

DON'T LOWER GUARD

As the people have started relying more on what is spread on social media day and night, at times situations arise which are really dangerous for the people at large. The latest problem which the health experts are grappling with is the plethora of myths regarding the Omicron virus which are becoming viral to an extent that people have started shunning the COVID appropriate behaviour which is not at all advisable. The myth which has become viral on social media and even some so called health experts have also started endorsing the same is that the Omicron being less severe is the signal for end of the pandemic. This in fact is negated outrightly by the World Health Organisation by countering the claim as the world health body has warned that dangerous mutants can emerge any time as Omicron is highly virulent and is spreading like the wildfire across the globe. It is important to recognize that there is still long way to go to see the end of the pandemic despite the fact that currently for COVID cases need of hospitalizations is not much. What is alarming is the fact that country as well as UT of J&K is dealing with a huge surge in COVID-19 cases and even though Omicron is quickly gaining ground in the region, the majority of current COVID-19 cases is still being caused by the Delta variant, which is known to cause severe disease and death. Observing the trends in countries where Omicron is becoming or has become the dominant variant, it has been seen that COVID-19 cases are doubling every 1.5 to 3 days and the need for hospitalizations is also rapidly rising as a result thus making it clear that one cannot afford to drop guard against the disease especially when deaths are consistent both in Kashmir and Jammu regions. All said and done, the need of the time is that regardless of where one lives and irrespective of age or health condition, one still needs to get vaccinated on his or her turn, with a complete course and booster dose if offered, and continue to take all other preventive measures to protect oneself and others.

GOOD NEWS

The adage 'no news is good news' has been negated by the Government of Jammu & Kashmir headed by LG Manoj Sinha because on the National Girl Child Day, he has come up with a real good news which cannot be termed otherwise under any circumstances as 15 per cent reservation has been provided to women in non-gazetted posts in J&K Police. For sure, no entity in the UT of J&K or elsewhere can deny the fact that this is good news in every sense. This is not enough, because the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha while making the announcement on Twitter has said the decision was just the beginning as the government was determined and committed to increase the percentage further in the future. This decision will surely go a long way in bringing prosperity across the Union Territory because empowering women is the key to ensure the good fortune of families and this step is revolutionary in that aspect. Besides promising prosperity to people, the step of 15 per cent reservation for women in J&K Police will give due representation to women in the police force and will ensure the availability of sufficient women personnel to engage exclusively in the matter of gender-based crimes. There is no doubt that this move will lay the foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable society as it is a well established fact that empowering women means empowering the whole society as was the case of educating women. As an educated woman in turn educates the whole family, in the very same context the empowered woman has the capability to empower the entire family and in turn the whole society. It is therefore the solemn duty of people sitting at helm to secure equal rights for women and empower them with opportunities. The people should also come forward and create a conducive atmosphere in the society to promote awareness about the rights of the girl child and provide support and opportunities to girls. The society as a whole has a social and moral responsibility to increase awareness on the importance of girls' education, and their health and nutrition because people steering the governments in the country since independence never get tired of ensuring rights to women but on ground things have not changed. It is good that the LG has taken such a pragmatic step for empowering the women and therefore it is a bounded responsibility of other stakeholders as well to emulate him in providing what is due to womenfolk in the country.



**Truth the
biggest
immunity booster**

Spiritually speaking, if we have a similar experience over and over again, it often means that we have not learnt the required lesson from it the very first time. Every incident takes place to impart some teaching, or to cut our previous karmas. With the Covid-19 pandemic waves coming back again and again, Nature seems to be asking us to transform, go back to being our natural self, and embrace truth in our actions, thoughts and deeds. Now is the time to prepare to be a sahi human – real human; being saral, sahaj, and samanya – uncomplicated, easy and normal, the way Nature wants us to be. And by shedding all our acquired mannerisms, we can grow to become a Being of Light.

Let us be centred, cleansed and come into our natural swaroop, form, so that Nature can work upon us. Nature appears to be determined to remove all imperfections that have seeped into our system. It can protect and save all who are supportive of it and become its medium, behaving according to its design. They will automatically get right messages, right help, right medicines, everything at the right time.

To be in sync with Nature, we can follow the path of satya, karma, prem, and prakash – truth, action, love and light. Satya means being one on

Meena Om

Science is a beautiful gift to humanity; we should not distort it.

-A P J Abdul Kalam

EDITORIAL

Glorification of terrorists-unacceptable

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

India is the largest democracy of the world but democratic functioning and liberal working of country should not be taken as a weakness of the democratic system. Democracy is a store house of power only if democratic institutions are working in accordance with the highest ideals of the democracy, but unfortunately our democracy is taken as a sign of weakness by enemies of the country and anti social elements. India is suffering from the scourge of terrorism and terrorism from the last over three decades and the country is fighting the menace of terrorism with determination and grit. However, it is very disturbing and unfortunate that some political parties are becoming a stumbling block in Government's fight against terrorism. It is alleged by people and BJP that Congress is busy in glorification of the terrorists in order to appease the minorities of country. Congress party has soft approach for terrorists and terrorism and in the process its leaders are glorifying the terrorists for the sake of gaining Muslim votes, but fact is that the Congress is the grand old party of the country and its leaders have played dominant and significant role in the country's freedom struggle. More than any other party, it is the Indian National Congress whose hundreds of leaders sacrificed their precious lives for freedom of the country from the British yoke and therefore it is the party which has fought the freedom struggle more than anyone else. Congress of today is different from the Congress of the yore and plays in the hands of the enemies of nation and even not feels shy to glorify terrorists, who are the enemies of the country. No one should be allowed to glorify terrorists and terrorism. It is not hidden from anyone that Congress party and its leaders have in past came to rescue and support of the students of JNU who were playing in hands of enemy country and were raising objectionable and anti-Indian slogans. Such anti-national activities of JNU students should be condemned by one and all but Congress party is silent on anti-national behavior and activities of misguided students. One fails to understand as to why Congress party and its leaders are silent on anti-Indian activities and anti-Indian slogans. It seems that the Congress has a soft corner for those JNU students who are indulged in anti-Indian activities. Congress party should introspect its role so far as its soft attitude towards the students of JNU who indulge in anti-national

activities. Thus, congress needs to mend its ways and not play in hands of anti-nationals. Congress is today a sinking ship because of playing in the hands of the anti-nationals. Congress does not feel shy of denouncing everything which glorifies Indian-ness. Hindutva and cultural nationalism is the eyesores for Congress and it does not leave any opportunity to blindly criticize and oppose those political parties who stand for the nation and who have love for the nationalism, patriotism and motherland. The other day Toukeer Ahmad, associated with Congress, unfortunately glorified terrorists who were killed by our gallant security forces some years back in Batla house encounter. He has equated slain terrorists with freedom fighters and has termed them as martyrs. This is very unbecoming and sad that Congress high-command is silent on the anti-national statement of Toukeer Ahmad. It reflects that Congress is soft on terrorists and anti-nationals and has got sympathy for terrorists, which is disturbing and unfortunate development. Congress party will have to pay heavily for its sympathy with the anti nationals and for its glorification of the terrorists. The congress has not dissociated itself from the anti national statement of its associate Toukeer Ahmad and therefore Congress cannot wash its hands off from his statements. Thus it seems that the Congress passively endorses anti-Indian statement of Toukeer Ahmad as it fails from dissociating itself from his views. Congress should also condemn the terrorists killed in Batla House encounter and not question encounter itself. This is a fact that Batla House encounter is genuine and no suspension and doubt should wrongly raised over the encounter in which the terrorists were neutralized but Congress questions the genuineness of the encounter which is very sad and shameful. It said that Batla House encounter was fake and false which however is wrong. Congress should desist from showing sympathy to terrorists and anti nationals. Congress party is busy in appeasing Muslims for vote bank politics and by doing so it only earns displeasure of majority community. The appeasement of the minorities will not bail out Congress in the elections in the five states in 2022 and in general elections, scheduled to be held in 2024. It is written on wall that the sympathy for the anti-nationals and hatred for the majority community will not translate into votes in elections. The congress party has been exposed for its soft attitude towards the terrorists and for its

sympathy towards anti nationals. The congress party should come clean on its behavior and not allow itself to be seen as friendly to terrorists and should not earn displeasure of majority community. The image of the congress has got a downward shift and today it is perceived as being friendly to the anti national elements. If congress wants come back in the elections it has to work hard and wash off its terrorist-friendly and anti-Hindu image so that it becomes acceptable to Hindu majority. The congress anti-Hindu image and its sympathy towards terrorists will be heavily paid in elections. The grand old party of congress should make self analysis and introspection and find out the reasons for its debacle in the elections in the past and should accordingly make amends so that it becomes a mass based political party which it was after independence of the country. For this the congress party should have to overcome its anti Hindu image and its soft attitude for the terrorists. Therefore if the congress sincerely wants to stage a comeback it should be friendly to all the communities including the Hindu majority so that the party will in future be able to muster the support of the majority of the people in order to bounce to power. But the chances for congress coming to power are very bleak as at present it is a sinking boat and in the present conditions, it cannot stage a comeback. On it, Congress is glorifying terrorists only to gain the support and vote of few Muslims but minorities of the country are wise enough to be deceived by the machinations of Congress party. The congress party should stop the appeasement of the Muslims and hate and hatred for the Hindu community and should not glorify the terrorists. Thus, the party should stop glorifying the terrorists and denouncing the majority community if it wants to have some place and relevance in the electoral democracy of the country. The people who are supreme in a democracy have seen the behavior and attitude of the congress party and thus they have voted against the congress in past elections of 2014 and 2017 and there is every likelihood that the congress will be shown the door in 2022 assembly elections and 2024 general elections. In brief, Congress should desist from showing sympathy with terrorists and should stop glorifying terrorists for good of the country and for good of the party itself and should remember that glorification of terrorists is simply unacceptable.

(The author is retired Education Officer and Columnist).

Adopting agriculture as a career

■ VIJAY GARC

There is this joy that accompanies self-sufficiency, creating a kind of system that supports your financial growth and also works in an environment-friendly field. That, and more, is what agriculture can afford you. One of the most satisfying careers in agriculture - you are not just working for job satisfaction, you are providing food for others as well. The world economy cannot stand without the impact of agriculture. Agriculture is the biggest contribution to any country's economy. The economy of a country cannot stand without producing enough food to export to other countries. For instance, Thailand is the largest supplier of rice in the world. India, Australia, and so on are also countries whose sustenance and survival are agro-based. Australian farmers provide about 93 per cent of Australian food. This means that they only buy just 7 per cent of food from foreign countries. What a country worth emulating! Since the world came into existence, agriculture has been the only means of producing food for man and animal consumption. The history of civilization cannot be told without agriculture. With development and civilization taking giant leaps, one does not need to be told that the agricultural sector needs to follow the trend. Sadly enough, a few people are just thinking about that sector. Even at that, the focus is shifting back to agriculture. The following are very relevant know-how in starting a career in agriculture.

Learn crop choice: It is not just enough to have a piece of land and crops to plant, if you do not know or understand the right crop to focus on, you may be heading down the hill of frustration. Knowing the right crop to plant will also limit the harm to the soil. Furthermore, you need to understand that there are different types of farming. To help you in your career choice, it is paramount to understand what you are going into. There are three major points to focus in agriculture:

Dairy farming: It includes livestock farming and animal husbandry.

Pastoral farming: It is regarding planting of sole crops of different kinds.

Mixed farming: This involves rearing of animals and planting of crops.

Armed with this mentality, you can decide on which type of farming to go into. You could practise mixed farming as a starter and when you gain the experience, you could choose what best suits your business ideology. Understand what it takes to be involved in agriculture. One needs to acquire theoretical knowledge of agriculture and its application. It is a pre-requisite to every other factor involved in choosing agriculture as a career. Agriculture involves much manual labor and you have to go dirty. Planting of crops, rearing of animals, taking care of your machinery, harvesting of your agricultural products, all involve physical labor. Your health is also on go; do not hesitate to take care of it. What about your animals and crops? You need the ability to withstand all kinds of weather because there are times the farm produce may not yield a bountiful harvest. Agriculture is an outdoor activity: the sun, the rain, the wind, and all weather conditions must be put into consideration while getting down working farmer's way.

One of the most excellent ways to speed-up your learning capability and understand everything about agriculture is to just pick up a course and learn all the way. It might look awkward standing on a farm with your laptop instead of a piece of paper;

taking some inventories. But that is part of the real deal. There is plenty to learn about farming and adding a laptop and learning online could make it easier for you. Just ensure you get to upgrade your knowledge. Learn both the technical and business side of agriculture. This is a better way to understand that agriculture is not a suffering and smiling venture. A certificate in agriculture will earn you a lot of things, especially as someone who is yet to find his feet in the industry. You will understand everything about job, learn about safety measures as well as broad skills to excel as a farmer. You will also learn how to repair agricultural equipment, how to observe the weather and take advantage of favorable weather conditions, identify livestock and crop diseases, take proper inventory, operate the irrigation systems and more.

Nothing beats a real-life experience! With experience come a lot of benefits. You will understand the administrative and business side of agriculture, how to handle clients, monitoring budgets, take financial records, comply with numerous regulations guiding agriculture, in addition to what you are already dealing with. Do you want to be set apart? You need a positive attitude and the ability to accept change. As an experienced farmer, you will need to wear many hats due to various roles and obligations that come with the job. You are always on call, monitoring your farm as well as your home. You will have to deal with any problem as it arises. An experienced farmer could be self-employed, remember? Therefore, the task is going to be an interesting one. Get your loins girded as you cruise the ride.

Why to start a career in Agriculture: There is always a reason for every action. Choosing a career in agriculture is one of the best decisions one could take. There are more than enough reasons one should consider making agriculture a career choice. Some of them are listed below:

Future Development: Think of poverty reduction and availability of food, think of agriculture. The world is counting on agriculturists to make foods available and improve the livelihood of the people, especially the less privileged.

Fastest-growing: Over the years, so many young people are pursuing a degree in agriculture. This has translated into high employment rates, thereby reducing the problem of food scarcity.

Endless possibilities: Before, people who venture into agriculture were seen as mere farmers. But it is not so now. There are possibilities of working in any sector, including food processing companies, logistics, manufacturing, trading, product management, and so on.

Significant employment rate: The majority of agricultural fresh graduates do not find it difficult in securing a job. The agricultural sector enables its employees to rise faster as long as they have basic qualifications in agriculture.

Salary prospects: As an agricultural graduate, you are certain to be placed on a good salary scale. The salary of workers in the agricultural sector is said to be above the national average. You might be lucky to earn as high as 50,000 pounds in a year. As with every other career, there are required skill-set by everyone venturing into agriculture. Some of them are listed below.

Physical Fitness: You will need physical fitness skills in agriculture. The career involves a lot of manual and physical labor and so, being in good shape is not an option, it is a must.

Teamwork: Teamwork is another skill you need to inculcate. You are not going to work alone; you need people to excel.

In choosing a particular programme, three factors seem to be most significant- alignment with their interests, their perceived strength in a particular relevant area of study/ academics, and future job prospects in the career domain. Students spend a majority of their time envisioning a good career with the aim of a good quality life. Universities serve as the bridge between school education and realisation of career aspirations, playing an enormous role in carving out the future. As per the survey results, the top three factors in choosing a university include the institution's placement record, rankings, and the programme design. What stands out is that decision-making at each level by students is mostly outcome driven as they all wish to see themselves as successful individuals and want to pick options that would nudge them in that direction. Programme design is an interesting addition as students do want to pursue programs that are in keeping with today's times and are flexible in curriculum, allowing for various combinations to match their interests and strengths. Other important factors in selection of a university are fees, location, and the quality of faculty.

Getting the location right can be just as important as the other factors. Choosing the right setting can make all the difference to the student experience -- ease of settling in, making connections and memories, and the career outcomes. All of this is a function of the surrounding environment, personal and professional opportunities, local culture, language and much more. The most important factor in location choice is

therefore, your relationship with others matters a lot. You must be willing to form a synergy with other agriculturists or co-workers in order to fly in your career. Delegation of tasks according to each one's ability is very essential. Your team members also need loads of motivation from you. People management and interpersonal skills must be put into play under teamwork. If you lack them, ensure you build them up.

Communication skills: Communication skills are also necessary because, without effective communication, you may not be able to pass quality information or instruction to your staff. You must also use your knowledge and skills to teach and guide your team members.

You will need so many practical skills: Skills like the knowledge of mechanics (this will help you to operate and repair the equipment when necessary), computer literacy (for administrative tasks), business management skills, and so on. If you are short of these skills, ensure you acquire them and the time to do so is now. The skills may not always be acquired on the farm. There are other areas of practicality where you can gain skills. For example, those that studied animal science could use their skills to work as livestock farmers. Those with business management certificates may not find it difficult overseeing the business aspect of the career. Taking some courses to acquire these skills is not also a bad idea.

Becoming an Agriculturist: To become an agriculturist, you will need a bachelor's degree in agriculture or any agriculture-related course. Afterward, you can proceed to study in any area of specialization. This area of specialization could be obtained through experience or a master's degree. A degree in agriculture affords you the basic knowledge and skills needed to work as an agriculturist. Some courses in agriculture include Forestry, Agricultural Chemistry, Agricultural Extension, Plant Breeding, Agriculture Genetics, Weed Science, Soil Science etc.

There are ranges of careers you can choose from in agriculture. Some of them are outlined below:

Farm Worker: Working on farms may seem very much easy, but there is more to what the eyes can see. You need to cope and adapt to physical work. The work could range from the operation of machinery used for cultivating the field, drilling of crops, application of chemicals, and also harvesting of agricultural products. You may also be required to feed the animals, take care of the sick ones or babies, as well as milking dairy cows and goats.

Farm Manager: A farm manager needs to have strong management, practical, and business skills. This is so because your skills would come in handy whenever you need to organize and manage all the agricultural activities, including the personnel. Financial planning, budgeting, strategic planning, are also required.

Agronomist: An agronomist ensures the proper growth of the crops. They see to it that weeds and pests do not destroy the crops. They could also be called 'crop doctors'. They are required to walk through the fields every day to make sure that early symptoms of potential problems are handled.

Nutritionists: These persons are in charge of what to feed the animals with. They ensure that farmers comply with the daily nutritional requirements for the animals. While doing so, profits should be the ultimate goal. There are other careers like agricultural sales, farm consultants, and so on, all with their varieties of duties to perform.

safety, closely followed by job opportunities in the area where the higher education institution is located. Quite interestingly, the third most important factor is the concentration of high-ranked universities in that location - students seem to prefer locations where multiple high-ranked institutes are situated, as that potentially impacts culture of the city too. The survey results indicate that reasons for choosing to study at an international destination beyond the home country are: higher quality of education, perception of studying abroad as providing a path to eventually settling outside their home country and prestige attached to an international qualification. Further, in choosing a particular country, students focus on three factors- high-quality teaching, affordability, and the opportunity to stay back in that country. Presence of multiple high-ranked universities is a factor that is common to both students wishing to study in and outside of the home country. Parents act as a major influence in their children's career development and career decision-making. Interestingly, the study reveals that reliance on parents in the decision-making process reduces as students move from classes IX, X to XI and XII. What stands out clearly is the increased need felt by students for career counseling at the right stage. As students gear up for future challenges, parents, teachers and counselors need to be cognizant of their role as facilitators and enable them to make independent yet well-informed career choices.

Vijay

YOUR COLUMN

Taking decision to choose a career

Dear Editor,

The choice of higher education and subsequent building of a career pathway on completion of school education has a profound impact on how the future shapes up for a student. With thousands of career options available, the task of picking one among many skill sets may seem insurmountable. This is mainly due to a wider array of choices than ever before, the competitive nature of higher education admission processes, multiple pathways to careers, and the dynamically changing world of work. The Institute Student Quest Survey has tried to develop an understanding of this dynamic decision-making process that students undertake, in choosing a career, country, college, and course. As students in class XII begin to think 'What after school?', 'What do I want to become or do?', they should first anchor or identify themselves with a career and then plan backwards for a suitable course, college and finally place.

Prem, love, is about loving all – living and non-living things alike, and prakash stands for cutting ignorance, illuminating oneself and others too.

Meena Om