

PROGRESSIVE COUNTRY

The 21st century will belong to India. India will become the superpower of the world. Such announcements have been made by politicians, economists and scientists of India. Many foreign scholars have also predicted the bright future of India. Will this dream come true? Are we really moving on the path of becoming a superpower, a developed nation? It is necessary to consider these questions.

There seems to be some solid basis behind these claims and predictions of India's all-round progress. In the last few years, India has proved its mettle in all fields. We have proved ourselves to be the largest and stable democracy in the world. Our economy is making steady progress. We have defeated the last global recession with our foresight.

There is no doubt that India has made remarkable progress in various fields. Our scientists have made many fundamental discoveries. Our progress in the fields of space science, medicine, development of weapons, industrial efficiency, telecommunication, nuclear power etc. is remarkable. Our progress in the economic field is evidenced by the stability and steady growth of our economy.

When the world's major economies were collapsing due to the worldwide recession, the Indian economy proved its credibility by remaining unaffected by it. Increase in foreign investment and acquisition of foreign companies also proves the success of our economy. Apart from this, we have also made remarkable progress in the field of education and culture.

Unlock the best years with active senior living after 50

DR. ISHA SEHDEV

Over the past decade, there has been a significant rise in the prevalence of various medical conditions among seniors, including Osteoporosis, Parkinson's, reduced mobility, joint pains, arthritis, deformities, chronic pains in the muscles, Dizziness, falls. The range of conditions experienced by senior citizen is extensive.

Studies shows that there will be increased number of older adults in society in the next few decades. They are more likely to have chronic pain problems and other co-morbidities. Generally, pain is poorly managed in older adults and this problem worsens when cognitive impairment exists.

Among older adults, persistent musculoskeletal pain is highly prevalent, with rates ranging from 40% to 60%. Musculoskeletal disorders are recognized as a significant threat to maintaining health in older age and have been associated with falls, frailty, depression, anxiety, sleep disturbance, reduced mobility, and impaired cognitive function.

Seniors may experience difficulties with balance, walking and performing daily activities which can negatively impact their quality of life. Falls in senior citizens can lead to debilitating consequences. It can result in fractures, most commonly in the hips, wrists, and spine. After experiencing a fall, seniors may face challenges in their mobility and independence. Fear of falling again may lead them to decline in physical function, limiting their activities and becoming more sedentary, further exacerbating health issues.

According to The Indian society for Bone and Mineral research, 20% of the 230 million Indian women over age 50 have osteoporosis. Prevalence of osteoporosis ranging from 8% to 62% in Indian women of different age groups has been reported in several studies.

The awareness of osteoporosis is low in India, with surveys indicating that only 10 to 15% of Indians are aware of the disease. Senior citizens lack awareness not only about osteoporosis but also about conditions such as arthritis, Parkinson's disease, dementia, Alzheimer's, loss balance, muscle weakness and many more.

A month back, on a fine day I was given a list of 3 clients, surprisingly first and third were both 75 years old seniors.

I called the first one, this 75 years old senior citizen has a stooped posture, leans forward with a hunched over back, and relies on a walking stick for support. He had a waddling gait reflecting the challenges he faces with in his mobility and stability. He exhibited early signs of dementia and Alzheimer's.

To my shock when I called the third client, at 75 years old, this senior citizen maintains an athletic body, exudes energy, and exhibits disciplined dedication to exercise. He actively participates in various physical activities, showcasing his vibrant and active lifestyle. His confidence and glow were impressive. That is the power of exercise.

Basic tests like standing on one leg, ability to hold breath, reaching out to pick something from the floor gives fair idea about quality of life.

Exercise plays a pivotal role in promoting physical strength, mental sharpness, disease prevention and overall quality of life for seniors. When seniors do not engage in regular exercises, they may experience a range of health conditions and challenges. Common issues that can arise due to lack of exercise in older individual like weak and brittle bones (osteoporosis), Cardiovascular problems like heart related diseases and increased of heart attacks and strokes. Reduced mobility and joint pain, lack of exercises lead to flexibility, stiffness, difficult to move freely.

Many doctors don't talk about Muscle weakness and muscle loss, leading to difficulties in maintaining balance, stability, joint aches, and overall strength.

Lack of exercises contributes to reduced balance and coordination, increasing likelihood of falls and potential injuries such as fractures and head trauma. Physical inactivity can also have a negative impact on mental well-being, leading to increased risks of depression, anxiety, and cognitive decline. Exercises increase confidence and feeling of independence profoundly in seniors.

Preparing your body for later age is essential for maintaining good health and well-being as you grow older. Engage in regular physical activity that includes a mix of cardiovascular exercises, strength training and flexibility exercises. The goal is to help maintain muscle mass, improve cardiovascular health, enhance bone density, and keep joints flexibility. A healthcare is the best professional to design an exercise routine suitable for your fitness level and any specific health consideration.

Stepping towards stability is crucial, how important is the balance training for senior citizens. When seniors have better balance, they feel confident in their movements and activities. This increased confidence promotes greater independence as they navigate their surroundings with less fear of fall. Balance training enhances proprioception, which is the body's sense to position itself in space. This allows them to make corrections and avoid potential fall. Adopting a balanced and nutritious diet that includes a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, protein, and healthy fats. Adequate protein intake becomes particularly important as you age to support muscle health. Limit the consumption of processed foods, sugary snacks and excessive salt and of course staying hydrated is equally important.

Maintaining a healthy weight is also one of the important aspects. Excess weight can increase the risk of health issues like heart disease, joint problems, and diabetes.

Senior citizens must understand that investing time and efforts in their physical health is not a luxury but a necessity. By prioritizing exercise, nutrition, regular checkups, and emotional well-being, they can enjoy a vibrant and fulfilling life. It is never too late to start, and the rewards are immeasurable.

Life's lessons: a master educator in personal growth

SHONIMA MALHOTRA

Life is the best teacher, just as it is. It is the toughest teacher. It won't tolerate slothfulness for long. It's always throwing some difficult problem your way and then seeing what you will do with it." Stephanie Killen, Buddha Breaking Up: A Guide to Healing from Heartache & Liberating Your Awesomeness. Certainly! "Life is a best teacher" is a philosophy that emphasizes the significance of pragmatic learning. It suggests that people gain their most valuable insights and wisdom through their own life experiences, both positive and negative, rather than through formal education and instruction.

Life is classified as the period of living existence from birth until death. The human when born is simply a biological being. It is through the process of socialization that he is converted into a social being. There is no better source of socialization than life itself. We come into this world on our own, we depart on our own. What happens in between is what our lives are made up of. Life teaches us the most important lessons that are there to learn, and thus life becomes the greatest teacher of all. Life, the teacher, is on job from day one of life to penultimate day of life. We are students up to the last moment of life. There is no second opinion about the fact that it is not possible to find a better teacher than life and an education better than through the 'University of Life'. We can learn ample from this open school, which we can call as society, world, or universe. As scenes created by a great artist could not excel natural scenes similarly what we learn within the educational institutions would never exceed what we learn from life at any time. No doubt, books are considered to be the source of all knowledge, but all that one learns through a book is only of theoretical nature in the form of ideas and concepts. What matters is that we deal with the ideas or representations of real things. Life provides us with enough opportunities to put these ideas, concepts and knowledge into practice in a real environment. For instance, a person who wants to learn cooking can go through various manuals and guides that teach them how to cook, but all this knowledge is useful only when one is actually cooking the food. Learning through experience is always a lot different from learning through books. Real-world experience is the best teacher because it is hands-on and deals directly with our senses and so it becomes real and something we are a part of. I am a Sociology student. Though I have learnt about the subject by pursuing a post graduate degree in the subject and even gained an idea about sociological concepts, perspectives, theories, social problems and much more but it was only when life bestowed me with opportunities to apply this knowledge practically that I could understand have a much better understanding of the subject. To quote an example let's talk about interactionist perspective. I had studied that under this perspective Goffman talked about dramaturgical approach, Homans talked about exchange approach. But to be honest I understood these concepts when I found them practically applicable in my life. My experiences could relate me to Goffman when he said that life is a stage where we all are actors and stage-manage our lives. Not to talk about others at times even I don't act my real self. Moving towards Homans's exchange approach we do exchange rewards and punishments in material and non material ways in our interaction with others. I would like to add that as per my life experience not only humans but even God makes use of this exchange approach. Whenever He

bestows some happiness upon us he snatches some very precious thing from us. Life taught me that we are conflicting with each other in the form of competition, disagreement over values etc. and this is how conflict perspective in sociology is actually defined. I understood Social Darwinism and its principle of Survival of the Fittest, Weber's types of social actions and even Parson's concept of pattern variables when I actually found myself applying them and saw others applying them in their life.

Every single human being gets enrolled in it with or without his choice. What it would teach is also beyond our control. In fact, its curriculum is very extensive and comprehensive providing us all kind of knowledge. In fact it is so versatile that every day is a new chapter conveying a new lesson. The different people we come across and the myriad of circumstances, situations, events and experiences that we encounter throughout our lives shape our personality and make us the kind of human being that we become. Being part of the social world, we encounter creatures from different walks of life occupying different social statuses in a particular social situation and having different natures. Consciously or unconsciously, each interaction and action do has a learning hidden in it and teaches us something.

One doesn't understand the world till one live in it. Life experience is important and the best way to learn; I say this because I've learnt way more by having getting real-world experiences than I ever did from any educational institution. From my birth to some years of my life I was in the loving and protecting care of my parents and family members and things were planned out for me. My world was small, and I didn't have much to figure out. I was not exposed to the harsh realities of life and was perhaps too young to understand the intricacies of life. Slowly, I stepped out of that protective environment into the real existing world. I thought I knew some stuff about life, but I didn't; had to figure out many new things quickly. I discovered that I didn't know anything about sorting through other people's work or solving multifaceted problems that started coming my way as I proceeded in the journey of my life. I cannot say about you, but I learnt a lot about myself when I started a job. It was my first time alone, and all my responsibilities were on my shoulders. I had to deal with honest and cunning people: sincere and insincere people; easy and tough situations. It's only when I moved out that I had a whole new set of problems; like figuring out what to eat, wash the laundry, pay the bills, and everything else that I were responsible for. Moving in a society with other people made me realize how to deal with different people and situations in an effective manner. All this was challenge in itself. The best way to I could know myself in and out was through the authentic experiences because I had no choice but to face them. I have read that the process of education starts at birth and continues throughout life. I feel it's absolutely true. Even today, my process of learning has not ceased about how to do all sorts of things by simply doing them.

It is undoubtedly the best teacher but at the same time it is innovative. In what ways life would teach it can't be said. It is not always a straight line. It has multiple curves. It moves by taking different twists and turns that makes us happy and smile at times and sad and cry at other times. At every turn, in every twist, it carries a message. Every situation that we face in our life teaches us altogether a different lesson. Tests, which we face at different

phases of our life, are definitely more extensive, difficult and superior to our school and college examinations. We get time to prepare for our school's or college's exams as the date sheet for the same is shared beforehand. But we never know what exam life is going to pose next before us. And we have no choice but to take that exam. Though teacher is not visible, there is more invigilation. In a classroom a teacher poses numerous questions to pupil in order to know whether the pupil has understood or learnt the lesson that has been taught. Whereas life poses us question rarely, instead it puts us in one after another situation which needs to be understood and solved through introspection, analysis, discussions, contemplation etc. We humans might fail to teach a lesson to a person but life always succeeds in its attempt. It has a unique way of teaching, which it never reveals. It evolves and adopts entirely different methods, different strategy for everyone. Hence nobody could copy its technique or excel it in teaching. Certain circumstances can turn our lives around a full 360 degrees. We question what happens to us and often say, 'but why me?' or 'why not me?' We seldom find answers to these questions, but the circumstances that we find ourselves in, however negative or positive, teach us infinite lessons about ourselves, about others, about our hidden potentialities, about our strengths and weaknesses, ways to deal with the circumstances and overcome them if required. And what's more, we find ourselves better prepared to deal with things more effectively and efficiently, should a similar situation arise. The way we experience things with our senses brings them closer to home; we feel all the things around us, so we get caught up in them. Put another way, when you do something for real, there is more to it than just an idea because it is much more tangible and relatable.

No doubt, in the early years of life I used to hum these songs but it was just random. It is now at this stage of my life that I realize the beauty, reality and profoundness of these so thoughtfully written lyrics- Zindagi Ka Safar Hai Yeh Kaise Safar Koi Samjha Nahi Koi Jana Nahi Hai Yeh Aise Daggar Chalthe Hein Sab Magar--- Jeena Ke Liye Socha Hi Nahi Gum Uthane Hogein Muskuraya To Muskurana Ke Karz Uttaama Hogein---; Zindagi Ek Safar Hai Suhana Yahan Kal Kya Ho Kisne Jana---; Zindagi Ek Paheli Bhi Hai Such Dukh Ki Saheli Bhi Hai ---; Har Ghari Badal Rahi Hai Roop Zindagi , Chaon Hai Kabhi To Kabhi Hai Dhoop Zindagi---; Zindagi Ke Safar Mein Guzar Jate Hein Jo Mukaam , Wo Phir Nahi Aate, Log Milta Hein Phool Khilte Hein Ek Roz Jo Log Bichar Jaate Hein Wo Hazaron Ke Aane Pe Milte Nahi, Zindagi Bhar Koi Pukara Kara Unka Naam Wo Phir Nahi Aate---.

To conclude, life is the premier institution recognized for its distinction in teaching, learning and outreach providing the highest quality education and continuously steering us towards self learning based on essence of antiquity and modernity thereby preparing us for purposeful engagement in futuristic world with an open mind and a balanced perspective. Coaching takes place during our entire lifetime. There is no holiday whatsoever in this school. There is no break at all. We are always kept engaged. Holiday is reserved only at the end of our life. It is for once and only once for all. Death is the ultimate test that one faces in their life.

(the writer is Assistant Professor of Sociology GDC Sidra).

World Nature Conservation Day

PROTECTING NATURE: PROTECTING LIFE

DR. PARVEEN KUMAR

Father of Nation Mahatma Gandhi had rightly said that, "there is enough for everybody's need, and not for everybody's greed. Mother Nature has provided us with resources that are sufficient for everyone but people because of their greedy nature are trying to keep a lot more than what is required for themselves creating socio-economic disparities. Although there are many resources on earth, nothing is endless, despite what many people think. We began to over-exploit our resources as a result of population growth and human carelessness. There won't be any resources left for our future generations if this keeps happening Nature has bestowed us with many precious resources. These include soil, water, air, plants, wild life, minerals and many others. Nature has also given us abundance of floral and faunal biodiversity. India is globally one of the most biologically, ethnically and culturally diverse country blessed with large arable land home to 4 out of 34 global biodiversity hotspots; with 2.4% of the world land area, harbors around 8% of all recorded species including 45,000 plants and 91,000 animal species. Unfortunately the human interference with nature has affected the planet adversely. It is hard to believe, but it is true that human beings which constitute just 0.01 per cent of the earth's surface have annihilated the rest of it. Fungi, mould and mushroom make up about 2 percent; but still humans have had a big influence on the world's environment. The natural resources like soil, water and air are limited and their formation takes millions of years. The unfortunate thing is that the human exploits them for their endless consumption and comfort. Human beings, thus pose a serious threat to our natural environment.

Human interference like deforestation, overgrazing, erosion, hunting, illegal wildlife trade, pollution, use of plastics, chemicals, and a lot more has led to so many threats to nature. Nearly 30 percent i. e. about 96.40 million hectares of land in the country is degraded. This is attributed to the excessive use of fertilizers, overgrazing, deforestation, poor irrigation practices, water logging and shifting cultivation. When we talk of air, air has been polluted to the level of toxicity. Of the 30 most

polluted cities 21 were in India (2019) at least 140 million peoples in India breathe air that is 10 times or more over WHO safe limit. Air pollution accounted for 1.7 million (18%) premature deaths in India (2019). The main causes of air pollution are Stubble burning, vehicular pollution, industries, factories, brick kilns. Water another natural resources is also going through a serious crisis. About 70 per cent of the water bodies are polluted due to industrial affluent, municipal wastes, agro chemicals, oil spills. More than 60 per cent water borne diseases are borne in India like cholera, Typhoid, Malaria, dysentery, Jaundice. Increased urbanization deteriorates the quality of life. 40 per cent of population in Indian cities suffers from lack of basic amenities like health, education, drinking water, electricity making them susceptible to various diseases. The causes of water pollution are industrial wastes, marine dumping, sewage and waste water, oil leaks, agriculture and radiation waste.

Ultimately, the world woke up to the threats to nature. They have realized the importance of protecting and conserving nature and that a healthy environment must be created to safeguard the present and future generations. While preservation and conservation share similarities in that they both aim to safeguard the environment, they approach this goal in different ways. While preservation entails defending nature from human use, conservation aims for the sustainable use of nature by humans for pursuits like mining, logging, and hunting. It is essential for people to understand that the world is one and anything that is done in part of the globe will affect other parts as well. Earth gives basic necessities to live like water, air, soil, minerals, trees, animals, food, so it is required that we keep our nature clean and healthy.

HISTORY OF WNCED:

Due to human interference with nature and the resultant natural imbalance, we are facing several problems like global warming, various diseases, natural disasters, increased temperature, etc. Therefore, for the next generation, it is necessary to preserve it. So, it is important to raise awareness among people all over the world to understand the importance of conservation of natural resources, recycle it,

preserve it, and also understand the consequences of damaging it. Recognizing serious environmental challenges, including climate change, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, and pollution, the United Nations General Assembly in 2018 proclaimed July 28th as World Nature Conservation Day to raise awareness about the importance of conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. Observed on July 28 annually, World Nature Conservation Day acknowledges that a healthy environment is the foundation for a stable and healthy society. Earth's natural resources include air, minerals, plants, soil, water, and wildlife. Conservation means the wise use of the earth and its resources for the lasting good of mankind'. It is the care and protection of these resources so that they can be preserved for future generations. It includes maintaining diversity of species, genes, and ecosystems, as well as functions of the environment, such as nutrient cycling. Conservation is similar to preservation, but while both relate to the protection of nature, they strive to accomplish this task in different ways. Conservation seeks the sustainable use of nature by humans, for activities such as hunting, logging, or mining, while preservation means protecting nature from human use. Now much emphasis is being laid on evidence based conservation.

EVIDENCE BASED CONSERVATION:

Evidence-based conservation is the application of evidence in conservation management actions and policy making. It is defined as systematically assessing scientific information from published, peer-reviewed publications and texts, practitioners' experiences, independent expert assessment, and local and indigenous knowledge on a specific conservation topic. This includes assessing the current effectiveness of different management interventions, threats and emerging problems, and economic factors. Evidence-based conservation was organized based on the observations that decision making in conservation was based on intuition and/or practitioner experience often disregarding other forms of evidence of successes and failures (e.g. scientific information). This has led to costly and poor outcomes. Evidence-based conservation provides access to information that will support

decision making through an evidence-based framework of "what works" in conservation. The evidence-based approach to conservation is based on evidence-based practice which started in medicine and later spread to nursing, education, psychology, and other fields. It is part of the larger movement towards evidence-based practices

INDIVIDUAL EFFORTS

Conservation also includes our individual efforts including that at household level too, that small efforts can make a big difference. We can conserve nature by using our natural resources like water, soil and air judiciously. Reduce, Reuse and Recycle should be adopted in our day to day life. Electricity consumption can be minimized with the use of LED bulbs. Leekages in our taps and judicious use of water in our bathrooms and latrines if avoided can prevent million of litres of water being wasted. Cutting of trees should be discouraged while planting should be encouraged. Waste should be properly disposed of and items such as single use plastics that do not decompose even after thousands of years should be not be used at all. India has taken many initiatives at the national level like the Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan, Project Tiger, and Mangroves for future to conserve to resources and its rich biodiversity.

One of the main aims of World Nature Conservation Day is to save species of plants and animals that are in danger of going extinct. July 18 reminds us of our responsibility and duty to work towards preserving nature's different elements including its fauna, flora, land, water, and air. It also emphasizes the need of protecting the environment for coming generations. Therefore, it is our responsibility to leave a healthy planet for future generations to enjoy. It is essential for all of us to understand that the world is interlinked and interdependent; anything that is done in part of the globe will affect other parts as well. On this day let us once again commit ourselves to make conscious effort to protect and conserve nature around the world.

(The author is a Scientist at SKUAST-K; can be reached at pkumar6674@gmail.com).

YOUR COLUMN NO CONFIDENCE MOTION

Dear Editor,

Tired and bored of confronting the government on the issue of Manipur crisis, the opposition parties are moving no-confidence motion against the NDA government. It is 331 vs. 141. BJP alone has 303 seats in its kitty. Half-way mark is 272. The result is foregone. Yet, the opposition parties are moving the no-confidence motion with much euphoria and fanfare. The opposition parties at any point of time do not have confidence in the ruling party right from the time oath is taken as MLAs or MPs. The government will be oscillating when hung Lok Sabha or hung Assembly is the result of elections. When the ruling party members tilt towards the opposition parties to the extent of causing the

ruling party falling into minority, the no-confidence motion survives and the government collapses. The present NDA government has stood like rock and is working like clock under the able leadership of Modi. In a situation of this kind, the no-confidence motion is not only an exercise in futility but also utter waste of precious time.

Whenever a new government is formed it is mandatory that the majority has to be proved on the floor of the House. The 13-day Vajpayee government fell just by one vote. In Maharashtra, soon after the Eknath Shinde-led MLAs withdrew support to the Uddhav Thackeray government, Thackeray was shown the door. As per protocol the Governor asked Thackeray to prove his majority on the floor of the House after Shinde walked out with his MLAs. But Thackeray did not face the House at all, save alone proving the majority. For sometime P V Narasimha Rao ran minority government. Later he mustered majority and survived. There are umpteen number of cases when govern-

ments in the past have collapsed before completing the term in the no-confidence motions. The present situation is not even remotely promising for the opposition parties to puncture the government through no-confidence motion. Instead of frittering away the time and energy like this, it could have been used for discussing and debating the Manipur issue. It is on this issue the opposition parties are wanting to express their views with reply to be elicited from the government. The discussion and debate in the House provide good forum to know the role of all the parties involved in keeping Manipur burning. People are mature enough to know that sometimes those involved in creating troubles make more noise to show that they "abhor" violence. Surely, I.N.D.I.A. is not disappointed at the outcome of no-confidence motion because they foreknow the result. The frustration of I.N.D.I.A. team is given outlet in the proposed no-confidence motion.

V Seetharamaiah.