

PROMOTING SKILL PROGRAMMES

Skills development programmes play a pivotal role in empowering individuals, enhancing employability, and fostering economic growth. These initiatives are designed to equip participants with the necessary knowledge, expertise, and practical skills required to thrive in various sectors of the economy. Here's how promoting skills programmes contributes to societal and economic advancement: Skills programmes empower individuals by providing them with relevant training and certifications. These programmes cater to a diverse range of fields such as technology, healthcare, hospitality, construction, and more. Participants gain hands-on experience and theoretical knowledge under the guidance of experienced trainers and mentors. This training not only enhances their confidence but also prepares them to tackle real-world challenges effectively. Moreover, skills development fosters lifelong learning and adaptability. As industries evolve due to technological advancements and market changes, individuals with updated skills are better positioned to embrace new opportunities and contribute meaningfully to their workplaces. By equipping individuals with industry-relevant skills, these programmes bridge the gap between academic knowledge and practical application. Therefore, participants of skills programmes often find themselves more attractive to potential employers and more capable of securing meaningful employment opportunities.

Neem-A Wonder Tree

The neem or Nim which is also named as "Azadirachta indica" in botanical parlance is a magnificent tree of multitudinal values in the history of our civilization till date. Apart from being a handsome tree, it enjoys its placement in the rarier of the rarest importance which exclusively exhibits its uniqueness and appropriate placement in the entire plant kingdom of monocotyledons over the globe. Says Bhavprakash, Nim or Nimba leaf is agreeable to the eye, destroys pains, parasites, Pitta and poisons and augments Vata. It is pungent on digestion and useful in and destroys anorexia and skin diseases and its fruit is bitter in taste, pungent on digestion, laxative, demulcent, Gulma (Plantomumour), parasite and meha etc and etc.

Neem tree is largely a handsome one, having imparipinnate leaves, long glabrous leaflets subsopposite and lanceolate or ovate-lanceolate, very unequal-sided, oftenly falcate, deeply serrate and very gradually acuminate and shining above with subsessile minute petiole is a wonderful one for its varied ramification and multitudinal values in all its unison. The tree, defacto, subsists in the sub-tropical zones unmistakably wild, though, of course, cultivated in the farmlands for shade and ornamental values throughout every nook and corner of its inhabitation in almost every greater part of India.

Admittedly, therefore, the tree is evergreen, native of India and Mayanmar which existed for millonia and is a cousin of mahogany with its twigs used as the tooth brushes for rural Indian and the pharmaceutical have their own share of utility in the Ayurvedic medicinal values of immense importance for Himalaya in drug store Banguluru, Charak, Dabar, Zandu, Mahayog Raj, Safi, Lakhmivilas, Chandra Prabhavati and its ilk which in unison bring home a hefty dividends for their extensive export values.

Shrouded bewilderingly in the Hindu mythology of love lore of those olden yet golden Vedic era around 4000 BC and vividly exhibited in Kautilyas scripts written around 4th century has, of course, invited rather drawn humans attention for its multitudinal medicinal values. The tree, unambiguously, purifies its surroundings, thus giving impetus to the flourishing environment and is probably the best connoisseur of nature. Nothing can ever bring bad where neem exists, say our Purans. So, the tree is fructuous one with embellishment of vide, varied ramification which impels illustrious ambience.

The neem has had been in use in Ayurvedic system of medicines older than any system of medicines practiced in India over the remote past representing longevity and originality in the Vedic tradition of India. That is why this tree led to the fore in broader spectrum a worldwide up rise of this wonder tree for the futuristic world, a tree of treasure trove on medicinal fronts and above all in eco-friendly stature and significance.

Of the few most pertinent usages of this wonder tree are briefed down :-

* Neem predominantly finds its importance in our old cultures as a medicinal and pesticidal in soaps, sacrament, protective to our raw food stuffs viz, grains, pulses and is andauth Zayed insipits of neem juice is the best antiseptic.

* Neem juice taken with honey Sharvat during peak summer dispels the pimples, boils and allied skin ailments throughout the life-span of its user.

* Neem is the best antiseptic, anti-inflammatory, antiallergic, antifeedant, antihistaminic, antigingivitic (teeth) antiviral and so of its kind, though the list goes endlessly.

* Neem fruits ignite wonders as a very good purgative, emollient and so do its flowers as the best tonic and for stomachic and its bark has its own unique significance of utmost amplitude.

* A prominent feature of this wonder tree is that it can well establish in dry arid zones without demanding irrigation though such regions are completely devoid of water.

* Neem products play wonders againsts pathogenic fungi and dreaded virus and studies are being afooted for the cures of cancer and even as anti-AIDS.

* Neem juice finds its prominence for the remedies of UTI (Urinary Tract infections), R.T.I. (Reproductive Tract Infections), renal Infections, apart from the purification of blood.

* Neem wood is moderately hard having its qualities as good as that of teak (Tectona grandis) and further it is resistant to shock which means that its wood is shockproof in its perfectability.

* Neem's leaves are the treasure trove of organic compounds having the most potential medicinal and antiseptic properties well renowned in the "Indian system of medicines" (ISM), though, of course, its biological properties are under way of evaluation. The gas chromatography mass analysis of the extracts has indicated as many as eight saturated hydrocarbons to be named as heptacosane, docosane, octacosane, hentraicosane, dotriacontane, pentacosane, hentriacontanenonacosane which find their usefulness in multitudinal medicinal uses.

* Neem's leaves and twigs as well contain fatty acids which are extracted by hydrolysis having varied acids brought under medicinal uses in broader spectrum.

* Neem's seeds are abundantly important in commercial uses which are biologically active and volatile with organic sulphur compounds which are attributed as larvicidal to mosquitoes, bud, corn and ear worms.

* Neem's kernels are the richest source of medicinal oil with lipid associates and variable ingredients of ample importance as good as that of groundnut oils and the remnant material after the extraction of oil, finds its usefulness of the best organic manure for nitrogen fixation.

* Neem's leaves form the best farm fodder for the domestic animals, preferably for camels which is as well known as "ship of desert".

Conclusively, therefore, it is most pertinent to mention over here that neem tree is wonderous one having immense values from toe to top (roots-to-the-leaves) in its Purity. It is as good as nectar and a life-leasing elixir finding its prominence of utmost usefulness in "Indian system of medicine" without any side-effects. Let us, therefore, pledge to cultivate this wonderous tree extensively and intensively in our farmland and other available lands to maintain and improve healthy environment which enlivens us over this globe- the mother earth.

(The author is Former Dy. Conservator of Forest, J&K)

DR. BANARSI LAL

Poultry farming is not new in the Union Territory of J&K and it has been practiced for the farmers since the time immemorial. Most of the backyard poultry production in J&K comprises the indigenous birds. The indigenous poultry birds produce only 60-80 eggs per year and meat production is also very less. Commercial poultry production can be easily boosted in the state with the introduction of improved varieties of poultry which can lay 160-200 eggs per year and also produce more meat. In the Union Territory of J&K poultry farming is emerging an important enterprise and is assisting to create income and employment for the rural youths of the state. There is immense potential of poultry farming in J&K. There are numerous examples of successful poultry entrepreneurs in J&K. Government is offering the various incentives to motivate the aspiring poultry farmers of J&K. Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) of J&K are imparting training programmes on advance poultry farming to the farmers and are creating interest on poultry farming in J&K. KVK, Reasi has introduced black meat poultry variety namely Kadaknath in the district which is very low in cholesterol (0.73%-1.05%), rich in proteins (25%), vitamins and helpful for the asthmatic and nephritis patients. The meat and eggs of this poultry variety are costly and can help to raise the socio-economic status of the farmers. KVK has also introduced high egg laying birds such as Vanraja, Chabro and Chabrown in Udhampur and Reasi districts. The Front Line Demonstrations (FLDs) laid by KVK, Reasi on Kadaknath, Vanraja and Chabrown have significant impact on the income of the farmers. Now many farmers of the area have become the poultry entrepreneurs. KVK, Reasi imparts regularly the short training courses to the interested farmers of the region.

Poultry farming has immense potential in the Union Territory of J&K. Despite the strenuous efforts poultry farming is not picking up pace in J&K. In J&K there is 69 per cent shortfall in the poultry meat and 97 per cent shortfall in the poultry egg production. The gap between demand and supply of poultry meat and eggs is filled by purchasing the poultry birds and poultry eggs from the other states of the country thus draining the state exchequer. According to the recent report, in J&K every year around Rs.2000 crores of meat is imported from the outside the state. A little progress has been made on the broiler production in the state but a poor progress has been

Poultry Farming-As a Sustainable Enterprise



made in commercial egg laying industry in the state. Some outstanding egg laying poultry strains such as Vanraja, Chabro and Chabrown have been introduced in the state which have raised hope for mitigating the eggs need in the state. The cost of quality proteins is increasing rapidly and due to poor purchasing power of the farmers their families' members suffer malnutrition especially of animal protein. The poultry sector can ensure the proper nourishment of the farmers' families besides income and employment. Poultry birds can increase the income of the farmers as poultry farming requires low inputs, have short gestation period and give better and quick returns.

In the domestic market, the consumption of poultry meat has been low due to many reasons. The main reason is the low purchasing power of people. Only 25 per cent of the population living in urban areas consumes about 75-80 per cent of eggs and poultry meat. The per capita consumption of egg is 100 and poultry meat is 1.2 Kg per person per annum in urban areas. But in rural areas, it is only 15 eggs and 0.15 Kg poultry meat. Egg industry showed an excellent growth in the country due to (a) Egg layer industry large units with millions of birds in one house are coming up (b) 70 per cent of the egg laying birds are in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra & Karnataka. (c) fresh eggs are available at more reasonable costs. Broiler industry grew in the country because (a) the commercial broiler chicks' ready in 60 days with tender meat. (b) Movement of parent stock, hatching eggs, day-old chicks initiated the broiler growing everywhere. (c)The broiler growing period has gradually come down to less

than 40 days from 60 days due to advance technologies in the poultry industry. (d)Broiler rearing is giving excellent results. 2 kg broilers are produced on 36 days with 1.5 kg feed per kg chicken with less than 3 per cent mortality are being achieved on low-cost open houses reared by the small and marginal farmers. Around 60 per cent rural population in India has backyard poultry production. Poultry has been there in the backyards of most of the houses since ages, forming a part of nutrition and family income. Government has started encouraging the backyard poultry for the rural development. Improved varieties of low technology input birds are bred for this purpose, which are genetically more efficient in production in comparison to the local poultry.

The birds grow faster than native birds reaching 1.5 kg weight in 45 days but can withstand variable feed qualities and also supplement themselves by scavenging. The low technology input birds are mostly of dual purpose. Mother units are being encouraged to take care of the brooding & vaccination in the first four weeks before they are distributed among the farmers to ensure the disease security. Cluster farming in rural areas is possible with these chicken for enhancing the meat production on the lines of broiler farming in which of group of 8 to 10 farmers or educated youth can form a cluster and grow the birds in groups of 500 to 1,000 birds in low cost houses as "organic chicken" by making their own low-cost organic feeds without chemicals and antibiotics.

The objective of backyard poultry is to encourage poultry farming activity and to provide employment opportunities in

backward areas. There are numerous opportunities in poultry industry in India due to (a) Government policies relating to investments in poultry and related industries, taxation, import duties, excise duties are favourable. (b) Increase in income and employment generation for the rural poor and marginal farmers. (c) Consumer awareness and acceptability of eggs and chicken as good source. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) is the nodal organization for agricultural research in the country that is playing vital role in this sector. It undertakes research in its own institutes Central Avian Research Institute, Izatnagar and Project Directorate on Poultry Hyderabad and also in state agricultural universities through All India Coordinated Research Projects. There are certain challenges in the poultry industry such as: (a) Poor infrastructure for export is hindering the export of poultry products. (b)Competition from international players on opening up duty-free imports, lifting of trade barriers. (c)Increasing propaganda and demonstrations by organizations on promoting vegetarianism and animal rights. (d)Occurrence of Salmonella and other diseases in poultry meat. (e)Many countries are dumping their poultry products i.e. exporting eggs at prices lower than production cost. (f) Many countries are protecting their poultry industry from foreign competition by protective measures like restricting imports, keeping egg prices at lower level etc. (g)Some countries provide subsidies, export incentives to exporters and keep their price low.

As the poultry industry is among the fastest growing in the world, it needs greater integration, better cost-effectiveness and improvement in the distribution. More retail outlets, mass gathering and creating awareness to home to home about the nutrient values of chicken and eggs is needed. Poultry industry needs good branding system in order to increase the consumption of chicken. The poultry companies have to encourage direct procurement of maize from the farmers by using contract farming. Also, the collection of reliable, updated statistics is necessary for immediate and long term planning and thereby helping in preventing shortages in poultry farming. There is need to develop efficient, independent, authority for disease monitoring, biological quality control and biosecurity measures in the poultry industry. (The writer is Scientist and Head of KVK, Reasi SKUAST-J)

Should colleges and schools teach us more skills in this changing age?

SURJIT SINGH FLORA

Introducing the iconic words of Dylan Thomas: "One: I proudly declare myself a Welshman; two: I embrace the spirit of a free-spirited drinker; three: I am an ardent admirer of the human race, with a special fondness for the enchanting essence of women." Imagine this: I proudly identify as a Sikh.

Introducing the second reason why I am truly exceptional: I am an artist.

Let's introduce the mysterious thinker who effortlessly adopts a highly useful persona.

Introducing a mind brimming with creativity and a natural inclination for writing, I must confess that my default mode of thought is that of a skilled wordsmith. Discover the captivating world of logic, where the intricate subdivisions harmoniously intertwine, creating a mesmerizing rhythm that elegantly tiles the vast plane of time...

Experience the thrilling convergence of cutting-edge technology and the dynamic evolution of our global society. Brace yourself for the seismic transformations that lie ahead in the workforce's future, as well as the formidable obstacles of climate change and conflict that demand our attention. Imagine a world where our youth are not just prepared but equipped to conquer the challenges of today's fast-paced and ever-changing environment. It's time to take action and make sure we provide them with the necessary skills and mindsets to not just survive, but thrive. Discover the transformative power of education that has shaped minds for over two centuries, with a focus on imparting invaluable knowledge.

Experience the transformative power of knowledge in the ever-evolving landscape of the Industrial Revolution. Witness the rise of specialization and the undeniable value it brings.

However, in modern times, a new era of necessity has emerged. Enter the realm of soft skills, also known as life skills, where the demand for these invaluable abilities has skyrocketed. With these essential skills, you can unlock the key to survival and success. Discover the true essence of character building, an essential skill to conquer the ever-evolving global challenges that lie ahead. Introducing a groundbreaking perspective on leadership: it's not about the position but about the extraordinary "Strength of Character" and unwavering "Sense of Community." Embrace this transformative definition and unlock your true leadership potential.

Discover the wealth of research and evidence that highlights the incredible potential for growth and development through experiential learning. Unleash

the power of collaboration, communication, critical and creative thinking, and character traits like self-confidence, grit, and resilience. Embrace a growth mindset and explore the transformative possibilities of mediums such as team sports, the arts, and free play.

Discover the incredible power of music, one of the most captivating art forms that effortlessly nurtures and enhances a wide range of skills. Unlock the magic of music through dedicated practice and unwavering self-discipline. Our revolutionary approach allows you to unlock your full potential as a student. You'll embark on a transformative journey by setting goals, such as mastering a captivating piece of music or preparing for a show-stopping performance. With a meticulously crafted plan in place, you'll conquer these goals and achieve greatness.

Experience the transformative power of group performance. Discover the invaluable lessons of collaboration, active listening, and unwavering support. Join us as we unlock the potential of teamwork. Discover the transformative power of music education! By exploring various genres and styles, students cultivate empathy and gain a profound appreciation for diverse viewpoints. Unlock your creative potential with music programs that go beyond the basics. Discover the joy of composition and improvisation, where your imagination knows no bounds. Nurture your creative thinking skills and watch them soar to new heights.

Embrace the power of music and let it be your guide on a journey of self-expression and artistic growth. Experience the transformative power of performing in front of a captivated audience. Step onto the stage and watch your self-confidence soar to new heights. Seize the chance to gain knowledge from each error, as these experiences cultivate resilience and a growth-oriented mindset. Unleash your potential and discover the true artist within. Experience the harmonious melodies of a well-rounded music curriculum, exclusively offered in prestigious private schools. Unlock every child's potential with equal access to this extraordinary opportunity. Discover the transformative power of music education as it takes center stage in the school curriculum.

Music is no longer just an extracurricular activity; it has become an essential part of every student's educational journey.

Unlock the power of equal access, transcending all backgrounds and skill levels. Imagine a world where teaching music in schools is not just an exception but the

norm. This simple change has the power to unlock the full potential of every child, fostering their holistic development. Let's strive for a future where music education is a fundamental part of every child's journey. By focusing on building character and life skills, we have the power to empower children on their path to personal and professional triumph. Not only will we guide them towards success, but we will also cultivate a new generation of leaders who possess the ability to care for themselves and make a positive impact on the world.

Enhance your desirability to employers and the community!

Unlock Your Potential with Economic Opportunities:

Unlock Your Potential: Discover the Power of Employability Skills can help you improve your job prospects and propel your career forward.

Unlock Your Income Potential: Discover how your skills can catapult you to higher wages and coveted job positions, paving the way for enhanced financial stability and limitless upward mobility.

Unlock your full potential with our personal development program. Discover the secrets to personal growth and self-improvement.

Take control of your life and achieve the success you've always dreamed of. Join our program today.

Discover the Power of Self-Confidence: Unleash your true potential by mastering new skills that will elevate your self-esteem and ignite your confidence. Experience the transformative effects of personal growth as you embark on this empowering journey.

With adaptability, you can unlock your potential. Skill development is the key to fostering flexibility and the ability to effortlessly adapt to new challenges and environments. In a rapidly changing world, this skill is absolutely essential. Embrace the future with confidence and stay ahead of the curve.

Discover the remarkable economic and social contributions.

Unlock Your Potential: Harness the power of skilled individuals to boost productivity and drive economic growth.

Unleash the Power of Innovation: Mastering skills in cutting-edge areas like technology, science, and the arts is the key to unlocking a world of endless possibilities. By harnessing the forces of innovation, we can pave the way for groundbreaking new products, services, and solutions that will revolutionize society as we know it.

Experience the epitome of a luxurious lifestyle.

Introducing Problem-Solving Skills: Unlock the Power to Solve Problems

Effectively, Making Everyday Life Easier and More Efficient!

Experience true independence with a diverse range of skills that empower individuals to tackle any task with confidence and self-reliance. Say goodbye to relying on others and embrace the freedom of being able to handle various tasks independently.

Experience the power of social interaction.

Unlock the power of effective communication! Mastering skills like communication and teamwork is absolutely essential for cultivating and nurturing meaningful relationships, whether in your personal or professional life. Don't miss out on the incredible benefits that come with honing these crucial abilities!

Unlock the Power of Networking: Mastering key skills can pave the way for unparalleled networking opportunities and the chance to forge invaluable connections.

Experience the ultimate in health and well-being with our exceptional offerings.

Unlock the Power of Skill-Building: Elevate your mental health to new heights by engaging in captivating skill-building activities that will ignite your sense of purpose and propel you towards a fulfilling sense of achievement.

Unlock the secrets to a healthier lifestyle with our comprehensive range of physical health skills. Discover the power of physical fitness and health management to transform your life.

Lifelong learning allows you to unlock the power of knowledge.

Unlock the Power of Continuous Improvement: Embrace the transformative power of skills that foster a mindset of lifelong learning and continuous improvement. Stay ahead of the curve and maintain your relevance and competence in today's ever-evolving world.

Unleash Your Curiosity and Embark on a Journey of Exploration: By developing new skills, you open the door to a world of endless possibilities, igniting a sense of curiosity and fueling your desire to venture into uncharted territories. This enriches your life experience, allowing you to discover the extraordinary.

The Grand Finale is introduced. Discover the undeniable importance of skill development for achieving personal triumph, experiencing true fulfillment, driving economic prosperity, fostering social harmony, and enhancing the overall fabric of life. Experience the transformative power that empowers individuals to reach their goals, seamlessly adapt to ever-changing circumstances, and make a meaningful impact on society.

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