

HERITAGE TOURISM

Preservation of historical sites like Hari Parbat, Leh Palace, Mubarak Mandi Palace, Pari Mahal, and Poonch Fort is paramount. This involves employing experts in conservation to ensure that these sites are maintained authentically while safeguarding them from natural wear and tear.

Restoration efforts should aim to revive the original glory of these monuments, repairing any damage inflicted by time or conflict. This may include repairing structural elements, restoring artwork and carvings, and recreating gardens and landscapes to their historical appearance.

Enhancing infrastructure around heritage sites is crucial for attracting tourists and providing them with a comfortable and safe experience. This includes improving roads, parking facilities, signage, and visitor centers.

Developing amenities such as restrooms, food stalls, and souvenir shops near these sites can enhance the overall visitor experience and encourage longer stays.

Robust marketing campaigns are essential to raise awareness about Jammu and Kashmir's heritage sites both domestically and internationally.

Utilizing various platforms such as social media, travel websites, and traditional advertising can help reach a wide audience.

Collaborating with travel agencies, tour operators, and online booking platforms can increase visibility and accessibility for tourists interested in heritage tourism.

Educational initiatives aimed at both locals and visitors can foster a deeper appreciation for the cultural significance of these heritage sites. This may include guided tours, workshops, and interactive exhibits that highlight the history, architecture, and traditions associated with each site.

Engaging local communities in the preservation and promotion of heritage tourism can instill a sense of pride and ownership, encouraging them to actively participate in conservation efforts.

Encouraging responsible tourism behavior, such as proper waste disposal and respect for cultural norms, can help mitigate negative effects on both the environment and local communities.

Using electronics shouldn't cause you to become ill

■ SURJIT SINGH FLORA

We have become increasingly reliant on the many things that science has provided us. We spend a significant portion of our day staying connected to these electronic devices. Enjoy the convenience and entertainment of devices like laptops, TVs, Wi-Fi, video games, and mobile phones.

These things have become an integral part of our lives. Despite the apparent deterioration, it's important to remain hopeful about the potential of each day. However, it's crucial to be aware of the potential health risks associated with these products. We should prioritize saving ourselves while there is still time.

**Ways to mitigate the negative impacts:**

We have the opportunity to discover just how many hours we spend working on our computers or laptops each day. Continuous work on the computer can have an impact on various parts of the body, such as the eyes, fingers, and neck.

It's important to take regular breaks and rest our eyes for a few minutes after every half-hour of computer work. Shift your focus away from the screen and give your eyes a break by closing your eyelids or finding a different activity to engage in. Take a break and give your fingers some well-deserved rest. Stretch your fingers, make a fist, and then slowly open your hand to help relax the nerves. Remember to take regular breaks throughout the day to stretch your legs, hydrate, and give your body a chance to relax.

I'm feeling really positive about TV. Embrace the light and avoid dark rooms. Ensure that the room is well-lit. Enjoying the comforts of home and indulging in some quality TV time. Remember to take breaks and rest after every half hour. Embrace the day and explore the world around you. Avoid eating while watching TV. You'll be pleasantly surprised by how much you ate. As a result, obesity will rise rapidly. Obesity is a significant factor in the development of various diseases, which is widely recognized around the globe.

**Excessive use of electronic devices can have a range of negative impacts on one's health, including:**

Extended periods of screen time may cause some discomfort, such as eye strain, dry eyes, blurred vision, and headaches. However, there are ways to mitigate these effects and maintain a positive experience.

Disturbances in sleep: The emission of blue light from electronic devices can have an impact on the production of melatonin, a hormone that plays a crucial role in regulating sleep. This disruption may lead to insomnia and other sleep disorders, as it can interfere with the natural sleep-wake cycle.

Extended use of electronic devices can sometimes lead to improper posture and stress on the neck and back, which can cause discomfort and pain.

Regular use of devices like keyboards, mice, and smartphones may cause inflammation and compression of the median nerve in the wrist, potentially resulting in carpal tunnel syndrome.

Increased physical activity: Limiting the use of electronic devices can lead to a more active lifestyle, reducing the risk of obesity, diabetes, and other chronic conditions.

Mental health concerns: Social media and various online platforms can impact our well-being, especially among young individuals, by potentially contributing to feelings of anxiety, depression, and other mental health challenges.

Overall, the widespread use of electronic devices can have negative effects on both physical and mental health. It's important to highlight the importance of practicing good digital hygiene and making sure to take regular screen breaks as part of our daily routine.

Embrace the benefits of using a large screen on a computer or laptop to maintain proper eye alignment.

Embrace the opportunity to use your mobile phone for a limited time, only when absolutely necessary. Focus your time and attention on more productive activities instead of getting caught up in the distractions of Facebook and WhatsApp. Stay organized and in control of your communication by scheduling specific times to send and read important messages. Make the most of your day. Experts have found that using mobile devices for extended periods of time can potentially disrupt the balance of glucose in the brain.

According to another research, it's worth noting that mobile phones can harbor a significant amount of harmful bacteria. This may raise concerns about the potential for stomach diseases and other health issues. Using a mobile device for more than 4 to 5 hours a day can have an impact on your temperament, potentially leading to increased anger.

Similarly, individuals who spend more time on the computer may face a higher risk of death compared to others. The risk of heart diseases is significantly elevated, by 125 percent. These figures are based on research conducted by the University of London.

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

The privilege of a lifetime is being who you are

■ SHONIMA MALHOTRA

Imagine waking up each day feeling completely at peace with who you are. Unburdened by the need to conform or satisfy others.

At times, instead of behaving in a real and unadulterated way, we act in ways that go against our true nature. In short, we are living unauthentically. Don't you think living and working this way is strenuous, unsatisfactory, and confining? On the converse, when we can provide ourselves acquiescence to be ourselves, we can live free from other's ideas and expectations, and we can choose our own desired course of life. This is the power of being one's own self. In a world that often pressurizes to fit in, to be you are the greatest accomplishment.

Being one's own self implies we are true to our true whole self. It is all about espousing one's unique persona and individuality acknowledging one's strengths and weaknesses, leading one's life according to one's own principles and goals and not being submissive to societal pressures or expectations that don't resonate with us.

We are honest with ourselves and with others, and take accountability for our mistakes. Our own thinking, feeling, acting and communicating is congruent with no mixed signals. It's a commitment to self awareness, self acceptance, and personal growth, allowing one to lead a fulfilling and authentic life.

However being authentic does not undermine the significance of flexibility. In fact, in a chapter titled "Authenticity" in the 2001 book "Handbook of Positive Psychology, Dr. Susan Harter argues that our personalities can't be "fixed". However, our basic true self remains the same no matter what situation we're in. Have you ever realized that all non

human living creatures unknowingly act their true selves because they do not have the option to behave artificial? But I feel it is a blessing in disguise for them because they are free from strains and stress of doing something that go against their real nature and values.

If those who cannot think wit fully behave natural then I think we as human beings are lucky enough to have this privilege to make a correct choice and behave our real selves. When we don't eat, drink or wear adulterated products fearing that they can damage the different aspects of our personality, then how can we adopt adulterated and fake behavior and lifestyle knowing that this too can damage our personality negatively in so many different ways?

But unfortunately, human beings in the pursuit of kaya (body), chaya (shadow) and maya (illusion) in their lives tend to lose their true self and embrace artificiality in their looks, behavior and personality. Talking about kaya, an over stress on physical appearance leads to a phony focus, where one's self worth becomes tied to exterior looks rather than interior qualities.

Societal principles of beauty and strength creates pressure to conform to certain physical ideals, leading individuals to take on behaviours or lifestyles that are not aligned with their true selves - like a person might start following intense fitness regimes and diets to attain a body type popularized on social media, ignoring their own body requirements and compromising their mental, emotional and physical well being or they might prioritize looks and attire markedly to project a certain reflection neglecting personal values and interests. Remember the story of a clever wolf that disguised itself as a peacock by using

vibrant colors from berries and flowers to paint its fur and reveled in the attention and adoration basking in the glory of its clever disguise.

However, the wolf's happiness was short-lived as those colors got washed away in a sudden downpour that drenched the forest revealing its true identity and making it feel ashamed.

This story conveys a clear message that true beauty, respect and happiness come from being genuine and authentic, not from false appearances or deceit.

Again, the pursuit of Chaya used metaphorically to represent an idealized version of one or the chase of a certain repute leads to the overpowering of one's individuality and personal expression.

In the constant pursuit of an elusive shadowy external reflection or reputation one might represent oneself in ways that are not authentic to one's genuine thoughts, feelings and values leading to actions that are not aligned with one's authentic selves. For e.g. A teenager might take on activities they do not take pleasure in or agree with, just to fit in with an admired faction and keep up their social standing, or someone might prioritize acquiring pricey items and displaying wealth to uphold an image of success, even if it means going into debt or sacrificing personal happiness and values.

In their run after maya, people tend to forget that to maintain authenticity, it is vital to stay grounded in one's morals, contemplate long term implications and cultivate self wakefulness when confronted with an option of remaining bound to one's values or succumbing to enticement and the lure of potential gain.

To clarify my point I quote the story of the honest woodcutter. This story is a genuine reflection of that woodcutter's character and true self, as he chose to

stay true to his ethics and ideals even when faced with temptation.

The idea is to live a life that is compatible with one's inner self- dressing in a way that reflects one's personal approach and makes one feel relaxed, regardless of existing trends; choosing a calling that aligns with one's passions and values, even if it's unconventional or less lucrative; pursuing hobbies and interests that genuinely bring joy, rather than those deemed trendy or socially popular; standing firm in one's beliefs and values, even when faced with peer pressure or societal expectations; continuously determined for self improvement and personal growth, based on one's own aspirations and goals, rather than societal standards of success- thereby ensuring a sense of fulfillment and contentment.

However, being true to oneself does not mean non considering the impact of one's actions on others or the environment one is in; it is about finding a way to express one's authentic self while also being mindful of the context and consequences. No doubt, being one's own self is generally a positive and healthy approach to life, but it is equally important to balance authenticity with empathy, adaptability, and ethical considerations.

In her 1994 book "The Dance of Deception," psychologist Dr. Harriet Lerner states that truth requires tact, timing, kindness, and empathy with the other person. Never forget that being true to oneself is not being over-individualistic rather it involves connections and contributions to the larger society. Prioritizing personal desires over responsibilities such as family obligations, or work commitments can lead to neglecting duties and letting others down.

(The writer is Assistant Professor of Sociology GDC Sidhra).

Human trafficking puts humanity to shame

■ PRIYANKA SAURABH

Human trafficking is a disgrace to civilized society and is one of the most devastating human rights violations in the modern world. Every 30 seconds a person or child is trafficked, 3.8 million adults are trafficked and forced into sexual exploitation, and one million children are trafficked into forced sexual exploitation every year. Bonded labor is India's biggest human trafficking problem, in which men, women and children are forced to work in debt-bonded brick kilns, rice mills and factories inherited from previous generations.

Human trafficking involves transporting, recruiting, transferring, harboring, and obtaining persons using methods such as force, threat, or coercion. The ultimate objective of these acts and means is to use these individuals for exploitation. The exploitation of these persons takes various extremely abusive forms such as prostitution, organ trade, sexual exploitation, forced labor, slavery, and servitude. The largest number of trafficked persons are women and children who are used for various forms of unethical labor or sexual exploitation.

India is among the top countries in the world in terms of human trafficking and is considered a source, transit, and destination of human trafficking. Apart from intra-state and inter-state human trafficking, international human trafficking from Nepal and Bangladesh also occurs in India due to its long open border. West Bengal has emerged as a new center of human trafficking. Human trafficking takes place from India to West Asia, North America, and European countries. One-third of victims of human trafficking worldwide are children.

According to an estimate, about 5 lakh women, girls, and children were illegally brought to India from Bangladesh in the last decade and this number is increasing year after

year. This is the reason why West Bengal has emerged as India's largest sex market today and the statistics also testify to this. Out of every 10 girls who were released from prostitution in brothels across the country, 7 are from North and South 24 Parganas. The biggest fear among these girls is of being caught because when they are released and sent back home, their families refuse to accept them to avoid social stigma.

To avoid getting caught, the pimps of these girls keep changing their place of residence and mobile SIM cards. The Benopole border with Bangladesh is the most used route by brokers for human trafficking and Bangladeshi brokers have established strong bases in the border areas. Apart from attractive employment, salary, and facilities, Bangladeshi girls are lured to India for marriage and to work in films, where Mumbai, Hyderabad, and Bangalore are considered to be their favorite destinations.

Trafficking thrives in places where there is widespread poverty. Parents sell their children because they are left with no other option due to poverty, they often think that by selling their children they will move to places that are much better and where their lives will improve. One of the most vulnerable sections of society that is more vulnerable to trafficking young women, and this is because women are socially and culturally considered devalued and unwanted in most societies and thus they are more vulnerable to the practice of trafficking. Are more sensitive.

The desire to flee places where their lives are miserable makes individuals approach traffickers who lure them in the initial stages with promises of a better life, but once the victims come under their control, So coercive measures are applied to make them bend.

Other reasons are the porous nature of borders, corrupt government officials, the involvement of transnational

organized criminal groups or networks, and the limited capacity or commitment of immigration and law enforcement officials to control the borders.

Over the years the menace of trafficking has become an organized criminal syndicate equivalent to a drug syndicate. It has deeply rooted itself in society with the help of money and corrupt politicians. The lack of concrete definitions in the Indian legal framework also does not help the cause as various smugglers go scot-free based on technical loopholes in the legal systems. Even without concrete definitions, the laws should have been sufficient, but much remains incomplete in the implementation of these laws in India. The lack of monitoring on social media platforms has opened up a new platform for smugglers to continue their trade.

Data on the problem of trafficking are insufficient, so the patterns and working mechanisms of smugglers are not as clear as they should be.

Even when victims are recovered from traffickers, they are not rehabilitated so that they do not become victims of trafficking again. The menace of human trafficking is huge and there is a need to not only stop such crimes but also ensure that the relief and rehabilitation process happens smoothly.

There is a need to further improve the policies and appropriate action should be taken by various agencies and stakeholders. The right to protection from human trafficking is a constitutional right.

This right must be protected to provide a dignified life to every child, every man, and every woman in the country.

Human trafficking is one of the biggest problems facing the world today. Despite all efforts, it is not possible to stop it, and not only under-developed and developing countries but also developed nations are not untouched by this problem. Human trafficking is also one of the major problems in India.

Dwindling Moral Values in society

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

I am very unfortunate that the moral and ethical values in the modern society are declining day by day and it is a matter of great concern to all right thinking people.

There is moral perversion and moral turpitude in human society today and concerted and serious steps should be taken to arrest the bad trend of declining moral values. Materialism is taking deep roots in the society as the people are becoming materialistic and are moving away from moral and ethical values. We take great pride in modernity but forget that the real modernity is in having moral and cultural values.

No doubt man has progressed in science and technology and has excelled in different walks of life but alas he is distancing from moral, social, cultural and ethical values and this is a big problem.

Morality is a thing of bygone days and in present time we are suffering because we lack morality and ethical values and there is great need to control this trend and ensure that people follow morality. Honesty and integrity is the first casualty of the degradation of moral and social values.

The bad results of moral decay in the society are felt in different fields of life and sooner we should control moral bankruptcy in the society.

An analysis of survey conducted around the world since 1949 shows that the idea of a decline in moral values is omnipresent, whatever the social or historical context. According to respondents, this moral decline is linked to getting older, and to the arrival of new less virtuous generations.

The idea of moral decline has been present in societies over history. Studies contradict this perception, everyday morality is not declining. We can therefore speak of the "illusion of moral decline". This erroneous belief is reinforced by

two cognitive biases -the negativity bias and memory bias. We often hear "things were better before."

"The idea is that in the past you could trust other people, the people respected each other, and that from now on that is no longer the case."

"If that is true, it is a very powerful description of the world and a disaster. If not, there is a very interesting psychological question-why do people think that there is a moral decline?" The decline in moral values means that people are less honest, generous, polite, respectful or kind than they used to be. The society has become less ethical in recent decades.

The study conducted between 1949 and 2019, involving 220,000 people in the United States, and 58 surveys involving more than 350,000 participants in 59 countries between 1996 and 2007 showed that everywhere people feel that their sense of morality is declining.

Everywhere there is moral deterioration in the society and honesty is declining with each passing day and there is moral perversion seen everywhere and if this trend of moral decline continues unabated it will bring in its wake great moral catastrophe and moral bankruptcy and it will be difficult to come out of the moral crisis of the worst order.

The bad trend of moral decline in the society should be fought with resilience and determination.

Without preserving moral and ethical values, there is no difference between the human beings and animals and men will lose the characteristic of being called superior animals and they are then worst than animals.

There is no real meaning of development unless and until we are able to develop the minds of the people.

All the material, scientific and technological development of the society is paling into insignificance till we are not able to ensure the morally upright individuals.

There is great need to make people morally and ethically conscious so that honest people are manned in different walks of life so that our economy will not suffer. In popular culture, what seems to have the highest shock value captures many people's attention. Consequent and consistent choice of shock value over normalcy has in sense eroded what is considered to be moral, Changing trends in family and parenting have also contributed to moral decay.

With many parents occupied with their careers, enough of them consider providing for the needs of their children as sufficient, yet being emotionally present/involved and supportive through their developmental stages matters more, especially in helping define their moral foundation.

The basic cause of moral degradation in society is the lack of standards that is lack of understanding of the importance of values to our lives.

The fact is the moral values are fading these days. The youngsters are busy preparing for their careers and enjoying their life.

They have little concern for social problems or family affairs. The old people are often neglected. We hear of young people mistreating their old parents or even throwing them out.

Due to cut throat competition in the society, the small children are neglected. The parents leave them in crèches where they are devoid of warmth and care.

The culture is degrading day by day due to the effect of western culture, influence and movies which often mislead the younger generation.

Children have less regard for their mentors and they are glued to their ipads and laptops.

Gone are the days when students valued their teachers and have immense gratitude for them. Life has become very fast and hectic in the coming times. The food

habits of children and even adults have been spoiled due to junk food.

More and more children are now suffering from obesity and do not understand the value of nutritious food. Adults are affected by diseases like blood pressure, diabetes, cancer.

Though we have become highly educated due to eroding values and ideals life is becoming more and more complex. People have forgotten the worth of simple and meaningful living.

The stiff competition is forcing youngsters to commit suicide which is very disappointing and reflects our weak support system. Our avarice and greed have led to low ethics and moral values, thus increasing crimes resulting in fear and threat among innocent people. People in this information age are busy in their selfish pursuits and lack human values. The low moral values have created unrest and turmoil in society.

We see honest people struggling and facing hardships. As we march into digital age, it is high time to keep our moral values high to create a just and equal society and spread happiness all around.

The family, good parenting and schooling should imbibe moral and ethical values among children who are the future leaders and rulers.

Moral and cultural education should be made an integral part of the school curriculum and passing in the moral studies should be made compulsory.

In the family the children should be given good education and should be imparted sanaskars so that they will become good students and later become worthy citizens of the democracy.

Let us reverse the moral perversion and moral decay and ensure that people become morally and culturally conscious so that there is all round development of the moral fabric of the society.

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