

ONLINE v/s OFFLINE LEARNING

Online learning is fast becoming an attractive option in many countries and offers a great alternative to the traditional brick-and-mortar model of learning. But the question remains "what is so great about online learning and why are more people opting for it?" Here are some reasons why many students prefer online learning rather than learning in a physical classroom.

More Time & Cost Efficient: It doesn't matter if you are in Asia and decide to earn a degree in Europe or want to study at a state university without leaving home. Online learning programs afford you the luxury to easily take courses without needing to move to your school's location. Since you also don't have to go to school, you'll save costs on transportation or accommodation. Nor do you spend hours getting to and from school or wandering around campus.

Personalized Learning: Traditional learning programs are designed in a way that makes personalized learning challenging. In-person instruction is designed around traditional lectures, often in large classrooms with a format that has changed little in a hundred years. However, a good online program is typically designed to combine personalized teaching models as well as technology to address each student's needs, including their strengths, weaknesses, and learning styles. Students can do simulations, rewind parts of lectures that did not make sense, work in teams in breakout rooms and make use of all sorts of technologies. This allows students to learn more effectively and succeed regardless of how challenging their educational needs may be. Since assignments are submitted electronically and recorded, grading is often faster. Students can receive personalized instruction and feedback exactly when they need it in order to help them learn a subject. Online programs are typically designed to carefully monitor student progress and provide a heads up when students are behind schedule.

Flexibility: One of the significant reasons why many students prefer online learning is because of the flexibility it offers. Unlike traditional classes that have a fixed schedule, online classes are typically asynchronous and give you the freedom to organize your classes at your convenience. You can choose to start your class any time you like. You can speed up one week and slow down another week around your different life obligations. Online learning also allows you to learn from anywhere in the world. That means you can attend classes even while on a family vacation. The flexibility of online learning also makes it the perfect style of learning for students who have other activities or a job.

Learning pace: One of the major turn-offs in traditional learning is that it does not adequately cater to the specific needs of each student. Online learning, on the other hand, allows you to learn at your pace. You can take as much time as you want on a module. As soon as you understand the topic at hand, you can complete the assessments and move on to the next topic. This makes online learning the ideal style of learning for both fast and slow learners. It gives you the freedom to slow down or speed up as you desire. You can find great many options for majors and degrees online on sources such as the US News and Degree Planet to help you choose an accredited program that is a good fit to your requirements.

Health Issues: Online learning is the preferred learning style for many students. It is ideal for many students who have certain health issues such as social anxiety disorder, sleeping disorders, or some disabilities. These students often have a hard time coping with traditional classes and modes of learning, but find it more convenient to learn online or attend classes remotely. Students with limited mobility may find both getting to and getting around campus challenging.

Choice options: One of the perks of online learning is that it offers learners a wide range of degree options and courses to choose from. There are literally thousands of programs around the world to choose from. You can sometimes work on different programs at the same time since you don't need to physically attend classes and classes are asynchronous. This is why more universities and schools are offering online programs for various fields and disciplines. You can choose to learn to code today, study HR management tomorrow, and focus on marketing next week. With some of the larger online programs, it is also easier to switch majors as there are more course offerings than you might find at some smaller local colleges. This can be very important if you find that somewhere along the way that your interests in what you want to study have changed.

Teacher-Student communication: This may be quite surprising, but online learning often allows students to communicate with their teachers more easily. In the traditional style of learning, it is often challenging for students to get the teacher's attention, especially if the class is large. It's awkward for some students to raise their hand in class or approach a teacher immediately after class. Also in cases where a student gets the teacher's attention, he/she may not be able to discuss things privately with the teacher. This is where online learning has an advantage. Students who learn online have the luxury of sending private instant messages during class if there is a question or issue. They can also meet privately via zoom afterward. There are often more opportunities for connecting to your teacher and getting the necessary feedback in online programs than students think.

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Search after the truth

If a man would succeed in his search after truth, he must, in the first place, shut his eyes to all the traditional superstitions of the past... It is, therefore, clear that in order to make any progress in the search after truth we must relinquish superstition. If all seekers would follow this principle they would obtain a clear vision of the truth... Science must be accepted. No one truth can contradict another truth. Light is good in whatsoever lamp it is burning! A rose is beautiful in whatsoever garden it may bloom! A star has the same radiance if it shines from the East or from the West. Be free from prejudice, so will you love the Sun of Truth from whatsoever point in the horizon it may arise! You will realize that if the Divine light of truth shone in Jesus Christ it also shone in Moses and in

Buddha. The earnest seeker will arrive at this truth. This is what is meant by the "Search after Truth".

It means, also, that we must be willing to clear away all that we have previously learned, all that would clog our steps on the way to truth; we must not shrink if necessary from beginning our education all over again. We must not allow our love for any one religion or any one personality to so blind our eyes that we become fettered by superstition! When we are freed from all these bonds, seeking with liberated minds, then shall we be able to arrive at our goal.

"Seek the truth, the truth shall make you free." So shall we see the truth in all religions, for truth is in all and truth is one! - Extracts from the talk of 'Abdu'l-Bahá on 10th November 1911 in Paris.

Bahai Faith

There is a magnet in your heart that will attract true friends. That magnet is unselfishness, thinking of others first; when you learn to live for others, they will live for you. -Paramahansa Yogananda

Pride of India: Bhagwan Birsa Munda

■ DR L MURUGAN

As India is celebrating Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav, one great name stands tall among the galaxy of stars who fearlessly worked for freedom of motherland against oppressive British Raj. That is Bhagwan Birsa Munda. Birsa Munda lived a short but valiant life of just twenty five years, but his heroic actions and noble deeds made Bhagwan for his numerous followers. His life story, full of gallant efforts to fight against injustice and oppression, represents a strong voice of resistance against colonial British Raj. Born on 15th November 1875, in Ulihatu village of a present day Jharkhand, Birsa spent his childhood in abject poverty in a tribal Munda family. This was the time when exploitative British Raj started penetrating into the deep jungles of Central and Eastern India, disrupting the tribals, living in harmony with nature and natural resources. The Britishers introduced a feudal Jamindari in Chota Nagpur region, destroying tribal 'Khuntkatti' agrarian system. The Raj brought in the outsiders -moneylenders and contractors, as well as feudal landlords, which aided the British in exploitation of tribals. The unrelenting missionary activities continued to operate with the active support of the Raj, insulting and interfering in the religio-cultural ethos of forest dwelling Adivasis. Young Birsa grew up watching all these unfolding before his eyes, and began to understand how these colonial forces and the dikus (outsiders -enemies of the Adivasis) worked against the interests of the local people. This acted as a fuel to firm up his

resolve to fight against this unholy nexus. During 1880s, young Birsa closely witnessed the Sardari Larai movement in the region, which was demanding restoration of tribal rights, through non-violent methods of sending petitions to British Raj. However, the oppressive colonial regime paid no heed to these demands. The Jamindari system soon reduced the tribals from the status of the landowners to that of land labourer. The feudal set up intensified the forced labour (Veth bigiri) in the forested tribal areas. The exploitation of poor aand innocent tribals now reached a breaking point.

It all culminated into Birsa taking up the cause of Adivasis. He showed a new light in matters of religious domain to the fellow tribals. He stood firm against missionaries who were belittling the tribal life and culture. At the same time, Birsa worked for refining and reforming the religious practices, discouraged many superstitious rites, brought in new tenets, new prayers, reformed many habits , and worked for restoring and reviving the tribal pride. Birsa impressed upon the adivasis about 'Sirmare Firun Raja Jai' or 'victory to the ancestral king' thus invoking sovereignty of the tribals' ancestral autonomous control over the land. Birsa became a mass leader, and began to be considered as a Bhagwan and Dharati Aba for his followers. He made the tribals aware of exploitative and atrocious nature of all vested interests. He knew who the real enemy were- alongwith the exploitative dikus, it was the oppressive British Rule. Birsa Munda had clearly identified that British Colonial Rule was the root cause of all the

problems and oppressions. It was amply clear to him that 'Abua Raj Setar Jana, Maharani Raj Tundu Jana (Let the Kingdom of the Queen be ended and our kingdom be established) Bhagwan Birsa ignited the spark in the minds of the masses. The Mundas , Oraons , other adivasis and non-adivasis responded to his call and joined 'Ulgulan' or revolt against the colonial masters and the exploitative dikus under the leadership of Birsa, for their social, economical, political and cultural emancipation. Birsa asked the people not to pay any rent, attacked the outposts of feudal, missionary and colonial British Raj authorities. With the traditional bows and arrows, the tribals of Central and eastern India waged an effective armed resistance against the British regime. In doing so, however, Birsa was careful that only the real exploiters were attacked, and the common people were not troubled. Birsa became an image of vitality and divinity. Soon he was captured by British police and lodged in jail, where he died in captivity on June 9, 1900. But Bhagwan Birsa Munda's spirited struggle did not go in vain. It compelled the British Raj to take cognisance of plight and exploitation of tribals , and brought in 'Chota Nagpur Tenancy Act of 1908' for protection of Adivasis. This important act restricted the transfer of tribal land to non-tribals, giving huge relief for the tribals, and became a landmark legislation for protection of tribal rights. The British regime also took steps to abolish Veth Bigiri or forced labour.

Bhagwan Birsa Munda continues to inspire millions of Indians, even 121 years

after his death. He is an icon of valour, courage and leadership. He was a leader who took great pride in his rich culture and great traditions, but at the same time, did not shy away from reforming his own faith wherever necessary. Bhagwan Birsa Munda is one of the tallest icons of our freedom movement. India's freedom struggle was strengthened by several tribal communities such as Mundas, Oraons, Santhals, Tamars, Kols, Bhils, Khasis, Koyas and Mizos to name a few. The revolutionary movements and struggles organized by the tribal communities were marked by their immense courage and supreme sacrifice, and inspired Indians all over the country. However, for whatever reasons, established historians could not do justice to their immense contribution in India's freedom struggle. But our visionary Prime Minister Narendra Modi appealed all Indians to celebrate Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav, and to study and understand the valour and sacrifice of many such unsung heroes in India's freedom struggle. Under his dynamic leadership, now for the first time, the tribal pride and contribution is being given a fitting tribute, by celebrating a Jan Jatiya Gaurav Divas, on 15th November every year, on the birth anniversary of Bhagwan Birsa Munda. On this Jan Jatiya Gaurav Divas, let us remember and recognise the efforts of India's tribal people for preservation of cultural heritage and promotion of Indian values of valour, hospitality and national pride.

(The author is Union Minister of State for Information & Broadcasting, Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying).

Avoid burning straw for clean environment

■ VIJAY GARG

The purity of the environment is extremely important for every living thing, including human beings. Along with the endless advantages of technological advancement, there are also many disadvantages. For example, with the advent of modern means of transportation, the distance has shrunk, but the rapid pollution of the environment cannot be ignored. One such problem is the pollution of the environment by burning straw. Punjab produces about 220 lakh tonnes of straw, most of which are burned in the fields. Nowadays we usually hear that burning straw is forbidden. The farmer needs to be environmentally conscious, instead of burning straw, he should be inclined towards alternative arrangements.

There was a time when in spite of the scarcity of food in the country, hardworking farmers produced huge quantities of food grains from the earth's crust and filled up the country's food stocks up to TC which is remembered in the name of Green Revolution. If we look at the environment of the state at that time and the health of the people, we are reminded of the clean environment and looking through the windows of healthy eyes. The secret was the rich, mixed diet of the people. Missy bread of paddy, millet, maize etc. was baked in almost every house. Wheat bread would be baked on the arrival of a special guest. Sugarcane was grown at home and sugarcane flour, molasses, and ghee were an integral part of the diet. If we compare these blessings of that time with the present time, then all the blessings are gone due to the loss of some aspect of crop diversification. Mankind has endured many symptoms in the cycle of modern agriculture. Rotten Missy bread has been replaced by wheat bread. Instead of all the small Kharif crops, paddy alone is the dominant crop. Wheat and paddy have become the major crop cycle of the states. The fixing of MSP of these crops is also

one of the major reasons for the popularity of these crops. After the harvest of paddy, its straw is usually burnt by fire but the toxic fumes emitted by it are extremely dangerous to the environment and standard of living.

A report clarifies the fact that if a fort's straw weighing 2.5 to 3 tons is set on fire, its decomposition consumes about 32 Kg of urea, 5.5 Kg of DAP and 51 Kg of potash. At the same time our friendly insects are also sacrificed which makes our agriculture less fertile and more susceptible to the attack of diseases or harmful insects. The next worst effect of fire is on the organic health of the soil as burning of straw also burns the organic manure on our soil to ashes. The next symptom that human beings suffer from straw decomposition is harmful toxic gases like carbon monoxide which reduces our body's ability to take in oxygen and thus many human beings suffer from respiratory diseases. This gas also causes eye irritation. In addition, the harmful fumes produced by burning straw can have a detrimental effect on the lungs, skin, blood and respiratory system. Today, if we compare the current health with the older generation, it is clear that the people of today's state have also lost in terms of health. Our Xerxes land area is plagued with a number of unwanted diseases.

The average lifespan, which was once normal at 100 years, is now in jeopardy after 60 years. All of this is the result of manipulation of the environment. According to the results of a survey, the amount of fine particles that we breathe in on a normal day is 60 mg per cubic meter. This straw increases to 425 mg per cubic meter on burning days. The most worrying thing is the difference in the winter season which can be felt normally in the last 2-3 years.

The land of the states is such that it enjoys the seasonal job but the difference in the winter season in recent years, the reduction of winter where there is a big

environmental problem, can also be a threat to the wheat production of the state. Then again, in the smoke, how often do we hear bad news about the loss of life and property in accidents? Therefore, realizing our duty towards the environment, instead of burning straw, we should adopt suitable alternatives. The State Agricultural University is committed to support the farmer. Use of techniques suggested by the university like Cedar is beneficial. With this machine, wheat can be sown directly in the paddy stubble cut by the combine harvester. This saves water and reduces daylight. In addition we can bury the straw in the pit on one side of the field where water is easily available and we can make good compost with the help of cow dung and water spray. Using cedar we can sow wheat without burning straw. We can also reap the benefits of using straw in biogas plants. Considering the economic condition of the farmers of the state, both the farmers and the government can work together to resolve this issue. The bio-gas plants suggested by the Agriculture University can be set up at the village level by the Panchayats with the help of the government and all the village straw should be collected in the village Shamlat and used in this bio-gas plant and the whole village gets fuel from it. Can do In this way our environment will be protected from pollution and at the same time people will get gas. Apart from this the Panchayat can send the progressive farmers in the village for training in mushroom cultivation from Purn Agricultural University and after receiving the training these veterans can cultivate mushrooms in a common place using straw from which the Panchayat can earn profit and working people of the village will also be provided employment opportunities. Machinery like Happy Cider should be provided in the village co-operative societies so that every ordinary farmer can rent and use this machinery.

■ G L KHAJURIA

Born with a silver spoon in his mouth on November 14, 1889 in Allahabad, Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, the 1st Prime Minister of India, was the real architect of democracy. Besides being a prolific writer, scholar, he was a veteran lawyer during British imperialism. Pt Nehru had explained himself as a typical bourgeois and more so communists and had often called him in his early part of life a petty bourgeois-a man of wisdom, deep-rooted thoughts with wider spectrum. In one of the speeches made on December 14, 1953, Pt Nehru said, "One has to find equilibrium among various forces at work, and in finding that equilibrium in a democratic country, one has to take the vast masses of people into confidence. And one has to produce a sensation in them that they are partners in the vast undertaking of running a nation, partners in Government and partners in Industry and this is the real essence of democracy". For him, democracy is not only the expression of sovereign will of people of their votes but comments at the same time, "I would say that democracy is not political way not even economic, but something of mind as everything is something of mind. It should be opportunistic freedom of masses at all spheres, political or that of economic involving certain degree of freedom of people to cultivate the best of capacity and ability which should go parallel to each other."

Pt Nehru was a dynamic democrat, political philosopher, an unparalleled socialist of eminence, a humanist, Karmayogi and above all a big favorite of masses for the right of determination. Lord Bertrand Russel, renowned British Philosopher once said, "It was pandering, Pt Nehru

who made democracy safe in India as elsewhere in other parts of Asia and Africa, and added further, " I don't believe Nehru's greatness in words and deeds which are amply appreciable but if the mankind is allowed to survive, he will be utmost recognized in a manner much more to his status. And his absence in the existing scenario will rather teach us as to how much we owe him." And about people of India, Pt Nehru remarked, "Ours is an ancient land, a newborn freedom achieved by us all greater with responsibilities. If anything goes wrong, we owe to it and we shall be defaulters in unison. And if we do good, it will not behoove to us all, particularly the young men of defence services."

Addressing public at an occasion, Pt Nehru said, "Our forces are operating in Kashmir to detract those who invaded this crown of India. We are peace lovers and want peace, we don't want to invade other countries and enslave them as we got freed India through Gandhian philosophy of non-violence, so we desire freedom for other countries who are oppressed, especially those in Asia. Kashmir is beyond doubts an integral part of India and our forces went there not to conquer but to defend the people who were in peril and under aggression by the invaders.

Our forces are known world-over went to Kashmir with utmost courage and performed their duty speedily. Much has been accomplished and much more difficult lies ahead."

Pt Nehru was cosmopolitan in international relation and his doctrine of Panchsheel is perhaps the greatest contribution defining exigent principles of International level 'Panchsheela which virtually means five principles of peaceful co-existence and Pt Nehru explains it

in the recognition of the right of each country to fashion his own destiny that India and the China Governments agreed upon five principles to govern their relations and this admittedly raised India's status globally. In his words, Pt Nehru explained, "Democracy is discussion, argument, persuasion and ultimate decision and more important undeniable acceptance, of those decisions even if these otherwise go against our gains. And his stressful need of self-discipline was the culmination point as voiced by him that there is no democracy, if there is no discipline." He added further that Democracy doesn't mean persistently shouting but otherwise requires discipline and responsibility within certain defined standards of behavior.

And conclusively, let us go by General Dwight Eisenhower's narration about Pt Nehru which very aptly goes as such "Pt Nehru was the foremost discipline of the great apostle of Indian freedom, indomitable leader of the people along the thorny path of liberation, wise counselor and molder of the policies of reborn nation renowned interpreter of the aspiration of great race, his intellectual leadership has combined the profound knowledge of the West with great heritage and enduring traditions of East, a champion of under-privileged people, and his devotional ideas of universal peace, his devotional ideas have won the respect and acclaim of mankind (Quintessence of Nehru).

The great leader (India's Gem) left for heavenly abode suddenly on ill-fated day of 27th May 1964 at 2.30 PM at his residence in New Delhi at an age of seventy four years leaving behind mourning India.

(The author is former Dy Conservator of Forests, J&K).

YOUR COLUMN Attitude towards life

Dear Editor,

Life is name of liveliness. Sadness and happiness go hand in hand in life. But it is up to the human being to make life better or worse. Many people seek great happiness even in the smallest things and lose many great pleasures in vain. Instead of believing what they have, those who don't have it keep crying. Time and destiny keep cursing. Life is a small word which has a very deep meaning in itself. Life is the name of sorrows and joys, of love and conflict, of friendship and longing, of gain-

ing and losing of joys and sorrows, of rejoicing and celebrating, of hope and despair and for many, life is a dream or reality. Every human being has his own way of life.

Wise people laugh at the bad days of life, while ignorant people cry in spite of everything. Every human being has to face challenges in life. Some human beings gladly accept life's challenges. Some people spend their lives in a state of intoxication.

However, those who do not accept the challenges live a miserable life. Only by overcoming the challenges in life can the destination be achieved. Those people are lucky who learn to live every moment because not everyone knows the way of life. Life can never be a burden for a rich person with the skill of laughing and laugh-

ing. That is why it is said to live in the house of laughter. If you really want to live life, get rid of jealousy, hatred and burning in your mind because these feelings do not allow a person to move forward. The stagnation in life is like stinking standing water that no one wants to go through. Intentions must be strong to make life beautiful.

So, along with beautiful ideas, vitality is also important. At times, we may even become overwhelmed by negative thoughts. Something that hurts us so much so we should not think that what will happen will happen, never be disappointed. Let us be the cause of someone's laughter. So, learn to think positively from small things, then the life will look very beautiful.

Vijay.

