"Gray hairs are signs of wisdom if you hold your tongue, speak and they are but hairs, as in the young."
-Rabindranath Tagore

CALL FOR GLOBAL SOLIDARITY

In a world stitched together by dreams and destinies, terrorism stands as a dark scar on the face of humanity - a force that seeks to tear apart what history, hope, and heart have built.

It is no longer the burden of a single nation or a distant neighbor; it is a collective wound that bleeds across all borders.

Terrorism knows no nationality, no religion, no righteous cause. It is an assault on the very fabric of civilization - on peace, progress, and the right of every child to walk without fear.

From the bustling cities to the quiet villages, from the valleys of Kashmir to the streets of Paris, its shadow seeks to sow chaos and division.

Nations must stand shoulder to shoulder - not just in mourning after an attack, but in unwavering, preemptive solidarity.

Diplomacy must sharpen its focus, intelligence must flow freely between allies, and resources must be shared generously.

International bodies must move beyond resolutions and into realms of real action.

Every handshake between nations, every shared commitment, every voice raised together against terror - they become the bricks of a new, unbreakable wall of global peace.

Let the banners of every nation unfurl not separately, but together, in defiance of fear.

Let humanity write a new chapter where courage is stronger than cruelty, and hope is louder than hatred.

For when nations unite, not even the deepest darkness can extinguish the light of our collective spirit. It is not just a dream. Unite the nations. End the terror. Light the future.

WAVES 2025: India's Leap Towards Global Creative Leadership

■ **DR. L. MURUGAN**

India has always excelled in the art of storytelling, captivating generations with its timeless epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharata. Our narratives extend beyond stories and serve as cultural cornerstones, shaping how we perceive the world, express creativity, and inspire generations of artists and visionaries. This inherent passion for storytelling has evolved into a powerful creative aspiration—one that is now driving India's emergence as a global media powerhouse.

The inaugural World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES), from 1st to 4th May 2025, places India at the centre stage of global creativity. Conceptualized under Honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji's leadership, WAVES is a transformative movement that will redefine the media and entertainment (M&E) landscape. As India's M&E industry nears INR 2.7 trillion, WAVES 2025 signals our intent to lead in creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

India's content creation landscape has transformed from traditional media to a thriving digital-first ecosystem, expanding global connections through streaming services, social media, and emerging technologies. Government initiatives like incentives for foreign film production in India, coproduction agreements and Film Facilitation Office (FFO) strengthen India's standing as a preferred destination for global creators.

Transforming the Media and Entertainment landscape

WAVES 2025 represents the dawn of a new era for India's media and entertainment industry. By bringing together innovators, policymakers, artists, and industry leaders from across the globe, the summit fosters an environment of collaboration that will reshape how entertainment is created, distributed, and experienced.

Central to this transformation are initiatives like WAVEX 2025 and WAVES Bazaar. WAVEX 2025 empowers startups working in emerging technologies such as gaming, animation, extended reality (XR), generative AI, and next-gen content platforms. This initiative creates a launchpad for startups to showcase their ideas, receive mentorship, and secure funding through interactions with venture capitalists and celebrity angel investors. On the other hand, WAVES Bazaar serves as a dynamic e-marketplace designed to connect creators, buyers, and sellers. With over 5,500 buyers, 2,000 sellers, and 1,000 registered projects spanning film, television, gaming, advertising, and more, the Bazaar is a space for seamless collaboration and opportunity discovery. AI-powered matchmaking ensures that projects and professionals find the right connections, fostering innovation and driving growth in the creative economy. These platforms are more than event-driven—they are transformative ecosystems that will continue to impact the M&E sector long after WAVES concludes. This will be another milestone in India's digital public infrastructure.

A golden platform for India's youth

India's youth—our greatest demographic advantage—stand to benefit profoundly from the WAVES initiative. With an average age of 29, India is not only the youngest country in the world but also the most vibrant when it comes to creativity and innovation. WAVES 2025 places the youth at the forefront of its vision, creating pathways for skill development, entrepreneurship, and global collaboration.

The Create in India Challenge is an example of this commitment. With around 1,00,000 registrations including over 1,100 international participants, the challenge has attracted a diverse pool of talent eager to showcase their creativity. The finalists, now part of CreatoSphere, will receive unparalleled opportunities to connect with industry leaders, attend masterclasses, and gain global exposure.

Furthermore, the establishment of the Indian Institute of Creative Technologies (IICT) in Mumbai marks a monumental investment in the future of India's youth. As a global centre of excellence for skill development and innovation, IICT will bridge the gap between creativity and technology, ensuring that young Indians have the expertise to meet the rising demands of the M&E industry.

Global collaboration for sustainable growth

The summit will also feature Global Media Dialogue, bringing together an unprecedented gathering of global leaders, policymakers, artists, and industry professionals. This dialogue is not just about discussions; it is about action—developing strategies for international collaboration, ethical practices, and innovation. Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji's scheduled interactions with CEOs and industry stakeholders are expected to set the tone for impactful partnerships that will benefit India for years to come.

A vision for Viksit Bharat

WAVES 2025 is not just an event—it is a leap toward realizing India's vision of Viksit Bharat, a developed nation leading the world in creativity and innovation. By promoting diversity, advancing technology, and empowering youth, WAVES WAVES 2025 positions India as a talent hub capable of sustainable development in the creative economy.

WAVES 2025 is a reinforcement of the endless possibilities that the creative industry has to offer. It is an opportunity to showcase its unmatched talent, technological prowess, and cultural richness. It is a testament to India's vision to redefine the global creative ecosystem through the confluence of tradition and technology.

(The writer is Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs)

Exploring the connection between spirituality and mental well-being

■ **SURJIT SINGH FLORA**

The term "Psyche" serves as the foundational element for both psychology and psychiatry. The term "psyche" refers to the concepts of soul, mind, or spirit. Spiritual activities may improve mental, emotional, and physical health and boost success.

A growing body of research links spirituality to mental wellness. Some may benefit from this link. Religious people had lower incidences of despair, anxiety, and drug addiction, according to research. Spiritual or religious people are like this. According to some research, having spiritual or religious beliefs may give one's life meaning and purpose, which may avoid mental health concerns.

There are many different factors that contribute to the development of a psychologically healthy and stable person, and spirituality is one of those factors.

In the field of psychotherapy, spirituality plays a vital and increasingly recognized role, and it brings a variety of distinctive contributions to the therapeutic process. Spirituality may be defined as an individual's or a person's desire for meaning, purpose, and connection to something larger. This search is not necessarily associated with a particular religious or divine hierarchy.

Therefore, it is a fluid process that is directed by internal experience, intuition, and self-discovery. There are no predetermined rules or rituals that are necessary, which encourages personal inquiry among individuals.

It is from the inside out that spirituality operates, with our inner experiences and beliefs influencing the acts that we do on the outside. Personal development, inner serenity, and self-realization are the driving forces behind spirituality, which may also incorporate a belief in a higher power, universal energy, or just a feeling of oneness. When it comes to mental health therapies, including spirituality is known to provide a number of well-known advantages. Not only does it enable therapists to address their clients' psychiatric concerns, but it also enables them to see their clients as complete individuals in terms of their mind, body, heart, and soul.

This acknowledges the fact that the bulk of people's problems and their progress toward recovery are profoundly rooted in their need for meaning, purpose, and connection that extends beyond oneself. A significant number of individuals seek therapy in an effort to find meaning, purpose, or forgiveness. They do this by bringing spiritual worries or existential suffering to the table, which may be a prelude to their underlying troubles.

In order to find a solution to problems such as anxiety, sadness, and mourning, it may be necessary to address these conditions.

An individual may acquire effective coping techniques via the use of spiritual practices and belief systems, which can assist them in dealing with traumatic experiences, loss, and transitions in their lives. There are spiritual options that may bring hope, acceptance, and resilience. Some examples of these tools are prayer, meditation, and support communities. For the purpose of facilitating recovery from alcohol, other substances of abuse, and trauma, recovery groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous and other forgiveness or meaning-based treatments actively incorporate spiritual themes.

The individual's personal choices and views serve as the guiding principle for the complementary inclusion of spirituality into psychotherapy interventions. Counsellors are strongly encouraged to inquire about and respect the spiritual origins of their clients, and to use these histories as a source of strength in their therapeutic work.

Spirituality may be coupled with mindfulness, existential psychotherapy, narrative therapy, and spiritually sensitive cognitive behavioural treatments, according to study. These methods help customers address spiritual difficulties, reframe pain, and find peace.

As a result of the recognition that spirituality is an essential cultural factor, therapists are encouraged to gain competency in handling spiritual and religious difficulties. This acknowledges the influence that these topics have on mental health and respects the many opinions that people have about the world.

The practice of mindfulness, which assists in the management of stress and the improvement of emotional regulation, is one of the effective spirituality-based strategies. It is possible for a person to increase their positive and create resilience via the practice of appreciation, and artistic expression may aid in the processing of emotions and the discovery of meaning.

The practice of spiritual precepts such as forgiveness and compassion may help lessen negative emotions and lead to healthier relationships. On the other hand, interactions with nature and community can help increase connectivity, reduce anxiety, and assist in the processing of emotions.

(The writer is a veteran journalist and freelance writer based in Brampton)

Impact of Climate Change on Agricultural Production

■ **DR. BANARSI LAL**

Climate change presents a significant challenge to the world in present era. Agricultural production as the foundation for the survival and development of human beings is greatly impacted by the global climate change. Global warming not only leads to frequent extreme weather events, uneven precipitation, droughts and floods, resulting in reduced crop yields but also disrupts ecological balance and affects the control of different insect-pests and diseases. Climate change and agriculture are interrelated processes. Agriculture plays an immense role in ensuring food and livelihood security and it accounts for a significant share of India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It engages around two-thirds of the population in gainful employment. Many industries such as food, milk processing, sugar, textiles, jute etc. depend on agricultural production. As agriculture is having its close linkages with other economic sectors so agricultural growth has a multiplier effect on the entire national economy. Presently, the threat of climate change poses a serious challenge for sustainable agricultural growth. This threat is compounded due to accumulated greenhouse gases emissions in the atmosphere, anthropogenically generated through long-term intensive industrial growth and high consumption lifestyles. As the international community is making strenuous efforts to deal with this threat, India needs to develop a strategy for adapting to climate change and its variability in order to ensure ecological sustainability. A resilient agricultural production system is required to sustain productivity in the event of extreme climatic variability. The Indian farmers have evolved many coping mechanisms over the years but these have been fallen short of an effective response strategy in dealing with recurrent and intense forms of extreme climatic events on the one hand and gradual changes in climate like rise in surface temperatures, changes in rainfall patterns, increase in evapo-transpiration rates and degrading soil moisture conditions on the other. The need of the hour is, therefore, to synergise modern agricultural technologies with the indigenous technical knowledge of the farmers to enhance the resilience of the Indian agriculture to climate change.

Climate Change refers to the statistical variations in the properties of the climate system such as changes in temperatures, rainfall etc. due to natural or human causes over a long period of time. Climate change drastically alters the distribution and quality of natural resources thus adversely affecting the livelihood security of the people. In order to sustain agricultural growth to mitigate food requirements, policies and strategies need re-orientation with appropriate feedback mechanisms that are embedded in the policy spectrum for not only meeting food grain and buffer stock requirements but also to ensure livelihood security in times of catastrophic incidents. According to Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the adverse impact of climate change due to rising temperatures and extreme weather events would be on the agricultural production. Consistent warming trends and more frequent and intense extreme weather events are being observed across India in the recent decades. The catastrophe of flash floods and land sliding in Jammu and Kashmir on 6th September, 2014 is the best example of climate change.

Several areas such as coastal areas, Indo-Gangetic plains and the drought and flood prone regions of the country have been identified as risk prone due to the impacts of climate change. Agricultural crops, livestock, fresh water and the marine ecosystem all are likely to be affected due to change in climate. Such climatic fluctuations adversely affect agricultural sustainability resulting in unforeseen situational shortages which could also impact other economic sectors. Vulnerability of India in the event of climate change is more pronounced due to its ever increasing dependency on agriculture, excessive pressure on natural resources and poor management mechanisms. The warming trend in India over the past 100 years (1901-2000) is estimated to be 0.4 degree C. The projected impact of further warming is likely to aggravate yield fluctuations of many crops. A one degree Celsius rise in mean temperature would likely to affect wheat yield in the heartland of green revolution. Negative impact on yield of wheat and paddy in certain parts of India due to rise in temperatures, increase in water stress and reduction in the number of rainy days has been observed. Parts of western Rajasthan, southern Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Northern Karnataka, Northern Andhra Pradesh and Southern Bihar are expected to be more vulnerable in times of extreme climatic events. It is estimated that irrigation requirements in arid and semiarid regions would likely to increase by 10% for every 1 degree rise in temperature. Rise in sea level would also likely to have adverse effects on the livelihood of fishermen. The effect can even be more detrimental if no adaptation is taken. The negative impact on agricultural production will imply significant percentage fall in the annual GDP and its fallout for livelihood security in the agricultural sector and other economic sectors. As the short term mitigation measures demand immediate attention, the complexities of abiotic stress on crops and livestock in the long term would require intensive research to effectively address the adaptation processes required for making our production systems resilient to climate change.

Sustainable agricultural practices maintain environmental and soil health and also economic profitability. Thus, stewardship of both natural and human resources is of prime importance. In other words, sustainable agriculture involves the processes that would enable us to meet the current and long term societal needs for food, fiber and other resources, while maximising benefits through the conservation of natural resources and maintenance of ecosystem. The priority of exalting human capabilities at the individual level and ensuring food security at the national level, through efficient and equitable use of resources are compatible with the concept of sustainable agriculture. Inter-annual, intra-seasonal, monthly and daily distribution of climatic variables such as temperature, precipitation and humidity play a pivotal role in most of the physical, physiological, chemical and biological processes that increase productivity in agriculture, livestock, forestry and fisheries sectors. Any change in these climatic determinants not only leads to adverse impact on food security and nutrition but also affects the livelihood of millions depending on the agricultural sector. Agriculture and allied sectors, thus, exhibit high sensitivity to climatic variability and changes. While in the long run, climate change is likely to exacerbate current stresses there by increasing the vulnerabilities in food production and livelihoods of farming communities, even the short- run climatic variability and occurrence of extreme weather events would affect agricultural production, livestock and fisheries. Climate change is also likely to significantly alter the dynamics of extreme events such as tropical cyclones, storms surges and extreme rainfall events; possibly increasing their frequency and intensity. It is estimated that low lying regions, including small islands, will face the highest exposure to rising sea levels, which further will increase the risk of floods bringing more cultivable area under the risk of submergence and degradation. Due to excessive rainfall hilly areas are prone to land sliding followed by flash floods in the rivers.A number of environmental, social and economic factors contribute to the differential vulnerabilityof diverse farming systems. Rainfed areas, in particular, having complex cropping systems operating under fragile ecological conditions, constitute about 60 % of net cultivated area. Poverty levels and high population density are other important factors that increase the vulnerability of the Indian agricultural system to climate change. Multiple stresses on natural resources such as soil erosion, salinisation of irrigated lands, degradation of pastures, water pollution and overexploitation of forest stocks contribute to low resilience in the Indian farming systems. As most of the agricultural production takes place in rural areas by engaging people from the marginalized sections of the society, the crop management capacity of the farmers during climatic extremities is limited.

Crop management response of the Indian farmers to natural shocks such as droughts are often of distress through sale or mortgage of farm assets like livestock or land. Constraint in accessing institutional or formal financial mechanisms for agricultural credit is another important factor that contributes to high vulnerability of the sector. Similarly, agricultural markets and food supply chains in India are mainly in the unorganized sector which is often dominated by intermediaries thereby depriving the farmers of their due remuneration. Post-harvest losses due to inadequate storage and transport infrastructure, lack of market information and intelligence reduce the profitability of farming systems. Although there are mechanisms to provide adequate information access on weather and crop management, they often operate on a delayed mode and lack feedback mechanism. The combination of high vulnerability and low adaptive capacity makes enhancing resilience in the Indian agriculture and allied sectors a challenging task.

Climate change alters the natural balance of local and global ecosystems and infringes on human settlements. It is expected that vulnerable groups such as poor will face food insecurity, loss of livelihood, hardships due to environmental change and extreme climatic events such as drought, floods, storms, cyclones and land sliding. The overall impact of climate change on our food production systems and economy is expected to be high as the agriculture and its allied sectors still accounts for a large share of gross domestic product (GDP) and employment. Although agriculture contribution to GDP is falling, it still accounts for a significant share. For the States like Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana, the percentage share of agriculture and allied activities in state domestic product is more than 30 percent. The Indian agriculture now faces the challengeof ensuring food security amidst constraints such as stagnating net sown area, deterioration of land quality, reduction in per capita land availability etc. As a result, agricultural productivity has been witnessing stagnation in recent years. Besides, issues such as competing demand for water in the context of changing demographics and its various end uses, further aggravates the degree of risks in the agriculture sector. These have considerable implications for food and livelihood security and as agriculture production being risk prone, may lead to migration from rural to urban areas. Fostering rapid, sustainable and broad-based growth in agriculture is thus a key priority keeping in mind the overall socio-economic development trajectory of the country, especially in the light of existing vulnerabilities that relate to a shrinking land resource base, additional stresses arising from the non-agricultural sector and issues emerging due to changing climate. This necessitates a strategic approach with a renewed vision and redefined focus.

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