

Truth-greatest power of man

Truth is the greatest power of man. Truth may be troubled, but it cannot be defeated. Truth has importance only when it is accepted and used in life through thought, speech and action.

Pariksha Pe Charcha 2024: Holistic development of personality, Mental Health and Well-being in School Education

Prachi Pandey & Tara Naorem

In general, theoretically, we focus on stress-coping models while practically, we give advice on various stress-coping strategies. However, an important question, i.e. the question of how to help students develop the capabilities to deal with academic stress and develop constructive coping strategies remains unanswered.



Another equally important issue is how to create an environment wherein there are adequate triggers for motivation while stress does not assume debilitating proportions and starts to adversely impact performance.

Creating a stress-free school environment that prioritizes mental health and well-being involves adopting a holistic, enjoyable and engaging curriculum and pedagogy in schools. This would involve designing a curriculum that is balanced and age appropriate. The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (2023) also recommends time allocation in school schedules and specifies specific learning requirements to be completed, placing a renewed emphasis on art, physical education, and wellbeing.

NEP 2020 propagates providing students with plenty of opportunities for participation in sports, arts clubs, eco-clubs, community service projects, etc. Additionally, NEP 2020 emphasizes that each student will participate in an enjoyable course, chosen by the state and local community and based on local skilling needs, that provides an overview and practical experience of significant vocational crafts, such as carpentry, electric work, metal work, gardening, and pottery making, among others, during Grades 6-8.

On November 24, 2020, a Policy on School Bag document was developed with an emphasis on lowering the weight of school bags which is being implemented by states and UTs. Further, a number of educational institutions have implemented "No Bags Day," an initiative that encourages students to leave their bags at home on certain days.

Creating a positive learning environment requires enforcing capacity building of teachers on stress management. On a similar note, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) developed a complete package named "Training and Resource Material: Health and Wellness of School-going Children" as part of the School Health Programme under Aarogya Bharat. It includes a dedicated module on "Emotional Well-Being and Mental Health" which delineates activities pertaining to teachers' and students' mental health and wellbeing.

One of the Exam Warrior mantra is that 'Exams test your current preparation, Not You'. Thus, transforming assessment for student development through a multidimensional report that reflects the uniqueness of each learner; peer support and mentoring, is a vital step towards making assessment and evaluation positive and a healthy tool for improvement.

In India, as in any other part of the world, incorporating subjects related to mental health and well-being, into the fabric of the school eco-system is crucial for various reasons. First of all, focusing on mental health in school education can contribute to bridging the rural and urban disparities and ensuring the all students have access to support. A Mental Health Survey for school students was carried out by the Ministry of Education in light of the NEP 2020, which places a strong emphasis on students' mental health and well-being in order to promote holistic development. Emotions of exclusion and loneliness can be made worse by stress. An atmosphere free from stress fosters inclusion, guaranteeing that every student, regardless of background, ability, or diversity, feels supported and welcomed.

Today, with the changing economic landscape and the rise of technology, students need not only academic knowledge but also life skills. Objective and moderate use of technology can have positive outcomes. Mental health education can equip students with skills such as resilience, adaptability, and effective communication to counter negative impact. Moreover, considering the cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic diversity, prioritizing mental health will not only help promote inclusivity but also ensure that the mental well-being of all students is considered, irrespective of their background. Through the "Manodarpan" campaign, which includes a variety of activities with proactive and preventive mental health and well-being services integrated into the mainstream of learning processes, the Ministry of Education is providing psychological assistance for mental health and emotional welfare to families, teachers, and students both during and after the COVID outbreak.

In summary, a stress-free education is critical to creating a supportive and positive learning environment that supports emotional health, academic achievement, and the acquisition of critical life skills. It prepares students for possibilities and challenges in the future by laying the groundwork for a sound and balanced approach to education. Therefore, it is highly essential that teachers, administrators, parents, and policy makers come together to create a stress-free education for the mental health and well-being of all students. One such innovative interactive program is Pariksha Pe Charcha, which unites educators, parents, students, and the community to create an environment where each child's distinct individuality is valued, nurtured, and celebrated. The Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been spearheading this unique campaign for the past six years with the goal of fostering a stress-free environment for youth.

(The writers Prachi Pandey is Joint Secretary, MoE and Tara Naorem is Principal Chief Consultant, SS, MoE)

LD SONI

When the news travelled to people that the great-soul Gandhi had passed on, they said to themselves, "Be still, our heart! Be still and listen!" They listened! The very vacant space had become vocal, it said to them, "There is no death to him who knows the meaning of Death!" Death doth not touch Gandhi. For he hath known the meaning of life: he hath known the meaning of death.

We are with them this morning to lay in sacred memory a few flowers of our love. They speak of him as Mahatma Gandhi: They speak of him as the "Father of the Nation". And we know in other ways, too, have many spoken of this great one. We love to call him "Brother"! Brother Gandhi! A brother is a burden bearer. And Brother Gandhi had borne the burden of millions. In one of his books he says, "I would rather be torn to pieces than disown my brothers and sisters in suffering and pain!"

Brotherhood of Man- this is what we have forgotten, and so we find today peoples fighting one another; and nation, alike in East and West, still travelling along the path of violence and war. The great message of peace, of love, of fellowship, of brotherhood is the piteous need of all the nations: is it not, our piteous need in this country? In his heart burned a Flame: How many sleepless hours did he not spend thinking of the deep tragedy of India! The tragedy of the nation once mighty, now in poverty entered as an iron in his soul. There was sadness in his beautiful smile. As he went from place to place preaching his Gospel, they thought of the Man with a Lantern in the story: The man went from place to place lighting up dark corners and saying to everyone, "Where art thou?" And as they heard his voice, one by one they answered, "I am here", and one by one they rose to follow the light. As Mahatma Gandhi moved from place to place, many awoke from their ease and indifference and followed the light. With a frail body but with truth and Love in his heart, Gandhi ji went from place to place to spread the message.

I personally salute Gandhi ji as a servant of the poor; as a brother of the poor; as a lover of the poor; as a devotee of the poor; oh! As a worshipper of the poor: The key-note to his wonderful life, a life of heroic deeds, of heroic achievements, of heroic aspirations, of heroic attainments, the secret of his life is his spirit of seva, the spirit of service and sacrifice. Gandhi ji's has been a dedicated life, a life dedicated to the service of the poor; this martyred man, adored by millions, gives us the mantra of sacrifice. This prophet of peace had to spend years within the area of challenge and storm. But his life never failed to bear witness to that new freedom which is fellowship with the poor and oppressed. In the day we have in our hearts the humility and love which may make us true brothers of the Poor; in that day will India achieve her true freedom. The coming religion is worship of the poor: Mahatma Gandhi ji was a witness to that

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Religion. Therefore, God gave him the great leadership of the people. As we think of him this day, Our thoughts move out in the "Rebels" of Humanity; and we whisper to ourselves their message: "Blessed are the crucified; for they shall emancipate the Nations".

Religion, to Gandhi ji, was not creed but right life- a life of sympathy and love, of fellowship with the poor: His leadership was deeply rooted in his life. He bore witness to the spiritual values of India's ancient heritage. His life reflected reverence for God and for all prophets and saints, and love for all creatures- men and birds and beasts. His life reflected the spiritual outlook which, indeed, was ever a mark of India's saints. The difference between his outlook and that of communism was significant. Gandhi could sacrifice all but not his spiritual outlook; the communist would sacrifice all but not his power. As the years passed, Gandhi ji felt, more and more, that life's true joy is not in earthly honours, and "greatness", but in pursuit of the "little way". To seek "greatness" is to run after the shadow-shapes which come and go.

To him, India was not a country apart, but a part of humanity. On one occasion, Gandhi ji spoke the following significant words. He said, my idea of Nationalism is that my country may become free and, if need be, the whole of my country may die, if only the human race may live! To Gandhi ji, India was a part of humanity: Gandhi ji was filled, through and through, with Gita's ideal of lokasangraha. 'Sangraha' means 'welfare'. 'Loka' means 'the world', 'humanity'. The welfare of humanity Gandhi ji sought; the welfare of humanity is what Gandhi ji worked for. This concept Gandhi ji never forgot. On one occasion, Gandhi ji said, "I am wedded to India, because I believe that India has a mission for the world".

Himself a servant of all, he wanted India to be a servant of humanity. The idea of exploitation, of one nation dominating another was alien to Gandhi ji's nature. For Gandhi ji stood for the great ideal of lokasangraha, of seva, services. He lived for humanity and died for humanity: Gandhi ji awakened millions- in a quiet way. Everything truly great is a quiet thing. Institutions may rise and fall. Kingdoms make noise, crush and crash noise. But the quiet power of this singular man- a hero of the silent way- continues calling attention, and moves on from strength to strength. In this tumultuous age, Gandhi ji's faith in the one Divine Spirit was wonderful. Many deny Him, but Gandhi ji raised his voice to rebuke the sceptic and the scoffer: Gandhi ji proclaimed the ancient message, "His Name, who can name? He is A-nama. The unnamable. Yet I believe in Him! My brother! You dare not silence the heart!" The Earth and the great stars proclaim Him as the immortal! Look within your heart and see the Eternal secret within you.

Among the pictures drawn from the lives of the truly great ones of humanity, there are three on which our thoughts have rested, from time to time, in the chaos and conflict of these days. One is the pic-

ture of Krishna wiping the tears of an outcast woman, saying to her, "Weep not, my child! I am with thee." The second is the picture of Jesus on the cross, crying: "Eloi! Eloi!" "My God! My God!" The third is the picture of Gandhi struck by the bullets of an Indian brother and, while falling backward, mortally hurt, quietly praying the mystic word of the ancient Rishi, "Hey Rama! Hey Rama!" "O Rama! O Rama!" When, on that fateful thirtieth day of January, 1948, the news of his martyrdom travelled far and wide in every corner of this great country, everyone felt sad. Gandhi ji served India and clung in faith and reverence to the lord of love.

Gandhi ji was a brother to all. He never thought of the sins of the people who worked against him. A rich lawyer with an income of ten to twelve thousand rupees, he renounced everything to take up the cause of the poor: He became an advocate of the poor people. Gandhi ji became poor for the sake of the poor: Like saint Francis of Assisi, he embraced poverty in order to serve the people.

Gandhi ji saw the village-folk ill-fed, ill-clad, malaria-ridden, fear-ridden; he saw the village-folk dying! They are dying at this hour, too. Gandhi ji was a brother of the poor and lowly, of the outcaste and the untouchables, not in words but in deeds of life. On one occasion he said, "If after death, I am to be re-born, I should wish to be one of the Untouchables, so that I may share their sorrows and serve them." What love in the heart of this man of God, this servant of humanity, this mighty interpreter and exemplifier of India's true spiritual culture, which most of us are forgetting today!

It seems to us that Mahatma Gandhi is a voice of God to the modern world. To India and other nations of the East, to India and all the wandering peoples of the West- wandering from violence to violence-Beloved Gandhi ji gave the message which is Ancient India's message to the modern world. The message was a call to New Freedom! And the call came from the depths of a dedicated heart, "O children of God! You cannot build a welfare state, until you cultivate the soul!" May we not say that in the kingdom of free India there should be no aliens? And yet, and yet, the thought has come to us painfully, again and again in this Free India, we feel that we are alien! Let us shake hands of fellowship and brotherhood, one with the other: Let us strive to understand the life and teaching of Brother Gandhi. He was a true brother: therefore is he a Mahatma, a great soul. He was a true brother: therefore is he become one of the shining lights of the humanity. And the light of his life, the light of love, shall, grow from more to more in the coming days. It seems to us that Gandhi ji is a voice of God to the modern world: say not Gandhi is dead." Our aching eyes behold the tragedy of the East and West and we exclaim: "Beloved Gandhi! India hath need of thee! And the world hath need of thee!"

(The writer is President, Home of Aged & Infirm, Ambphalla, Jammu)

Soil Pollution and Agricultural Output: Interrelation and Growth

DR. RAJKUMAR SINGH

Soil pollution poses a significant threat to agricultural productivity by affecting the health and fertility of the soil, which is the foundation for plant growth. The key points which impact soil pollution and agricultural productivity include: a. Nutrient Imbalance: Soil pollution can lead to an imbalance in essential nutrients needed for plant growth. The presence of heavy metals, chemicals, and other pollutants can interfere with the soil's natural nutrient balance, making it difficult for plants to absorb the necessary nutrients. b. Toxicity to Plants: Certain pollutants in the soil can be toxic to plants, leading to stunted growth, reduced yield, or even plant death. Heavy metals such as lead, cadmium, and mercury are particularly harmful, as they can be absorbed by plants, inhibiting photosynthesis and other vital processes. c. Soil Structure Degradation: Pollution can adversely affect the physical structure of the soil. In the context, excessive use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides can lead to soil compaction, reduced aeration, and decreased water infiltration, all of which can negatively impact plant growth. d. Water Pollution: Soil pollution can contribute to water pollution, affecting not only surface water but also groundwater resources. Pollutants can leach into water bodies, impacting the quality and availability of water used for irrigation, further affecting agricultural productivity. e. Microbial Imbalance: Soil health heavily depends on its microbial community, which aids in nutrient cycling, organic matter decomposition, and plant disease suppression. Soil pollution can disrupt the microbial balance, leading to decreased soil fertility and increased vulnerability to plant diseases. f. Bioaccumulation and Biomagnification: Pollutants can accumulate in the soil and be taken up by plants, entering the food chain. This not only affects plant health but can also lead to bioaccumulation and biomagnification, posing risks to human health and wildlife, and affecting the entire ecosystem's balance. To

mitigate these impacts, sustainable agricultural practices such as organic farming, integrated pest management, and soil conservation techniques are being increasingly adopted. These practices aim to reduce the reliance on chemical inputs, enhance soil health, and ensure long-term agricultural productivity. Soil pollution and crop production

Soil pollution can arise from various sources and pollutants, each with distinct impacts on crop production. Understanding the types of soil pollution is crucial for implementing effective management strategies to safeguard agricultural productivity. Here are some common types of soil pollution affecting crop production: a. Chemical Pollution: Pesticides and Herbicides: Residues from these chemicals can accumulate in the soil, affecting beneficial soil organisms and potentially harming crops. Fertilizers: Overuse of chemical fertilizers can lead to nutrient imbalances and soil acidification, reducing crop yields. Industrial Chemicals: Spills or improper disposal of industrial chemicals can introduce toxic substances into the soil, inhibiting plant growth. b. Heavy Metal Contamination: Metals such as lead, cadmium, mercury, and arsenic can enter the soil through industrial processes, mining, sewage sludge, and contaminated irrigation water. They can be toxic to plants, reduce crop yields, and enter the food chain, posing health risks. c. Organic Pollutants: Petroleum hydrocarbons, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and dioxins from industrial activities, waste disposal, and accidental spills can persist in the soil, affecting crop growth and quality. d. Radioactive Contamination: Nuclear accidents, improper disposal of radioactive waste, and natural sources can introduce radioactive substances into the soil, affecting crop production and safety. e. Salinization: Over-irrigation, particularly in arid and semi-arid regions, can lead to the accumulation of salts in the soil surface, reducing soil fertility and crop productivity. f. Acidification: Acid

rain, resulting from the emission of sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, can lower soil pH, adversely affecting nutrient availability and crop growth. g. Biological Agents: Overpopulation of certain soil pathogens, such as bacteria, fungi, or nematodes, due to imbalanced soil ecosystems can lead to diseases that affect crop health and yields. Each type of soil pollution requires specific management and remediation strategies. For instance, to combat chemical pollution, practices like phytoremediation, bioaugmentation, and the use of organic farming methods can be effective. Managing heavy metal contamination might involve soil amendments to immobilize metals or the removal and replacement of contaminated soil layers. By identifying the types of soil pollution present, farmers and agricultural managers can adopt targeted strategies to mitigate their impacts on crop production, ensuring sustainable agricultural practices and food security.

Methods of positive output Increasing agricultural production sustainably is crucial for meeting the food demands of a growing global population while preserving the environment and it requires: a. Improved Crop Varieties: Developing and planting high-yield, disease-resistant, and drought-tolerant crop varieties can significantly enhance productivity. Genetic modification and traditional breeding techniques are used to create these improved varieties. b. Advanced Irrigation Techniques: Implementing efficient irrigation methods, such as drip or sprinkler systems, can reduce water waste and ensure that crops receive the right amount of water at the right time, leading to better crop growth. c. Integrated Pest Management (IPM): IPM involves using a variety of biological, cultural, physical, and chemical tools to manage pests in an environmentally and economically sustainable way. This approach reduces reliance on chemical pesticides, preserving beneficial organisms and preventing pest resistance. d. Soil Management: Proper soil management,

(The author is a youth motivator)

National and Cultural awakening of India

OMKAR DATTATRAY

The programme of Ram temple consecration has already left its imprint, impact and is in fact leading to the national and cultural awakening of India. But the opposition parties who criticize and oppose the BJP for the Ram Temple inauguration do not understand that by opposing BJP, they are opposing the national and cultural legacy of the nation and these so called secular parties will feel its impact and heat in the ensuing Lok Sabha elections. Under the garb of opposing Modi and BJP, these opposition parties are in fact opposing the very life, soul, essence and breath of India and the sagacious and conscious people of the country will teach a lesson to such political parties in the coming general elections. First time since independence, there is going to be the national and cultural renaissance in this country called Bharat and the people including the opposition parties should acknowledge and appreciate this fact and should avoid blind and negative opposition and criticism but they hardly will do it as the minority appeasement is the philosophy of these pseudo-secular parties. The devotion of Ram by the majority of Indians is unacceptable to them and they are ignoring the national and cultural awakening of India because of the Ram-Janambooni movement and now by the construction of the grand Ram temple which now is a reality after a long struggle of 500 years. The Ram temple serves as a reminder of the nation's ability to navigate its diverse and complex history, fostering a future where cultural identity and progress is the key for the nations awakening. The Ram temples eagerly anticipated consecration on January 22, 2024, is set to be a seminal event in the tapestry of Indian history, intertwining time-honored traditions of the past with the robust progress of contemporary India. The temples inception has brought to life the decades-old chant "Ram Lalla Hum Aayeenge, Mandir Wahin Banayenge," a powerful slogan that has echoed in the hearts and minds of millions worldwide. For prime minister Narendra Modi, who envisioned the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya as a young Swayamsavak and is now realizing this vision as the nation's leader and the executive head, this journey has been one of unwavering faith and "devotion." Those familiar with India's trajectory attest to this being the culmination of a lifelong commitment. It is a testament to both his dedication and the unwavering commitment of millions of devoted Swayamsavaks, all united

in their effort to realize this historical vision. However, there is a long history that led to the re-establishment of Ram temple. A history that is deeply intertwined with a complex and longstanding dispute that epitomizes the challenges of communal harmony in India. In a landmark decision in 2019, the Supreme Court judiciously resolved this long-standing conflict. The court's verdict not only facilitated the construction of the Ram Mandir on the contested site but also underscored the importance of balance and equity by allocating a separate area for the erection of a mosque. This judgment was more than a legal resolution, it represented a pivotal moment in India's ongoing journey towards communal harmony and mutual respect. The supreme Court's historic decision to green light the construction of the temple marked the end of this protracted struggle, a narrative reminiscent of Lord Rama's own period of exile and eventual return to Ayodhya. This mirrors the city's prolonged anticipation for its spiritual rejuvenation. The reconstruction of the Ram Mandir transcends its role as a mere religious edifice. It represents a confluence of faith, unity, and a celebration of India's rich civilizational and cultural heritage. It signifies the dawn of a new chapter of hope, spiritual, national and cultural awakening. Every brick laid in the temple, imbued with devotion and reflective of India's renewed spirit, contributes to this historic monument. It stands not only a place of worship but also a symbol of the collective aspirations and rejuvenated spirit of India. Ram temple in Ayodhya is just the start of India's cultural renaissance. As we ushered in 2024, India is on the cusp of a cultural renaissance. Apart from the consecration of Lord Rama's idol at the newly constructed Ram temple, the 350th anniversary of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's coronation, the centenary of Mumbai's iconic Gateway of India and the centennial celebrations of Vaikom Satyagrah - the first ever struggle against caste discrimination are significant events this year. The consecration of the Ram idol at the newly built Ram Janambooni Temple at Ayodhya should not be seen as a mere religious event. True Hindu worship Ram. But just as Ramayan and Mahabharata are India's national epics, Ram is our national hero. Visit any part of the country, you will find Ram in people's names - from Ramachandran, Ramananthan, Ramnayan or Ramappa, in the south to Rambhai, Ramsingh or Ramasharn in the north. While debate about the historicity of Ramayana will continue, it is a fact

that Ram in particular and the Ramayana in general reflect the essentially Hindu/Indian belief that every individual has some elements of divinity within him or her—a foundational doctrine that Hindus often forget and so face the threat of fragmentation. Ram symbolizes the core of Indian value system that is founded on a humanitarian approach. The Ram temple in Ayodhya is a turning point in India's cultural history. A society always at the receiving end of the injustice and atrocities of aggressors will liberate itself. This temple is a symbol of our ability to protect our self respect. The resurrection of the Ram temple in 2024 can be compared only with the resurrection of the Somnath temple in the 1950's. What is being constructed in Ayodhya is not just a temple of brick and mortar but a monument saluting the civilizational journey of India. India, as described by Kerala governor Arif Mohammad Khan, is a country that is always ageing but is never old. This spirit finds its majestic manifestation in the temple that is currently getting its final shape. PM Modi has aptly appealed to countrymen to light a lamp on this day as the light of the eternally relevant message of Rama's life and mission reaches all. While many in the west continue to struggle to effectively deal with multiculturalism, in India this is inbuilt in our traditions. The Dalai Lama had once said, "India's great tradition of religious tolerance can be the role model for entire world." It is important to remember this at a time when mindless westernization/Americanisation is eroding the rich cultures of several small countries, especially in the southern hemisphere. For our cultural renaissance to attain its truest meaning we have to collectively rise above smaller identities, especially those related to caste and community. It is heartening to hear Farooq Abdullah say, "Ram doesn't belong only to the Hindus. He belongs to all." This is a great transformation indeed. It would have been wonderful if Babur had realized this as well. By destroying the Ram temple, he crippled the soul of Bharat, a land of ekam sat vipra bahudava vadanti (god is one but wise men describe him in different ways). All the above boils down to the fact that India's national and cultural awakening has begun and all of us the Indian's should carry it to desired fruition which will result in strengthening the national and cultural renaissance of India. Ram temple inauguration is the focal point of our cultural strength.

(The author is a columnist, social and KP activist)