

ALARMING SITUATION

Diwali festivities celebrated with great fanfare in the country Diwali night with huge fireworks, air pollution in many cities of the country reached critical levels. Firecrackers were set ablaze as a result of which pollution spread in the skies all around. The air in many cities of the country, including the capital, became extremely polluted with smoke from firecrackers. Ten days after Diwali, the air is still not clean. The weather has been severely affected in almost all the states of North India, including Delhi. The worst situation is in North India. North India is made up of gas chambers. It is shrouded in fog due to pollution all around. According to official standards, the level of PM2.5 is considered as critical as per the official standards. This is the situation in many cities of the country. Every time there is talk of saving the environment and every time during the festival the situation reaches alarming level. The amount of green firecrackers in the market has changed a lot this time around, but there is still a need to change a lot from the environmental point of view. Noida is number one among the most polluted cities in UP; Varanasi has the cleanest air there, cities like Kanhapur and Lucknow are also not in good condition. More than 600 police personnel were deployed in Chandigarh to enforce the orders of the administration but nowhere did they show any fear. Chandigarh's air quality index reaches 152 points on November 5 Lucknow has been covered with smoke for last 10 days due to pollution. The Air Quality Index is used to measure air quality. It is a unit that determines how clean and breathable the air in a place is. In fact, the 8 pollutants in the Air Quality Index are used to determine the amount of air pollution in the area. If they exceed the limit, the air is considered to be polluted. The amount of sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and carbon monoxide in these elements should not exceed the standards set by the World Health Organization. There are 6 categories in this index based on quality. It includes categories like good, satisfactory, slightly polluted, bad, very bad and serious. If we talk about good ranking then it should be less than 50. After this the level rises and rises above 500 then it is an emergency situation and it increases the risk of respiratory distress and people are advised to stay indoors as much as possible. The air quality index (AQI) reached 999 in the surrounding areas like this is a very dangerous and deadly point. In the northern states, apart from firecrackers, straw fumes also played a major role in creating a deadly situation. In Delhi, on the very next day of Diwali, about 40 per cent pollution was recorded in straw, besides industrial, construction, transport and other industries. Pollution is spreading and increasing due to various reasons. Firecrackers have been adding fuel to the fire. This cycle of pollution will now continue till the last week of January, when neither straw will be burnt nor firecrackers will be fired. It has been felt for many years now that the mourning period starts from October every year. Governments and the Opposition are shouting in different tones. The Kejriwal government is weeping in various ways but the situation does not seem to be improving much. The governments of the northern states had spent crores of rupees to set up Samag towers but they could not stop the pollution. It is natural that its smoke will filter the environment of North India but the question is how long it will last. The government should find a solution to this problem as soon as possible so that the health of millions of people can be protected. It is also a matter of great concern to have politics in this matter. In the matter of environment, all parties have to rise above the line and think about it so that the elderly and children can breathe a sigh of relief from this suffocating air.

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How to bask in the light of the divine-self

The Bhagwad Gita, verse 8:15, states that the world is indeed an evanescent place of hardships. Social distress stems from the individual level with the mind at its source. The Gita further adds that the mind can be your best friend and also your worst enemy. When intelligence gets ousted by the rusty mind, the power of reasoning, logic, and judgment enter into a stay-put mode. The Gita states that by nature, the mind is restless, obstinate, and overbearing. Just as we have a hard time dealing with toddlers, the same is the case when it comes to mind. It keeps vacillating between extremes, is quick to judge, snubs good advice, scoffs at discipline, and is averse to wisdom. When the mind substitutes intelligence as the centre of command, it becomes a lot easier for one to succumb to every temptation hands down.

Ravan's Mind

Ravan, the formidable demon in the Ramayan, also happened to be a yogi. The definition of a yogi is one who is greater than an ascetic, greater than the wise, and greater than a materialist. But Ravan was licentious. Though he had tremendous resourcefulness, reflecting in his conquest over the upper and lower planetary systems, yet he would succumb to the lower propensities of the mind, like lust, anger, and greed. What a travesty! The prowess of Ravan was eclipsed by his submission to the mind. As a result, he acted out subversively, deceitfully, and insidiously. Though powerful, yet he tripped over temptations at the drop of a hat, alluding to his weakness of

Pursue social work for welfare of humanity

■ VIJAY GARG

The social work profession promotes social change, problem-solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Social work is primarily developmental work, wherein a group of people or a community works for some common cause that is related to welfare of a person, state, country or community. Social work is a combination of art and science to bring in some effective changes in society for the welfare of humanity. Social workers basically enable or help people to fight for their rights. Social work is basically a professional as well as an academic discipline that works selflessly to improve the quality of life and wellbeing of an individual, group, or community. The main emphasis of social workers is generally focused on areas such as human development, social policy, public administration, psychotherapy, programme evaluation, international and community development. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at point where people interact with their environments. Social service is not restricted to a particular place, country or community. Social workers are organised into local, national, continental and international professional bodies and they all work in accordingly in their respective fields and areas for a good cause. The main fundamentals of social service include in principles of human rights and social justice. Professional social workers work for the development related to these fields of human rights and social justice and their main tasks involve in case management (linking clients with agencies and programs that will meet their psychosocial needs), medical social work, counseling (psychotherapy), human services management, social welfare policy analysis, community organizing, advocacy, teaching (in schools of social work), and social science research.

History of Social Work: Historically, social work was carried out by people who volunteered their service for the service of mankind. The concept of charity goes back to ancient times, and the practice of providing for the poor has roots in many major ancient civilizations and world religions. Today with the rapid modernization and advancement, social problems have become more complex and social work needs in some professional people with skills and desire to bring about a change. Whereas social work started on a more scientific footing aimed at controlling and reforming individuals, it has in more recent times adopted a more critical and holistic approach to understanding and intervening in social problems. Social work has its roots in the social and economic upheaval brought by the Industrial Revolution way back years ago, which particularly started with the struggle of society to deal with poverty and its resultant problems. Since the only focus of social work at that time was aimed at dealing with poverty, it was intricately linked with the idea of charity work during earlier those times. But today, it is well classified in much broader terms. Today there is a clear classification between social work and charity work.

Whereas charity is only aimed at providing some basic facilities to the poor or needy people, the social work is aimed at bringing a change in the society, a change for human betterment. Modern social workers can be found helping to deal with the consequences of these and many other social maladies in all areas of the human services professions and in many other fields besides.

Career Options in Social Work: Social work as already told is not restricted to a particular state or a community; social workers have a number of professional associations, which provide ethical guidance and other forms of support for their members and for social work in general. These social workers work as a group for solving problems of the people who fail to seek any help from the government means. These associations can be international, continental or semi-continental, national, and regional. The main international associations are the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW). These organizations work in different areas like medical help in the times of war or epidemic, children welfare, labour welfare or some other important issues related to common man. Social service can be termed as service working for the developmental process of a particular area where the government authorities failed to perform. The main areas where social workers are involved include,

Community Development: Social workers with specialization work in administrative as well as management fields volunteer in to bring about a community development, human development, and resource development. These mainly concentrate on the community development both the rural as well as the urban community. Professional social workers work in a variety of settings, including non-profit or public social service agencies, grassroots advocacy organizations, hospitals, hospices, community health agencies, schools, faith-based organizations, and even the military. These work for promoting awareness of the rights of the citizens and also the various government projects aimed at benefitting the general class. Professionals from any field passionate about improving the lives of others can enter into this sector and work for their community and country as well.

Healthcare & Medicine: Social workers also help in the clinical setting and also run in several charitable hospitals and clinics aimed at providing free or affordable treatment for everyone. Social workers also contribute to the preventive and promoting rallies to promote various aspects of health care and also to bring about awareness about some common and life-threatening diseases like AIDS, malaria, and TB etc. providing for special schools where handicapped and children with disabilities enroll in is yet another function of these social work organizations. Educating drug addicts, organizing anti-smoking campaigns and rallies against the health effecting programs includes in some sincere effort form these people.

Family & Child Welfare: Specialist form medical fields provide some useful service for

child and family welfare. There are many diseases related to children that can be life-threatening. These medical representatives organize free camps for the check-up and spreading awareness among deprived masses that do not get enough facilities. Major organization working for child welfare is UNICEF (United Nation International Children Emergency Funds) that works in area of child development and is constantly working in countries all around the globe for eradicating many diseases like polio, chicken pox, and smallpox etc. these have been constantly campaigning to aware the masses against malnutrition in children that may retard growth of children or may even lead to some serious health complications.

Service at time of war & crises: Disasters can be natural or man-made. Natural disasters may include some calamities like floods, earthquake, draught etc. On the other hand war, bombardments and industrial accidents or fire may be termed as man-made. In the case of these tragedies, various social organizations are always there to help in search and rescue operation. Besides helping in rescue operations these also help in providing food and Medicare facilities at the site of action. Social workers help voluntarily to set up relief camps and organize community kitchens in the case some calamities and help in recreation also.

Work of a Professional Social Worker: The social service sector is all about special individuals who believe in themselves to truly make a difference in society and bring about some social and cultural reforms for the betterment. A social worker must possess passion, leadership and the ability to think out-of-the-box to face challenges and come with bold and innovative ideas to fight back challenges. Apart from these a social worker has to be ready to work in the time of crisis and calamities without fearing for their own life. Above all, these qualities must be balanced by compassion, empathy and a willingness to make a positive change to the community. If someone wants a profession that is truly rewarding and meaningful, with a feeling of doing something really important and respectful, then social sector have ample career opportunities. A career in social services can give you an important role in another person's life. One has a direct interaction with people and their grievances. Social service workers empower people who use social services, assisting them to make informed choices which will improve their lives. They make difficult decisions and at times enforce the law. Also sometimes there is a need for some protest or demonstration. A social worker should always be ready to fight for the right cause. An important task of a social worker is to prevent problems from getting worse and find an outright solution at the right time without much delay or hassle. The task of a social worker is manifold and they generally help out people in need with their professional approach towards problem-solving. They deal with problems related to a social sphere that includes families, children, the crime against woman and child, those with mental disability and other people seeking help. Work includes a mixture of counseling, discussion, problem-solving and some strict steps if need-

ed. There are many different jobs within social services that require a range of professional and personal skills. One can choose to work in social care, early education, and child care or as a social worker. Individuals can work with a variety of people in the private, local authority or voluntary sector. This includes children and families, older adults, people with mental health problems, youth services, criminal justice services etc.

Qualifications for Professional Social Work: Some people with no formal training have engaged in the field of social help, however, these days complexities of the problem are rising along with various legal hassles and policies. These days it has become important for social workers to have some normal levels of literacy and education to give him enough knowledge and confidence to understand the problem well and act accordingly keeping in mind various constitutional ways of dealing with the problem. The education of social workers begins with a Bachelor's degree (BA, BSc, BSSW, BSW, etc.) or a diploma in Social Work. There are various requirements that a candidate needs to fill in before entering into social sector these days. These requirements may vary from region to region and type of social sector one choose to enter in. Some countries offer Postgraduate degrees in Social Work, like master's (such as MSW, MSS, MA, MSc, MRes, MPhil etc.) or doctoral studies (such as PhD and DSW (Doctor of Social Work)). More and more graduates of social work continue to post-doctoral studies. Some argue that social work education is a lifelong process and one continues to learn as he works in the related field. A number of countries and jurisdictions require registration or licensure of people working as social workers, and there are mandated qualifications that the workers need to fulfill before entering into the field of social work. In some places, a professional association sets academic requirements for admission to membership. The success of these professional bodies' efforts is demonstrated in that these same requirements are recognized by employers as necessary for employment. Without a particular education level, it becomes really hard for a person to distinguish between the right and wrong and may sometimes take into account some un-constitutional means to get the work done. Hence it is important to possess certain educational levels. Also, it is important for those entering into medical work or medical help to have prior experience of working in camps and at the time of some emergency.

Rewards of Entering Social Sector: Though the rewards that one receives serving the mankind are far more than big pay-checks, still a feeling of doing something for community and mankind overpowers all the other joys of the world. The respect that one gets is priceless. No one can buy the tremendous amount of happiness and satisfaction that one achieves working for the community. Job satisfaction comes from helping people in distress and working for a cause towards human betterment. The profession of social work was not very paying, but these days one can get some good remunerations and recognition for some honest and quality work in the field of social development.

Celebrating Cooperative Week

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

As usual the nation as well as the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir is celebrating 68th cooperative week. It is celebrated from 14th of November 2021 to 20th November 2021 every year throughout the country and Jammu and Kashmir is no exception. In fact this has become largest cooperative movement in the world. It is joined by about six lakh cooperative societies. As this celebration has a huge network, it plays an important role for India's economic and social development. India recognizes the fact that there are still weak sections in the Indian economy. Therefore to address this issue the national cooperative week is celebrated every year. It is the time to strengthen the cooperative movement and focus on the various activities of the cooperatives. It is proper to know that this movement was started to encourage people to take active part in cooperatives so that their money will not remain idle but is used for the productive activities. Thus the awareness about the cooperation is to be inculcated in the people especially the youth of the society. Cooperative movement will help in the development of the weak sections of the society. The cooperative week is celebrated by organizing various programmes like debates, conferences, seminars, webinars, discussions and other such activities which promote the sense of cooperative movement by inculcating the importance of the cooperative societies. In our union territory of Jammu and Kashmir the week commenced with the address of the LG Manoj Sinha who threw light on the activities and the economic and social role of the and impressed upon the officers to

work for strengthen the cooperative movement in the union territory. It is time to throw light and extend partnership between the international cooperative movement and the non-governmental organizations and the government. Through the celebration of the cooperative week the cooperative societies threw light on the achievements, performance and also to plan the future activities of the cooperatives. The week long seminars, debates, symposiums, conferences, discussions make people aware about the need and importance of the cooperatives for the social and economic development. The main objective of the celebration of the cooperative week is that it promotes cooperatives. The cooperatives contribute to the good of the economy because the people are encouraged to borrow money that they can use for productive activities. This leads to increase in the standard of living of the people. Cooperative week is the opportune time for people to join the cooperatives. The week long celebrations also lead to the Prosperity of the Indian economy. Improving the economic status of the people through lending and borrowing will definitely lead to better economy in general in the country. The celebration of the cooperative week also helps us to know more about cooperatives and share your knowledge with other members of the society. The celebration of the cooperative week also helps the people to choose a cooperative for you and then you join a cooperative of your choice. Every year there is a different theme for the cooperative week and this year's theme for the celebration of the national week of the cooperatives is prosperity through cooperation and we should work towards this end so that prosper-

ity is achieved in the spheres of the social and economic life of the people. We are living in a competitive economy and there are challenges, competitiveness and as such cooperatives should work to achieve the social and economic goals by rejuvenating the cooperatives so that they achieve the required efficiency. The cooperative week is celebrated not at the level of the union territory but the celebrations are performed at the district and tehsil level also to inculcate the fashion of the cooperatives among the people in the cities and rural areas. Thus for the upliftment of people in the cities and villages the spirit and the organization of the cooperatives should be laid for the social and economic development of the people. The prime minister in the mid of the COVID epidemic has given the slogan of the Atmanirbhar Bharat and the cooperative organizations have become the wheels of the progress and economic development and have also become the engines of the societal and economic growth of the country. Hence in the sphere of the self reliance the cooperative societies played a significant role and helped the people to perseuse policies which lead to self reliance and self sustaining and also to increase the efficiency of the cooperative movement. When the country was threatened by the coronavirus and was fighting the war against the disease the cooperatives provided the monetary help and also gave the help in kind also to the people and thus did a yeoman's work to help the suffering humanity and such is the need for the cooperation and cooperatives. The cooperatives also performed social work and distributed food, masks as well as sanitizers to the needy people during the COVID pandemic and thus

came to the rescue of the needy people. Thus the cooperatives in the country perform the social and economic functions and also help the society to encourage the thrift and savings so that such savings could be invested into the gainful and productive activities. It follows that during the crisis of COVID-19 the cooperatives played an important and enviable role by helping the needy people by providing them the help in cash and kind so that the people will not suffer any more due to hardship during the COVID. The self help groups and the cooperatives help the people in the sphere of the economy and also in the field of social awareness so that the cooperatives become important wheels of the societal and economic development. It should be recognized that the cooperatives play an important role not only in the economic life but also advance the social life of the people. The cooperative societies are especially working in the rural areas and they have become the engines of the social and economic development of the people. The cooperatives should lead to the sustainable development and sustainable consumption and this is in conformity with this year's theme of the cooperative week which is prosperity through cooperation. In brief we should resolve to further the aim of the prosperity through cooperation via cooperation movement. Let the cooperative movement be a successful movement and lead to the economic and social development of the people especially in rural India as the real India lives in villages. Long live cooperative movement.

(The writer is a retired education officer and columnist).

YOUR COLUMN

Vir Das's monologue: Reply of wife of an Air Force officer

Dear Editor,

Through the medium of your esteemed daily, I would like to give a reply to Vir Das, for his recent monologue. I belong to an India where despite the back breaking work they have been doing all morning, at lunch time two laborers will buy food from the nearest roadside vendor and will proceed to eat it with relish and joy sharing the choicest bits with each other, laughing all the time. A meal consisting coarse rice, thick roti, a couple of limp pieces of radish, all swimming in an unrecognisable curry of some kind. I belong to an India, where I have had conversations with auto rickshaw drivers about the states of country

and who are more informed about politics than many learned people I know. I belong to an India, where domestic help welcomes me like a personal guest and with a smile asks me, Auntie Ji Chai Layun even before my host does so. I belong to an India, where there are special seats for ladies in public transport and where men give up their own seat when they see a woman standing. I belong to an India, where every doctor's office has a female attendant to help women patients feel safe and comfortable and to hold their hand during painful exams/procedures. I belong to an India, where senior citizens are treated with respect and dignity and have a special place in the family, and no important decision is taken without their advice. I belong to an India, where family to the rescue is the motto, regardless of any differences and disputes that may have taken place. Go Fund Me pages do not have to be created to pay for funerals. I belong to an India, where war veterans do not sit with placards asking for donations. Every single soldier if not compensated by

Government has a village to return to, which he calls home. I belong to an India, where every visitor is greeted with folded-hands and Jee Aayan Nu, where all are welcome to one's home at all times, where people go to each others' houses on Diwali, Eid and Christmas regardless of their own religion. But I'm sorry to say that I also belong to an India whose journalists, authors and intellectuals are systematically perpetuating the worst possible stereotypes about their country on an international level, and in the process creating confusion in minds of Westerners, who are only just beginning to realize and appreciate the diverse and rich cultural traditions and heritage of the great nation.

I will not say Bharat Mata Ki Jai because I do not want to start a controversy but like a true Fauji wife, I will say Jai Hind. Be happy everyone and God bless.

Vandana Walia,
W/o Air Vice Marshal A J S Walia,
New Jersey.