

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

Sustainable agricultural practices are crucial for addressing the challenges posed by climate change while also contributing to its mitigation. These practices encompass a range of approaches aimed at preserving soil health, enhancing water management, diversifying crops, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from farming operations. Conservation agriculture techniques such as no-till farming and cover cropping help maintain soil structure and organic matter, while agroforestry integrates trees into agricultural landscapes to provide multiple benefits including carbon sequestration. Improved livestock management practices, such as rotational grazing and efficient feed utilization, minimize emissions from animal agriculture. Water management strategies like drip irrigation and rainwater harvesting optimize water use efficiency, crucial in regions experiencing water scarcity due to climate change. By adopting these practices, farmers can build resilience to climate variability, protect natural resources, and contribute to global efforts to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, knowledge sharing and capacity building are essential for empowering farmers to implement sustainable approaches effectively, highlighting the importance of collaboration among stakeholders in promoting sustainable agriculture as a cornerstone of climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts.

A pathway to job seekers

After serving in the government sector in the police department for 36 years, the opportunity to serve as one of the Directors on Board in the private sector that too in a public limited company gave me strength to pen down my experience for job seekers in which way, government sector or private sector they should think for a job. Apart from these two sectors of job opportunities that at least require some sort of education and unblemished character, there is another field that is politics where illiterate and tainted control both government as well as private sector. Deciding between a private sector job and a government job can often be a mystifying choice for job seekers. My words on this situation are that both career paths come with their own unique advantages. Private sector jobs may be more suitable for those who are unable to secure high-ranking in studies or high qualifications for prestigious government positions. We find many drop outs in studies are now millionaires/billionaires controlling the world finance. Choosing a government job vs. private sector job entails weighing stability, benefits, and structured routines against the autonomy, potential earnings, and challenges of entrepreneurship. While government jobs provide job security, pension and benefits, work/life balance, and interesting and challenging work are all great reasons to consider a government job. The satisfaction that comes with helping to serve the public is an added bonus. If you are looking for a stable and rewarding career, a government job is a great choice but the salaries in the government sector are often lower than those offered in the private sector. The salaries in the government sector get saturated in later career roles. While in corporate, the salaries may increase exponentially. There is also limited scope for career growth in government jobs, which can be a major drawback for ambitious individuals.

I will not shy away from divulging that government jobs are inherently bureaucratic; they leave very little room for rewarding individual professional initiatives. In the case of government jobs, promotions are time-based and dependent on vacancies. Even though senior most positions in government jobs can be very powerful, they only come after years of patience, waiting for people to retire before their seats can be replaced. A private job, on the contrary, provides vast scope for growth and climbing up the ladder. Landing a government job is far more difficult than landing a private job. To receive a government job, the employees must first appear for a nationwide entrance test, competing with a large pool of candidates. There are other factors such as age limits, availability etc. In comparison, recruitment for private jobs happens all year long and is filled based on demand. Petitions can also be filled via campus recruitment, referral recruitment, online recruitment, and through other streamlined and straightforward processes. When we flash on the work culture, government jobs usually have a more structured and hierarchical work culture, while corporate jobs tend to have a more dynamic and competitive work culture. A job in the corporate sector is best for seeking career advancement, and a dynamic environment. A government sector on the other hand, is best for those seeking stability and security. The job in the corporate sector is not secure. If a company is not achieving desired growth or suffers heavy loss they fire their employees and even close their entire operation for some time or permanently. Compared to the corporate sector, the government sector often provides greater job security. Government workers often have better protection against layoffs and a decreased chance of losing their jobs as a result of business closures or economic downturns. The government sector has stable jobs, no inflation, no recession, and no market volatility. In fact higher the inflation, higher would be your DA. If we have to demarcate a line between jobs in the government sector and private sector, we can easily conclude that in the government sector, government organizations at all levels, including local, state, and federal agencies, provide employment whereas in the corporate sector, organizations give employment. A college degree has long been perceived as the gateway to secure government jobs. However, several government positions welcome candidates based on specialized skills, certifications, or specific qualifications rather than a formal higher education degree. The employment in the government sector is shrinking and on the other hand the corporate sector is providing new horizons for job seekers. As the job market changes rapidly, it is difficult to find a job in the corporate sector today. We as job seekers in the corporate sector should prepare our self-according to the changing trends in this sector. Employers are always on the lookout for candidates who not only possess the right qualifications but also a unique blend of abilities. It takes more than a degree to land your dream job in a corporate sector environment. It requires an amalgamation of skills and qualities that will set you apart from the competition. Adaptability is a prized trait in the corporate world. It is vital to be able to communicate effectively in the corporate world. Corporate settings often present complex challenges that require innovative solutions. The leadership skills will be on display if one exhibits traits like initiative, the capacity to motivate others, and project ownership, which will put job seekers in the corporate sector on the road to promotion. A broad range of abilities, including adaptability, communication, problem-solving, leadership, emotional intelligence, digital savvy, networking, and organizational skills, are worth proving for seeking a job in the corporate sector.

Mahadeep Singh Jamwal

Early childhood care and education

■ MOHAMMAD HANIEF

While it is generally recognised that the right to education is relevant to primary, secondary, tertiary and basic education levels, it is important to recognise that this human right also applies throughout 'early childhood', which the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) defines as the period from birth up until the age of eight.

Early childhood is understood as a critical developmental phase as it represents the most rapid period of physical, cognitive, social and emotional growth of the human lifespan. These formative early years necessarily require a mixture of care and education for children, with close support by parents, families, other caregivers and broader communities. It constitutes both a significant and meaningful stage itself, and impacts the realisation of other human rights throughout a person's lifetime.

Consequently, the early childhood care and education (ECCE) that children experience, from earliest infancy through to the transition to formal primary schooling, has a direct effect on their well-being, how they make sense of the world, and the extent to which they are able to make the most of future opportunities. Research on ECCE demonstrates its importance in, among other things, tackling gender and other barriers to accessing primary school, increasing participation and achievement in school, and lowering school repetition and drop-out rates - thereby decreasing wastage in the education system.

It also contributes to reducing gender inequalities and broader societal benefits such as enhanced social cohesion, a lower rate of future violence and crime, higher individual incomes and stronger national economic development, a stronger cultural identity and a reduction in health costs and poverty cycles across generations.

The international human rights framework offers guidance to states and others about a rights-based approach to ECCE. As outlined by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, education in all its forms and at all levels shall exhibit the following interrelated and essential features: availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability of education.

As the CRC has explained, these elements must be adapted to the interests, concerns and changing capacities of children during early childhood. States must consider the best interests of the child throughout the early years, promote nurturing and non-violent forms of parenting and education, and - of particular significance at this time of life - ensure the right of



the child to rest, leisure, play and to free participation in cultural life and the arts.

The first six of life are critical years of human life since the rate of development in these years is more rapid than at any other stage of development. Global brain research also informs us about the significance of early years for brain development.

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) makes a positive contribution to children's long term development and learning by facilitating an enabling and stimulating environment in these foundation stages of lifelong learning.

Parents as caregivers are critical in providing a stimulating learning environment to the child and the first two and a half to three years need not be in a formal learning environment. The National Curriculum Framework acknowledges the significance of involvement of parents, family and community. The National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Curriculum Framework for all children below six years of age is aligned with the government's vision of ECCE as spelt out in the National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy. The National ECCE Curriculum Framework is informed by the Position Paper on ECCE (National Curriculum Framework, NCERT, 2005) and the curriculum detailed there under.

The National Education Policy 2020 marked a turning point in India's commitment to shaping a bright future for all children. As 85% of brain development occurs before the age of six years, the Women and Child Development ministry recognizes the pivotal role of early years in development and seeks to strengthen India's Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

landscape. In this endeavour, the ministry is launching a National Curriculum for Early Childhood Care and Education for Children from Three to Six Years and a National Framework for Early Childhood Stimulation for Children from Birth to Three Years.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development empowers and supports mothers and their children under six years through Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0, together with the Palna and Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) Schemes under Mission Shakti. It aims to ensure comprehensive childcare support throughout the day in a secure environment, with trained staff, educational resources, nutritional support, and activities for holistic child development. The Ministry runs 13.9 lakh Anganwadi Centres around the country, catering to more than 8 crore children under the age of six years.

For children from age three to six, the National Curriculum for ECCE 2024 covers all domains of development as per the National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage - 2022 (NCF-FS), including physical/motor, cognitive, language and literacy, socio emotional, cultural/aesthetic as well as positive habits. It aims to improve the quality of ECCE transacted at the Anganwadi Centre by prioritizing competency-based lesson plans and activities, presented in a simple and user-friendly manner.

It addresses how children learn in the early years, with a focus on playful joy-based learning, in preparation for primary school. The Curriculum is structured to provide a weekly calendar comprising 36 weeks of active learning, 8 weeks of reinforcement and 4 weeks of initiation, together with 5+1 days of play-

based learning in one week, and three blocks of activities in one day. It provides for a combination of activities, including in-centre and at-home, indoor and outdoor, child-led and educator-led etc.

Robust assessment tools are provided for tracking progress, tailoring learning, and celebrating each child's unique journey. Special focus has been given for the screening, inclusion and referrals of Divyang children in every activity. Community engagement has been facilitated through monthly ECCE days and a continuum of home learning activities for each week.

For children from birth to three years, the National Framework for Early Childhood Stimulation 2024 aims to empower caregivers and Anganwadi Workers for holistic early stimulation, through responsive caregiving and opportunities for early learning, for optimal development of children, both body and brain.

It fills conceptual and practical gaps in the understanding of care and stimulation, based on the Nurturing Care Framework. The framework is designed to provide the Anganwadi Worker with a basic understanding of how children grow and develop, the importance of brain development and the need for nurturing care. It focuses on the principles of serve and return, caregiver's three acts: love, talk, play, and positive guidance. 36 month-wise age-based activities are provided that can be conducted both within the household as well as at the Anganwadi Centre or Creche, through all the contact points including home visits, monthly meetings, community-based events etc. Screening, inclusion and referrals for Divyang children are also provided special focus. The documents have been prepared by the National Institute for Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD), with the support of an Internal Committee and development partners. Feedback from Anganwadi Workers has been incorporated to make the curriculum more flexible, activity-based, using more illustrations and less text.

NIPCCD will lead the training of Anganwadi functionaries on the new Curriculum and Framework. Provisions from both the Curriculum and the Framework, including weekly activity schedules, home visit guidance, assessment tools for tracking child development etc. will also be included on the Poshan Tracker. We aim to strengthen and support Anganwadi Workers for the delivery of high-quality ECCE for all children, to ensure that every Anganwadi Centre becomes a vibrant learning centre in the community.

■ DR NAZIA & DR RIDHAM

Glaucoma is caused due to raised intraocular pressure (eye pressure) and changes in the optic nerve that help in sending visual messages to the brain for vision. Pediatric glaucoma can also present with these changes in eyes, but signs in the Pediatric age group may vary. Previously it was classified as Newborn onset glaucoma (age group 0-1 month), Infantile onset glaucoma (age group >1-24 months), and late-onset glaucoma (>24 months). However, in 2013 International Classification of Childhood Glaucoma replaced all these classifications with a single term called primary congenital glaucoma.

Congenital glaucoma is a rare glaucoma that occurs in infants and young children, typically before the age of three. Primary congenital glaucoma occurs approx. 1 in 10,000 live births. In congenital glaucoma, there is usually a problem with the drainage system of the eye, which leads to increased intraocular pressure (eye pressure). Congenital glaucoma typically occurs by abnormal development of the eye's drainage system during development inside the mother's womb. In some cases, it may be associated with other congenital conditions or genetic abnormalities. The white part of the eye (sclera) is more distensible in children than adults; owing to this difference, their eyes behave differently due to increased intraocular pressure. Diagnosis is usually made based on a thorough eye examination, which may include measuring intraocular pressure, evaluating the optic nerve, and examining the drainage angles of the eye. With early diagnosis and appropriate treatment, the prognosis for congenital glaucoma is generally favourable. However, if left untreated, congenital glaucoma can lead to permanent vision loss and blindness. Parents need to be aware of the signs and symptoms of congenital glaucoma and seek prompt medical attention if they suspect their child may be affected. Congenital and childhood glaucoma can have a good prognosis, provided they are treated timely and regular follow-up is done.

Symptoms

Childhood glaucoma usually presents with a triad of symptoms: epiphora (watery eyes), photophobia (sensitivity to bright light), and blepharospasm (squeezing of the eyes). Other symptoms that



Congenital glaucoma, cloudy corneas. Source: © 2019 American Academy of Ophthalmology.

can be present in patients are enlargement of one or both eyes (buphthalmos), asymmetrical eyes, cloudiness or haziness of the cornea, and redness in the eyes. However, if the patient is having other problems with the eye or any system of the body then secondary childhood glaucoma can be present. Secondary glaucoma can be due to some other associated syndromes such as aniridia (complete or partial absence of the iris), microphthalmos (small eye), microcornea (small cornea), steroid-induced, trauma, tumors, glaucoma following cataract surgery, maternal rubella and some other systemic syndromes, etc. Since childhood glaucoma can have an irreversible impact on vision, it is advisable to prevent and treat these conditions early.

Prevention

There is no way to prevent primary congenital glaucoma, although childhood glaucoma secondary to trauma/eye surgeries can be prevented to some extent. Prenatal genetic screening may emerge as a primary preventive measure for congenital glaucoma in the future. It is advisable to visit an eye doctor if parents notice anything unusual about their baby's eyes. Any cloudiness in the eye, difference in the size of the eyeballs, or excessive tearing raises the suspicion of childhood glaucoma. In case of a positive family history of childhood glaucoma, all the siblings should be screened by an eye specialist.

Treatment

A specialized eye doctor will examine the eye, and intraocular

pressure (eye pressure) may need to be recorded by handheld or portable machines (tonometers). In cases of further suspicion, the child may need to be examined under general anesthesia for complete diagnosis and management. Corneal examination (putli ki jaanch) along with recording of its diameter; examination of angles of the eye (gonioscopy), recording of intraocular pressure (eye pressure), measurement of axial length of eyeball, detailed fundus examination (recording of cup disc ratio) is possible under general anesthesia.

The treatment is decided based on the patient's age, the extent of the disease, and overall health. In cases of congenital glaucoma, surgery is usually required. It is advisable to do surgery as early as possible. Surgery is done to establish the pathway for fluid drainage of the eye outside the blocked tissues, which, in turn, helps return the eye pressure to normal. Surgical options include goniotomy (incising the angle of the eye), trabeculotomy and trabeculectomy (removal of part of trabecular meshwork of eye). Some patients may require repeated surgery in case of failure. Some patients may require additional use of glaucoma drainage devices in case of failure of filtration surgery. Repeated eye examinations of the child may be required under general anesthesia after surgery. Medications used to treat glaucoma function by decreasing the production of eye fluid (aqueous humor) or increasing drainage. Usually, such medications (anti-glaucoma eye drops) are prescribed lifelong. Careful instillation of anti-glaucoma drops is advised to parents. Lifelong monitoring of eye pressure and routine complete examination of such children is recommended. Such patients may develop cataracts at an early age, which needs to be treated. In advanced cases cyclophotocoagulation may be required. In this procedure, freezing a part of the ciliary body is done, which is responsible for the production of aqueous (eye fluid), ultimately reducing eye pressure. Early diagnosis and intervention are crucial for preserving vision and preventing long-term complications in childhood glaucoma. Monitoring and regular follow-ups to assess the effectiveness of treatment and detect any progression of the condition.

(The writers are Assistant Professors, Department of Ophthalmology, AIIMS, Jammu).

YOUR COLUMN

Name and shame anarchist and urban Naxal Arvind Kejriwal and his nasty outfit AAP

Dear Editor,

Instead of asking the Modi Government to deport 10 crore Rohingya and Bangladeshi intruders, who have become a live threat to national security, changed the electoral scenes in Bengal, Northeast and other parts of Bharat, including Delhi, and have been eating up our resources since decades, oppose CAA saying migration of 2 crore persecuted Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan to India will hurt India, Indian economy and Indian youth and change demography of those areas where BJP is politically and electorally weak.

How dangerous and anti-Bharat is he and AAP. Anna Hazare is responsible for forcing down the Bharat's throat the dreaded Kejriwal.

Remember, Indira Gandhi and Manmohan Singh in particular helped Bangladeshis and Rohingyas to the extent possible for vote bank politics. They also settled almost one lakh Rohingyas in and around Jammu city before and after 2008.

Prof Hari Om

CAA ROLL OUT

Dear Editor,

The much-coveted Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) has been rolled out by the Modi government. It is not unusual for the opposition political parties to criticize anything that the ruling party does. Criticisms command value only when good things are appre-

ciated and bad works are criticized. Criticism loses its value when everything is criticized. Critics of CAA have half-knowledge about it. The object of CAA is to accord citizenship to the persecuted Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Parsis and Christians in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh. The point of objection of the critics is that Muslims have been discriminated against. They fail to understand or feign to not understand that the Muslims community does not face persecution from their own community countries. Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh are the Islamic countries. If the Muslims can face persecution in the Islamic countries, where else can they be safe? How can they be expected to be safe in any non-Islamic country? It is altogether a different matter that Hindus of India are quite tolerant of people belonging to other faiths. But that does not merit citizenship to the Muslims coming from Muslims country. The opposition parties would not like to accept this stark truth. If Hindus face persecution in India, can they be expected to be safe in non-Hindu countries? Sharad Pawar's remarks that CAA will disturb religious harmony in the country make no sense. RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav says "I am a Hindu. I oppose CAA because it's a black law". Has Tejashwi who claims that he is Hindu forgotten that his father Lalu Prasad Yadav, being a Hindu, stopped the Ram Rath Yatra of L.K. Advani and arrested him? His party is and was staunch opponent of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. Sitaram Yechuri of CPM says that the rules are utilized for some electoral gains. Every party will do or undo anything for electoral gains only. No party should be singled out for it. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi shouts that he would not allow CAA in Assam, come what may. AICC President Mallikarjuna Kharge says that the society is being divided on the basis of religion. Did he forget that Jawaharlal was instrumental in dividing the nation on the basis of religion for the sake of power? Samajawadi Chief Akhilesh Yadav says "It is a game of distraction". He complains that lakhs of citizens gave up their citizenship of the country

during the 10-year rule. Those who do not want to live in India will give up their citizenship. Foreigners who want Indian citizenship will come and have come to India. It does not mean that those who have renounced Indian citizenship have faced any persecution in India and those who have come and settled in India have faced persecution in their own country. Between 2011 to 2022, the average number of Indians giving up citizenship has been reportedly put at 1,38,620. Who was in power from 2011 to 2013 and partly in 2014? It was the Congress-led UPA that was in power. Renouncement and acquisition of Indian citizenship is a continuing process. No government can prevent it. Asaduddin Owaisi, AIMIM chief has termed the CAA unconstitutional. He views that the CAA has been notified to trouble the Muslims. The CAA does not empower the Indian government to deport the already living Muslims in India. It is a deliberate attempt by Owaisi to pick hole in the CAA. Manata Banerjee has vowed that she would not implement CAA in Bengal. Is Bengal not an integral part of India? Or is Bengal the personal property of Manata Banerjee? Does she think that she will be the Chief Minister forever in Bengal? Power comes and power goes. While criticism is part of democratic feature, non-cooperation with the Central government is not so. Congress has questioned the timing of notifying CAA. No time is inauspicious to bring the necessary laws in times of need. If Congress thinks that the CAA is bid to manage headlines after Supreme Court's severe strictures on electoral bonds, how come that BJP had passed CAA four years back whereas the Supreme Court has nixed electoral bonds now? The Muslim population has grown from 24.8 per cent to 34.2 per cent from 1951 to 2011 in Assam whereas it is 19.4 per cent to 27 per cent in Bengal in the same period. With their unjust criticisms at everything, the opposition parties are proving that they are fit to be more in the opposition benches.

K.V. Seetharamaiah