


## PSYCHOSOCIAL HEALTH OF CHILDREN

The Ministry of Education with the help of National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) had conducted Mental Health Survey keeping in view of the perspectives of National Education Policy, 2020 which emphasizes students' mental health and well-being in order to provide holistic development. The survey was undertaken to explore the perception of students with regard to their mental health. The items of the survey gave an opportunity to the students to reflect and introspect their feelings and emotions on aspects that positively or negatively influence their perceptions of well-being. While giving a written reply in Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Education, Annpurna Devi told that a total of 3,79,842 students of classes 6 to 12 from different schools across the country participated in the survey. The Survey Report was released by the Ministry of Education on 6th September, 2022. The overall findings of the survey indicate that: majority of students expressed feeling responsible for doing well in their life, are satisfied with school life, are trustworthy, do not hesitate in seeking social support. However a decline is observed in student's responses about their physical appearance, satisfaction with personal and school life, and availability of people to share their feelings and experience of happiness, as they move from middle to secondary stage. Happiness was the most common emotion/feeling reported by both boys and girls. Students also reported frequent mood swings, feeling anxious about studies, examinations, and results which increased from middle to secondary stage and were reported more by girls in comparison to boys. Coping strategies adopted by students reveal their preference for yoga and meditation, changing the way they think, writing journals, and self-reflection.

The Ministry of Education has undertaken an initiative, named 'Manodarpan', covering a wide range of activities to provide psychosocial support to students, teachers and families for Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing during the COVID outbreak and beyond. A Working Group, having experts from the fields of education, mental health and psychosocial issues as its members, has been set up to monitor and promote the mental health issues and concerns of students and to facilitate providing of support to address the mental health and psychosocial aspects during and after COVID-19 lockdown, through counseling services, online resources and helpline. Under the Manodarpan initiative a Web page (URL: <http://manodarpan.education.gov.in>) has been created on the Ministry of Education website carrying advisory guidelines, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), Practical tips, posters, videos, do's and don'ts for students, teachers/faculty and families for psychosocial support have been uploaded on the Web-page. A National Toll-free Helpline (8448440632) for a country-wide outreach to students from schools, colleges and universities to provide them tele-counseling to address their mental health and psychosocial issues during and after the COVID-19 situation has been set up, which has been functional since 21st July, 2020. All the State and Union Territory Governments were advised to give wide publicity to the Manodarpan initiative of this Ministry so that the interested students/teachers/parent could make full use of these services. NCERT has been engaged in strengthening the capacity of teachers and counselors to extend the support to the students for their emotional and mental well-being, help to deal with fear and find ways of dealing with these. NCERT offers the Diploma Course in Guidance and Counseling (DCGC) with teacher counselor model so that such teacher apart from teaching can also extend help to students in dealing with academic, personal and career-related issues.

Modular Handbook on Early Identification and Intervention for Mental Health Problems in School Going Children has been developed in collaboration with Public Health Foundation of India (PIHF) which contains guidelines for early identification, detection and intervention of mental health problems (stress/illness) in school-going children, for hands-on training of teachers, counselors and other stakeholders. The Handbook was launched by Ministry of Education on 06th September, 2022. The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) provides pre and post examination tele-counseling facilities through centralized toll-free helpline. Due to the corona pandemic, CBSE started an additional Toll-Free Tele Helpline on coronavirus safeguards for students. The Board has published material on how to be stress free. Audio-visual presentations on issues affecting mental health during this crisis were made available on official YouTube and Facebook handles of CBSE. CBSE has also brought out a manual on mental health and psychosocial well-being during COVID. CBSE has launched mental well-being app 'Dost for Life', to provide free counseling sessions by principals and counselors.



OFF 'D' CUFF

### Hymn to the Mind

along with our senses, it comes back to peace, the innermost dweller, the light of the soul. Much healing and refinement occurs in our sleeping hours especially after chanting this ancient and powerful prayer: Shiva Sankalpa Suktam is a powerful six verse hymn from the Rig Veda that entreats the mind to dwell on the auspicious will of the Divine. For developing calm and clear thoughts, alignment to dharmic living is a must; it strengthens resolve

Not only does the chanting of SSS harness thoughts, it brings one pointed focus, purifies the mind and cultivates harmony. The six mantras of SSS are also a part of the Shanti Karmam mantras that are chanted while performing yajna. So, how does chanting of SSS mantras work?

When we are bewildered, confused, or in despair, the mantra acts like a soothing potion. Without a clear head on our shoulders life can be challenging to say the least. The ancients teach us that the subtle powers of the mind are necessary to be in alignment with our soul and in order to be happy and fulfilled.

-V N Mittal

## Difference between leader & politician

■ MAHADEEP SINGH JAMWAL

A functioning, robust democracy requires a healthy, educated, participatory followership, and an educated, morally grounded leadership. Not everyone who occupies high office is a leader. A person who merely coordinates the actions of others or has management skills is not a leader. Political language is designed to make lies sound truthful. So here we must differentiate between a leader and a politician? A politician is interested in power and position, over promises to win the elections, creates chaos and ruckus, creates problems for his own gains, looks for his own performances, works selfishly and looks for the problem in all the opportunities. Whereas leaders under promise and over deliver, solve the problem through consensus, build friends based on shared visions, values and principles and committed to those values. We can say it's unlikely to have a good politician and a great leader in one person just as it's impossible to have a prostitute and a virgin in one girl. What qualities then a common man should look for in his representative? Which virtues are required to provide ethical representation? We can sum up some of the qualities such as: honesty and integrity, confidence, inspire others, commitment and passion, good decision making capabilities, accountability, delegation and empowerment, empathy, resilience, humility, transparency, vision and purpose. It

is never possible that all natural born human beings should possess all qualities that a common man likes to see in his representative. The world history is blank regarding such personalities accepted by one and all without any commentary. We have arrived at a stage of a similar situation, where there is drought in fertility of real politicians in India. The recapitulated qualities expected in politicians, when put to the reality test with regard to the politicians of India irrespective of party affiliation right from 1947 till date, we come up with a dirty picture, painted by scams, corruption, favoritism, criminality, exploitations, dynastic rule, self promoting, lust for power, ignoring the ballots after being mandated to power, creating ditches between communities on caste and religion for vote bank, fake commitments and what not. The people with cases of rape, murder, dacoits, kidnapping, loot, corruption and what not are enjoying constitutional immunities and hovering over the citizens as ministers well protected by security categories on the tax payers money. The architects of the Constitution have shown much disregard to the law abiding society by stipulating no provision to debar those from contesting elections as well as inducting them in Government involved in criminal cases and as a result we have experienced such criminals making law for law abiding citizens from day one till date. A criminal overnight becomes an 'Honorable' subject. This is how our great

Constitution mandates. We are bound to raise the finger against those responsible for our Constitution and those leaders to bring an amendment and neglect the most required provision of at least basic qualification for a politician, who as representative of people has to hand down thousands of important laws and policies to their communities and country. For an educated, neat and clean person who could prove to be a real representative of people's aspirations, we are left with no solution except to look for scientific intervention for the invention of 'Test Tube Politicians' on the analogy of 'Test Tube Baby'. We have advanced much in scientific inventions and are now blessed with a technique to get babies having genes of our choice. The scientific revolution has solved a number of problems faced by people from time to time. A Los Angeles clinic is offering the ultimate in designer babies. Want a son with brown eyes, black hair and a dark complexion or a pale-skinned, blonde, green-eyed daughter? One has the wonders created by scientist Robert Edwards (conferred Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for developing the IVF treatment) and gynecologist Patrick Steptoe in 1978, when the first test tube baby, Louise Brown was born in England.

Before downing the curtain, I would like to say that my intentions here are not to malign or degrade the representatives or someone but to point out the grey area where a much

talked honest, intelligent, visionary, dynamic leader should pay attention for bringing reforms so that tainted and uneducated should not have escape channel to reach Parliament or Assemblies. We are also eagerly looking forward and our hopes are pinned upon the scientists to make available the techniques accessible in a very affordable manner in every medical college of the country to have real politicians in meaning by producing such stuff through available technology of test tube babies, segregating the genes of scams, corruption, favoritism, criminality, exploitations, dynastic rule, lust for power, creating ditches between communities on caste and religion for vote bank from the DNA of those aspiring to become community leader as politician and inseminating genes of required standard for an end production that will stand to the required standards of the politics on the analogy of the 'Test Tube Baby' in the form of 'Test Tube Politician' only then our future will be in safe hands. Luhban Yang, a Harvard recruit from Beijing; a young postdoctoral scientist is a key player in developing a powerful new technology for editing DNA. Harvard laboratory had a project under way to determine how it could be achieved. So why not design a highly intelligent group of people as 'Test Tube Politicians' on the analogy of 'Test Tube Babies' culture, who could be tomorrow's leaders in real sense.

## Women empowerment still a distant dream

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

Men and women are the two wheels of a van and women are the equal partners in the development of the country. Women have been accorded a place of pride and respect in the religious scriptures and thus they deserve due respect and reverence in the society but alas in the male dominated society the women folk is not given the respect which they deserve. There is talk of much needed women empowerment in the county and it has become a Mahamantra and slogan in the country thank to the governmental efforts of ensuring women empowerment. The present BJP government is committed to women empowerment and upliftment and in fact it is not only the current government which has accorded much importance to women empowerment but the earlier congress governments also did a commendable job for women empowerment. The women are today working side by side with the men in all most all walks of life and they have even left men behind in different endeavours. The women are excelling in various fields and they are showing their mettle and contribution and they are next to none in the modern society. The government is according top-most importance to women and is also on the path of giving due representation to women in the democratic institutions and governance. The women today are becoming doctors, engineers, professors, DMs, SPs, doctors, pilots, judges, scientists and what not. But despite all this the fate, condition and status of women is not commensurate with their contribution and they are looked down upon and are maltreated in the family and society. The atrocities, ill-treatment and discrimination is mounting and continuing without any break on women. The kidnappings, abductions, gang-rapes, rapes, beatings, eve-teasing and showing disrespect to women are continuing abominable things have become a daily occurrence and have given a bad name to us all. The Government, NGOs, intellectuals, academicians, all talk of women empowerment and the government is devising schemes and programmes for the women empowerment but in spite of all this the women are let down in the society and it is a matter of grave and serious concern. It is very unfortunate that women who are the embodiment of love, affection, sympathy and above all sustain the world are not given the due respect and instead are ridiculed and looked down upon. Atrocities and discrimination is still heaped upon the women flock at work-place, family and the society and they are ill-treated. Day in and day out we hear the unpleasant and sordid stories of abductions, rapes and killings of the women and our heads hang in shame on this sad plight of the women who continue to be hapless and helpless. The cunning and greedy men are only regarding women as an

object of sense enjoyment and nothing beyond that. While we talk of equal rights and privileges of the women but in practice women continue to be disregarded and looked down upon both in home, society and at work place. It is very sad and disturbing that women are shabbily treated by the male dominated society notwithstanding the fact that government talks much about women empowerment. No doubt women are being given representation in legislatures, Panchayats, Municipalities and other local bodies and efforts are made to uplift them. But in spite of all this women are still neglected and shown disrespect and the pious declarations of the government of giving 33 per cent representation to women in assemblies, parliament and local bodies is still a distant dream and this adversely affects prospects of women empowerment. It is very disturbing that the fair sex is exploited sexually at the work place by the greedy men and their bosses. It seems that all talk of women empowerment is humbug and if women empowerment is our objective we should give a fair representation to women in legislators and local bodies. The women should be fairly represented in educational and professional institutions so that they feel equity and justice. Despite of excelling in various fields, the women are still not shown the respect which they deserve. The women being frail and weak are subject to sexual exploitation at work place and there are enough cases where women are sexually assaulted in buses and taxis and it is a matter of great introspection. The women are maltreated and abused by their husbands under the influence of liquor and there are innumerable cases of the abuse and ill-treatment of the women in family. The women are still treated as a marketable commodity. The excesses and dowry deaths and cases is on increase and it is very unfortunate that we lose many precious lives to dowry deaths and due to other atrocities. On one hand we talk of women empowerment and on the other hand we treat women shabbily and with contempt. It is a matter of great introspection that even after seven decades of freedom, we have yet to empower women fully and make them equal partners in governance and participatory democracy and it raises a question mark on the slogan and practice of women empowerment. Something on war footing and consistently should be done to ensure women equal rights and chances of opportunities and thus to make women empowerment possible in real sense. The country has in fact excelled in all most all spheres but we are lacking to uplift women fully and thus all our talk of women empowerment seems a distant dream. Despite making big budgetary provisions for women empowerment, much development in this connection has not been made, with the result women continue to be discriminated

and neglected. It is the women which are the vehicle of education and it is again the women as the mother who educates the family including children but they are treated with contempt and not shown the respect they deserve. Article 16 provides equal opportunities for both men and women with regard to employment. In spite of having so many laws, women in India are not treated equally. After independence of India many laws like Provisions of The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005, Dowry Prohibition Act 1961, have been enacted to protect the rights of women. Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013 provides protection to women at all workplaces both public and private sectors, whether organised or un-organised. The constitution of India also emphasizes on gender equality and empowers the state to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women. Article 15 (3) is the example of one of such provisions that provides equal opportunities a scope of positive discrimination. Article 16 provides equal opportunities for both men and women with regard to employment. In spite of having so many laws, women in India are still not safe. Various heinous against women are still prevalent in Indian society. As per the annual crime in India Report 2017 released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) a total of 359849 cases were reported against women in India. Gruesome incidents like rape and sexual assaults have made girls and women vulnerable. Although we are witnessing a spurt in such heinous crimes, the conviction rate is abysmally low. Therefore, perpetrators can easily evade law that embodies them to repeat those crimes against women. Due to the continuous increase in crimes like rape and such other incidents women always feel insecurities in their minds which resist them from coming forward to do jobs or business or other works. The incident which took place in Hyderabad where a veterinary doctor was raped and murdered while returning from her workplace in November in 2019 is a proof that women are not safe even to do jobs in the country. Due to worse situations even family members also sometimes get threatened to allow their daughters to leave their home city or town to peruse their dreams and career that makes their path of success more struggling and arduous. In short some women have gathered the courage to break the glass ceiling despite the worse scenario; India has still a long way to go to achieve women's empowerment in real sense as all our efforts in this direction have failed to produce the desired results.

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

## Soil requirements for some fruit trees

■ PROF R D GUPTA

Soil is one of the most important natural resources of any country. It is the basic pillar for production of food crops and fruits. The main objective of writing of this article is to discuss soil requirements of some of the fruit trees that can be looked into by the prospective fruit grower himself before any orchard is laid out. It is not really the surface soil that should concern the prospective fruit grower so much so the sub-soil lying deep below the surface soil should also be examined. It is not necessary that a soil suitable for ordinary farm crops should also be suitable for fruit trees because roots of fruit trees go very deep. If the subsoil condition is not favourable, then the trees may grow nicely for a short time but will begin to decline as soon as the roots reach undesirable sub-soil.

Defective sub-soil: Condition of sub-soil should always be examined to a depth of at least 2 metres and preferably to 2.5 metres. If the examination shows the existence of a layer of gravel, Kanker or even coarse sand or a clayey plastic sub-soil or a hard pan, the land should be considered unsuitable for fruit orchards. A layer of gravel or even coarse sand is harmful because of lack of fertility and lack of water holding capacity. It does not permit the proper development of root system. Clayey soils on the other hand. Do not allow the irrigation or rain water to percolate water ultimately produces a water logged condition, which is extremely injurious for healthy growth of roots. Trees with constantly 'wet feet' turn yellow and eventually die.

Water logged soil and shallow water-table: A swampy or water-logged soil should never be selected for fruit garden as in the absence of proper aeration in such soil roots cannot develop. Watertable must not be nearer than 2 metres or preferably 2.5-3.0 metres from surface of the soil. Where water-table is near, the fruit trees begin to become yellow and die after a few years when the roots reach at water table. A soil that becomes waterlogged even for few weeks in the year should not be selected unless some arrangements for artificial drainage exist.

Effect of salinity: Citrus is most sensitive of salinity and it is one of the most important causes of citrus decline in Punjab, Haryana and Jammu region of J & K state. A salinity limit of 0.5 to 0.8 m mhos has been found suitable for its successful growth. On the contrary, guava is more tolerant to salinity and a critical salinity level of 7.5 m mhos has been proposed. ECe (electrical conductivity of saturated paste extracts) of more than 1.4 m mhos has been considered harmful to the mango tree which has resulted in the decline of mango in Punjab and Haryana as well as Jammu region of J&K. In fruit crops, reclamation of salt affected soils by leaching is not practicable. Hence, their salt tolerant rootstocks and varieties can be successfully cultivated on these soils. Guava, pomegranate and fig are moderately tolerant whereas date and ber are highly salt tolerant and thus, can be cultivated on saline soils.

Type of rootstocks: Suitability of soil for any particular fruit also

depends on the kind of rootstock used for grafting or budding. For instance, apricots can be budded on peach, plum and apricot stocks. Peach stock requires light warm sandy loam soil and will not flourish in moist heavy soil. But plum stock can grow very nicely in heavy moist soil. Similarly certain other rootstocks can withstand adverse soil climatic conditions. By budding grapes on Salt-creek and Dogridge rootstocks, can be grown safely in saline conditions. Likewise Rangpur lime and Citrus baxifolia rootstocks of citrus can also tolerate saline conditions upto some level. What type of soil is required for different types of fruit trees are the questions that is frequently asked by the prospective fruit growers. There is no doubt that some fruit trees are more exacting in their soil requirements that others as will be clear from the table given below. But can be safely said that any well drained soil that is neither too heavy nor too light and which is suitable for ordinary farm crops ought to successfully grow almost any kind of fruit tree provided it is under-land with a suitable sub-soil as already discussed. The optimum requirements of soils for different kinds of fruits are given below:

1. Mandarin: Rich light loam soil of good depth is the best suited. Never select soils with gravelly or clayey sub soil.
2. Sweet Lime: It can be grown on a variety of soils and is rather tolerant to defective soil conditions. All the same, it does best on deep loam soils which are well drained.
3. Sweet Orange (Mosambi): Mosambi can be grown on a wide range of soil from heavy clay to very light sandy. The tree is particularly sensitive high to concentration of salt and cannot stand water logged conditions for any length of time. Heavy soils if well drained may produce good crops. However, the ideal soil for Mosambi is medium or light loam with a slightly heavier sub-soil.
4. Sweet Orange (Malta): Sandy loam to loam and well-drained soil, with the sub-soil free from any layer of gravel or hard pan is found to be the best. Avoid water logged soil conditions.
5. Kagzi lime: It can be grown on a wide range of soils. A loamy soil of uniform texture upto a depth of 2.5 m, having good fertility, is considered the ideal one for its cultivation. Heavy soils, with well drained conditions yield good crops.
6. Mango: It can be planted on any soil except alkaline water-logged ones though a light sandy loam is better. Too heavy soils should be avoided.
7. Litchi: It is not fastidious in its soil. It makes best growth in deep loam soil under slightly acidic conditions; culture of my corrhizal fungi should be applied to the soil. These fungi form nodules on the roots of litchi trees and the fungus lives together to the benefit of each other. If the corrhizal culture is not available then the addition of some soil from old litchi orchard will serve the purpose.

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## PROGRESSING J&K Mission Youth engaging, mobilizing young volunteers under Youth Clubs initiative

Mission Youth is focusing on encouraging, engaging and mobilizing young volunteers of J&K to support the government efforts of socio-economic transformation of Jammu & Kashmir. "Youth Clubs provide an opportunity for the young generation of J&K to contribute to society and achieve self-growth under Mission Youth initiative," an official said.

As energetic and vibrant partners of Panchayats and district administration, these clubs are ensuring that governance effectively reaches to the grassroots level. The official added that through Youth Clubs, Government is not only generating awareness about various employment and self-employment schemes but also uniting young men and women of the UT of Jammu & Kashmir to pursue their dreams. Youth's commitment to social service, national integration provides the foundation of developed J&K, the official said. "These Clubs are unique not only by virtue of their composition but also in providing leadership in different sectors and entrepreneurship commitment."

"More than 74,000 members have become a beacon of hope for thousands of others. Youth are now active partners in the process of building a peaceful and prosperous J&K," he added. It is pertinent to mention here that more than 74,771 youths from 20 districts have joined the Youth Clubs, which are playing a significant role in providing youth an opportunity to work through real challenges and make meaningful change. A total of 4,522 Youth Clubs have been constituted across 20 districts with a maximum 9,000 youths enrolled in Poonch district. Young people in these clubs, who volunteer, regularly develop a civic identity, as leaders and change-makers and therefore become more socially active. They also learn new social skills like collaboration and problem solving that are vital to succeed in academics, the workplace and their personal lives. Thus, Youth Clubs are playing a pivotal role in creating lifelong change among youth and result in their overall personality development, which happens to be the core agenda of Mission Youth, which runs the Youth Clubs," it was stated. Pertinently, the initiative of Youth Club was approved by the governing body of Mission Youth, headed by the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha in its first meeting held on June 17, 2021.