR. ADIL MALIK

The Indian subcontinent, with its vast populace surpassing the 1 billion mark, stands as a remarkable testament to diversity with its mosaic of 1,652 distinct languages. This land, adorned with a myriad of cultures and traditions, epitomizes the rich tapestry of diversity that defines our nation. From the lofty snow-covered peaks of the Himalayas in the North to the sun-drenched shores of the South, from the bustling thoroughfares of urban centers to the tranquil backwaters of rural landscapes, every facet of this expansive country proudly unveils a distinctive cultural identity. The cultural diversity of India is not merely a source of pride but also the dynamic impetus propelling our advancement and shaping our collective character.

In accordance with statistical data, the populace adheres to varying religious affiliations, with Hindus constituting 79.8%, Muslims 14.2%, Christians 2.3%, Sikhs 1.7%, Buddhists 0.7%, and Jains 0.4%, all coexisting harmoniously under the broader banner of "Indian." Each geographical domain is distinguished by its exclusive language, customs, gastronomy, clothing, and artistic forms. The vibrant celebrations that resonate throughout the nation, encompassing festivals such as Diwali, Eid, Christmas, Pongal, and Baisakhi, serve as unifying threads, weaving together individuals from diverse faiths and regions, fostering an ethos of unity and concord. The northern expanse of India bears witness to the grandeur of Mughal architecture through icons like the TajMahal. In contrast, the vivacious folk traditions of Rajasthan and Punjab captivate with their vivid attire, lively music, and spirited dance genres. To the east, literary luminaries like Rabindranath Tagore and Satyajit Ray illuminate Bengal's cultural prominence, while to the south, classical dance forms like Bharatanatyam, Kathakali, and Odissi enthrall audiences with their elegance and intricate choreography. In the western sphere, Bollywood cinema commands attention with its enchanting melodies and captivating narratives, captivating millions worldwide.

Amidst the profusion of cultural distinctions, India remains bound by the overarching principles enshrined in its Constitution. The democratic ethos permeating the nation enables individuals from varied backgrounds to articulate their views, elect their representatives, and actively contribute to shaping the nation's trajectory. The ideals of equality, justice, and liberty are not mere theoretical constructs; they embody the very essence of countless lives across the nation.

The foundation of Indian democracy is deeply interwoven with

its cultural heritage. Evident in the village panchayats that convene at the grassroots level to collectively address local concerns and make decisions, participatory democracy thrives. Similarly, the principle of "Unity in Diversity" serves as a guiding tenet, underscoring the significance of embracing disparities and celebrating them as wellsprings of strength.

Acknowledging the significance of cultural diversity, the Indian government has consistently taken proactive measures to cultivate unity and ensure comprehensive development across the nation. Policies and initiatives have been instituted to bridge regional divides, encourage cultural interchange, and uplift marginalized communities-all with the overarching goal of harmonizing and advancing the collective society.

As a resident of this land graced with serene landscapes and remarkable inhabitants, I implore the government to broaden its horizons by partnering with the local Dogra community and sharing their exquisite culture, traditions, and practices on a global scale. Commencing with workshops and exchange programs, inviting individuals worldwide to partake in the splendor of this pristine community, could lay a foundation for such endeavors.

It's worth noting that the government's unwavering efforts have staunchly supported the preservation and promotion of traditional artistic expressions, ensuring their continuity for posterity. Esteemed institutions like the SangeetNatakAkademi, SahityaAkademi, and Lalit Kala Akademi have played pivotal roles in nurturing and acknowledging talent across an array of artistic domains. Additionally, the government has underscored the inclusion of regional languages and literature within the educational curriculum, recognizing the importance of linguistic diversity and fostering its propagation. The Indian government's commendable initiatives extend to the development of remote regions through endeavors such as the PradhanMantri Gram SadakYojana (PMGSY), which aims to provide all-weather road connectivity to rural areas, ensuring the fruits of progress reach every corner of the nation. Conversely, initiatives like "Digital India" and "Make in India" consistently strive to forge pathways and empower individuals from all corners to contribute to the nation's advancement. While India's cultural diversity undoubtedly stands as one of its greatest strengths, it also presents challenges. Instances of religious, linguistic, or caste-based divisions have at times triggered conflicts. Nonetheless, such occurrences pale in comparison to the numerous instances of unity and collaboration. A prime illustration of this unity is the KumbhMela, the world's largest religious gathering, wherein millions of Hindus,

Generational Odyssey: From Resilience to Digital Dilemmas

■ AKASH KUMAR

In the annals of history, the generations that came before us are celebrated for their unwavering dedication to hard work and their unwavering resolve in the face of countless challenges. From the indomitable "Silent Generation," who withstood the Great Depression and World War II, to the socially conscious "baby boomer generation," who fought passionately for civil rights, and "Generation X," who confronted economic disparities and the AIDS epidemic, each of these generations has left an indelible mark on society.

Stepping into this rich legacy, "Generation Y," or "millennials," emerged between 1981 and 1996. They enjoyed an improved living environment, made possible by the sacrifices of their predecessors, which in turn fostered ambition and a willingness to take risks. Consequently, they became champions of innovative thinking, diligent labor, and brought about monumental changes in an astonishingly short time.

However, the world inherited by "Generation Z," encompassing those born between 1997 and 2012, stands in stark contrast to that of their predecessors. With enhanced human rights and technological advancements, life has grown notably more comfortable and convenient. Nevertheless, despite these advancements, Generation Z grapples with a myriad of physical and mental health challenges, including depression, anxiety, and obesity.

It is striking to note that Generation Z is now regarded by experts as one of the most depressed generations. Astonishingly, around 70% of Generation Z experiences some form of depression or anxiety, as reported by the Pew Research Center. The coexistence of substantial societal progress and the high prevalence of these issues raises thought-provoking questions about the origins of their struggles.

A fundamental element of a fulfilling life is the presence of a clear sense of purpose. A well-defined purpose not only guides decision-making but also shapes aspirations, offers direction, and infuses life with meaning. For many individuals, this purpose is found in their work, fulfilling familial obligations, or through their religious beliefs.

Ironically, Generation Z appears to be grappling with a sense of aimlessness-a significant departure from previous generations. The causes behind this phenomenon are multifaceted, including the phenomenon of digital overload. The internet has

made information instantly accessible, inundating individuals with a multitude of answers to their questions, often leading to indecision.

Termed "digital natives," Generation Z grew up in the age of the internet, spending the majority of their time in a hyper-connected digital world. Remarkably, 54% of Generation Z dedicates an average of four hours daily to online activities, with approximately 38% dedicating even more time. This continuous exposure to conflicting information has given rise to what experts have termed a "Nihilist Attitude," causing many in this generation to feel estranged from reality and perceive life as devoid of meaning.

Nihilism, a philosophy first introduced by Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, asserts that life lacks inherent meaning, rendering religious and moral principles inconsequential. The perpetual exposure to diverse aspects of reality through digital media often renders actual reality hollow in the eyes of Generation Z. The act of comparing their lives to the seemingly perfect lives of others on social media platforms further intensifies their feelings of purposelessness.

Furthermore, this digital inundation prevents Generation Z from making productive use of their time. The absence of religious beliefs also contributes to their sense of purposelessness, with approximately 18% of Generation Z identifying as atheists or agnostics. Traditionally, religion has provided individuals with ethical and moral values and offered a framework for comprehending the world. The vacuum created by the absence of these beliefs has given rise to feelings of purposelessness.

Depression and mental health issues have experienced a surge within Generation Z. Alarminglly, around 18.8% of high school students in this generation report having had suicidal thoughts. The overuse of technology plays a pivotal role in rendering their lives devoid of meaning and triggering depressive episodes. Unlike preceding generations, which spent leisure hours outdoors or engaged in face-to-face interactions, Generation Z dedicates the majority of their time to social media platforms.

Ironically, these platforms, initially designed to connect people, often serve to isolate individuals from one another. Moreover, Generation Z's preference for online gaming over outdoor physical activities has had a detrimental impact on their mental well-being. Laziness, exacerbated by the convenience of online activities, amplifies the prevalence of depression, anxiety,

Muslims, Sikhs, and Christians congregate to cleanse themselves in the holy waters of the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati rivers. During this event, discord is set aside in favor of shared camaraderie, underscoring the celebration of their shared humanity.

Despite the manifold advantages of cultural diversity, there exist those who seek to fragment society along communal lines. These individuals exploit fear and misinformation to erect walls between communities, often fueling misunderstandings and discord. Yet, it remains paramount to recognize that these voices do not represent the prevailing sentiment. We must internalize the fact that our diversity is a wellspring of strength rather than a weakness. We must actively strive to dismantle the barriers that segregate us, laboring towards constructing bridges of comprehension and empathy. Through the embrace of our disparities and the commemoration of our diversity, we have the power to mold a more inclusive society-one wherein all individuals feel esteemed and respected. Simultaneously, as we celebrate this diversity, it is incumbent upon the government to guarantee that each region and community receives equal opportunities for advancement and national development. The unity of India, thus, finds its footing not in uniformity but in the embrace and reverence for the differences that constitute the essence of our citizens. By fostering an environment of inclusiveness, nurturing cultural exchange, and securing impartial progress, the government assumes a pivotal role in coalescing the nation into a singular entity, thereby fostering a harmonious and prosperous India.

As we continue our journey toward progress, we must learn to fathom and treasure the elegance and fortitude that cultural diversity imparts to each one of us. It is through this remarkable amalgamation of cultures that we remain united, safeguarding and upholding the tenets of democracy, sovereignty, and equality-the bedrock principles of our extraordinary nation.

Hence, it is unequivocal that cultural diversity stands as India's lifeblood, serving as an animating force propelling the nation's accomplishments. It has united people, kindled creativity, innovation, and enterprise, and rendered us a resilient and adaptable society. Let us steadfastly value and celebrate our diversity, even when faced with adversities. Amid sporadic instances of communal unrest and disparity, let us center our focus on constructing a more promising tomorrow for all. Together, we can forge India into a luminous exemplar of unity in diversity, an emblem of optimism for the global community.

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and physical health problems.

Societal pressures and expectations represent another primary source of depression within Generation Z. As educational opportunities have multiplied, academic competition has intensified, leading to increasingly selective college admissions processes. Entrance exams have become progressively challenging, resulting in heightened stress and anxiety. Moreover, the societal insistence on securing high-paying, prestigious jobs compounds their distress.

Financial insecurity looms large for Generation Z. Global unemployment rates have surged due to population growth and the COVID-19 pandemic, disproportionately impacting Generation Z. Presently, two billion individuals worldwide fall within the Generation Z age range, constituting approximately 30% of the global workforce by 2025. Generation Z grapples with double the unemployment rate of previous generations.

Furthermore, a significant portion of Generation Z works as gig workers, functioning independently for multiple employers without job security. While gig work offers flexibility, it lacks the stability and benefits of traditional full-time employment, exacerbating their financial instability. Ongoing job automation and advances in artificial intelligence further threaten job security for Generation Z.

The excessive use of technology has also eroded their cognitive skills, impeding the development of essential soft skills such as negotiation, networking, and public speaking. These skills are increasingly critical in today's job market, and Generation Z is lagging in their acquisition. A survey revealed that roughly one-third of Generation Z believes they will never afford home ownership, with 50% feeling incapable of starting a family due to financial insecurity.

Nevertheless, despite these challenges, Generation Z possesses the potential to shape a brighter future. Their technological aptitude, creativity, and activism can be harnessed to overcome obstacles. Adaptation of lifestyles and habits, along with guidance from older generations, can enable Generation Z to find innovative solutions to financial difficulties. While every generation faces its share of challenges, resilience and collective efforts can empower Generation Z to navigate and conquer theirs successfully.

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The Sacred River Vitasta

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

River Vitasta is a sacred river of Jammu and Kashmir and it flows through capital city of Srinagar as it is situated on the banks of this river .The river Vitasta has a great spiritual ,cultural and religious significance and Kashmiri Pandits still celebrate vith truva and pay obeisance to this holy river .It is believed that Vitasta originates from Vith Vutur Verinag in south Kashmir district of Anantnag which is a famous tourist spot visited by a large number of tourists every year .For the people of Kashmir in general and Pandits in particular Vitasta occupies an important place and they revere and respect it .In good olden days and not long ago it was brimming with clean and cool water and its width was in consonance with its deepness and water capacity .But alas the greed of man has exploited it and today its width has shrunk and its water has become dirty as well as scant! We should pay attention towards the safety of this river and save it from degradation and exploitation .With the efflux and passage of time this sacred river came to be called by the name of Jhelum and therefore in present time it is known Jhelum but this does not diminish the cultural ,spiritual and religious significance of this great river with which the past of Kashmiris is associated and it falls in central Kashmir and flows into Pakistan .There is great cultural ,religious and spiritual significance of river Vitasta .According to Nilmatpurana it was Sati daughter of Himal Parvata consort of Shiva who was called Uma in Viastra Antra and is the same goddess as Vitasta and same is Kashmirra. The goddess Vitasta is verily the holy river remover of all sins .People who offer their bodies to or die with in its waters in their bellies reach heaven

without any hindrance. Those people who take bath in Vitasta do not see even in their dreams the tortures of hell .Vitasta gives protection with her hands to the evil doing sinners falling into hell .Fire of hell is pacified with cool outpourings of the drops sent from the waves of Vitas carried by wind .A person merely listening to the glory of Vitasta goes free from sins .The only thing Ganga has more than Vitasta are heaps of bones of human beings but all other things are equal .The river draining the entire Kashmir valley called by Kashmiris as Vyath is the direct derivation from original Sanskrit name Vitasta .Vitasta is also mentioned in the river names of Rigveda .In Vayupurna ,Vitasta has been referred as Biloda .The present name Jhelum river has been adopted from the city of Jhelum besides which it flows in Pakistan .The name was brought to Kashmir by European travelers and found its way in official use otherwise this river is still known by the Kashmiris as Vyath .The river Vitasta can be considered as the confluence of Harashpatha -Arapat ,Bringa -Bring and Sandran .But the old holy scriptures have traced the origin of Vitasta to a more specific source .As already stated in Nilmatpurana Harecaritachintamani and subsequently quoted in later references Vitasta is a manifestation of goddess Parvati .After Satisar (Parvatis lake) was drained of its water and demon Jalodbava destroyed by Vishnu ,Bhrama and Maheshvera ,at the request of sage Kashyap ,Maheshvara persuaded Parvati to show herself in Kashmir in the form of a river to purify the humans from the unholy contact of Pisachas .The goddess assumed the form of underground river and asked Shiva to make an opening by which she could come to the surface in the form of

a river .Shiva by striking the ground with his trident on13th of Badar Shuklapakasa from which the river gushed forth receiving the name of Vitasta .Since then the birthday of Vitasta is celebrated on 13th Badar Shukla Paksha .The spring from where the goddess flowed in river form became known by several names Nilganga, Nila Kumda ,Sulaghata or simply Vitasta .According to a legend Vitasta made her second appearance at Vitvatru close to Verinag .Clear mention of Nilganga (Verinag) as the birth place of Vitasta by Kalhans leaves no doubt about the tradition prevailing in his time .The course of Vitasta has not changed during the historic times except at Vitasta Sindhusangrama where it was altered by Suyya the able engineer of King Awantivarman in 19th century .It is believed that as soon as Lord Shiva struck his trident and made a hole equal to a Vitasti about four inches long ,water sprouted forth .Lord Shiva named the river as Vitasta as it was formed by a Vitasti .The place where the spring was formed came to be known as Vitasatra and with the passage of time it became vyeth Vathur .Vedic civilization flourished along the course of the legendary river Saraswati .The people of Kashmir valley lived on the banks of river Vitasta ,flowing across the entire valley from the foots of Pir Panchal mountain range ,where its source is located at Vrinag ,to its confluence at Jhelum village ,with the river of Krishen Ganga ,flowing in the territories of Jammu and Kashmir under the occupation of Pakistan .The Kashmiri Pandits very much like Sarswat people ,built their Tirthas and their places of worship along the banks of river Vitasta .The Vedic people venerated rivers ,worshipped them as the embodiment of the divine mother Bhavani and praised

them as the source of life and means of sustenance .For Hindus of Kasshmir ,Vitasta is the embodiment of Goddess Parvati ,consort of Lord Shiva .Vedic literature refers to Vitasta as a prominent river of north India .Vitasta also finds mention in Mahabhrata as well .Vitasta is also called by the name of Jhelum and it is the river of northern Indian sun continent .It originates at Vrinag and flows through the Indian Jammu and Kashmir and enters into Pakistan administered and POK .It is the westernmost of the five rivers of the Punjab region and flows through Kashmir valley .It has a total length of about 725 Kilometers .The river Jhelum was called Hydaspes by ancient Greeks .Alexander the Great and his army crossed the Jhelum in BC 326 at the battle of the Hydaspes River ,where he defeated an Indian King ,Porus .The river Vitasta is the Gods gift to the people of Kashmir and it is not less than a blessing for them as it irrigates and gives sustenance to the Kashmir' .But it wrecks havoc in floods .The memory of devastating flood of 2014 is fresh in our memory as it had damaged the Kashmir in a big way .It is the greed and selfishness of man which is responsible for the flood in the river Vitasta otherwise this river is the real gift of God to Kashmir .The Vitasta ,Vyath ,Jehlum whatever we chose to call it will not diminish the religious ,cultural and historical significance of this sacred river .Let us maintain the sacredness ,holiness and sanctity as well as the beauty of Vitasta .May we continue to venerate river Vitasta so that it will continue to sustain us .In brief river Vitasta is most sacred ,holy as well as economically beneficial for the people of Kashmir .Pranam to maa Vitasta.

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