

NATURAL FARMING

In recent decades, the overdependence on chemical-intensive agriculture has led to a range of ecological, economic, and health-related problems. While the Green Revolution in the 1960s helped achieve food security in India, it also set in motion a system heavily reliant on chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and hybrid seeds. This approach has degraded soil health, polluted water sources, and increased the cost of cultivation for farmers. As a sustainable alternative, natural farming is gaining attention and importance. Natural farming is a method of growing crops without the use of synthetic chemicals, instead relying on locally available resources like cow dung, cow urine, compost, and traditional seeds. It offers a path toward sustainable agriculture that is in harmony with nature and beneficial for both the environment and society.

One of the most pressing reasons for promoting natural farming is the need to restore soil health. Years of excessive use of chemical fertilizers have severely depleted the soil of its essential nutrients, reducing its fertility and microbial activity. Natural farming methods, such as applying jeevamrit (a fermented mixture of cow dung, urine, jaggery, and pulse flour), help in regenerating soil fertility by promoting the growth of beneficial microbes. This leads to improved soil structure, better water retention, and increased productivity over time. Unlike chemical inputs that provide short-term boosts, natural inputs nurture the soil in a sustainable manner.

Another significant advantage of natural farming is its potential to reduce input costs. Farmers spend a large portion of their income on purchasing expensive chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Natural farming eliminates the need for these costly inputs by using locally available materials. This not only lowers the financial burden on farmers but also protects them from falling into debt-a common issue in the current system of commercial agriculture. Moreover, with minimum dependency on external inputs, natural farming enhances self-reliance among small and marginal farmers.

Natural farming also plays a vital role in mitigating climate change. Conventional agriculture contributes to greenhouse gas emissions through the use of fossil fuel-based fertilizers, intensive tillage, and excessive irrigation. In contrast, natural farming practices promote carbon sequestration in the soil, reduce methane emissions, and conserve water. Techniques like mulching and intercropping improve biodiversity and maintain ecosystem balance. Thus, shifting to natural farming can help reduce the carbon footprint of agriculture and contribute to climate resilience.

From a health perspective, natural farming provides chemical-free food, which is essential in the present age of rising lifestyle diseases.

How to navigate problems as a parent in the digital era?

SURJIT SINGH FLORA

Parenting today is a completely different experience. Technology and social media offer many chances for learning, connecting, and having fun.

Indeed! while overuse of technology may be detrimental to the development of children. Their brains undergo a shift in their circuitry as a result. Children, for instance, have a much less capacity for concentration, and it does not stimulate critical thinking.

However, there are other problems, such as a decrease in fine motor abilities (recent research revealed that medical students who were interested in becoming surgeons lacked the strength and coordination necessary for fine motor skills). An excessive use of technology may also have a negative impact on children's physical health, as well as their strength, agility, and confidence. Children that need mobility and exercise would benefit from this. There has been a rise in the prevalence of obesity among children in our nation, as well as the development of health issues that would have previously been more prevalent among the elderly. One of the factors that has contributed to the creation of this is technology: Monitoring and management of technology is necessary in order to ensure that it contributes to the growth and development of children rather than hindering them.

The challenges: if you don't adapt or are slow to adapt, you're kicked out of business. Most nonessential businesses that didn't adapt to online marketing, shopping and delivery have now been rendered out of business.

For the technically challenged parents, things are moving too fast for their capability, and this can expose them to risks e.g. fraud, hacking, identity theft etc. hence the many stories we hear about someone giving out their personal details to a "customer care agent" a few moments before their accounts were wipes clean.

Also, technological advancements have brought the challenges of monitoring chil-

dren's activities on the internet. So many creeps and pervers on there are out to get our children so as parents, we have to step up and secure our children's devices and do a lot of extra monitoring that wasn't there before the internet age.

However, they also bring distinct challenges. As a parent, it's important to find a balance and help your children develop responsible online habits.

The content must be suitable for the age group. Ignoring the issue won't make the 'monsters' of social media disappear.

Even the internet is a blessing for humanity. It has simplified life and advanced technology. The internet influences all age groups in society, especially the youth.

Overusing the internet decreases interest in studies and negatively impacts health. Busy parents often aren't aware of their children's online activities. They explore various sites out of curiosity or to learn new things, which can lead to cybercrime.

Another misuse of the internet is cyberbullying. Fake accounts on social media allow people to anonymously threaten young individuals, resulting in various crimes and harm. The online aspect makes it even more dangerous since the bullying doesn't happen in person.

Children are highly susceptible to manipulation. A small, kind act from a stranger can easily create friendships. A recent study by the Pew Research Centre found that 95% of teens are online, and 85% use social media.

87% of young people have witnessed cyberbullying online. These stats show just how prevalent cyberbullying is and how vulnerable your children can be to it.

Parenting is perhaps the biggest responsibility one can take on. Kids are always picking up new things as they grow. While learning and exploring, they may encounter a situation where you need to step in and assist them.

In today's fast-paced world, not spending time with your children means missing out on much of their lives. Kids learn from those

nearby, and you can steer them in the right direction. As a working parent, you can't always be with your children. You can use various parental control apps available in the market for this.

A parental control app may not encompass all aspects of effective parenting, but it can certainly assist you in your efforts. Given your hectic work schedule, your child has been spending a significant amount of time with gadgets. These devices facilitate a virtual realm where individuals find solace and enjoyment in the absence of real-world companionship.

Clear and straightforward! Begin by encouraging open and honest dialogue with your children regarding the Internet and social media. Urge them to express their digital journeys, obstacles, and worries.

It is important to convey that not everyone engaging in conversation is truthful, and some individuals may resort to malicious tactics, including revenge porn. Under no circumstances should explicit photos or videos be shared on social media.

Following Define explicit limits: Create specific guidelines concerning screen time, device usage, and online interactions. In our household, we adhere to a fundamental principle: the use of laptops and social media is strictly prohibited on school days.

Prevent your children from sleeping with electronic devices.

Bedtime signifies the time for rest and slumber. Rest is essential for everyone, particularly for young children. Allowing them to go to bed with a device tucked under their arms poses the risk of it being activated the moment you turn your back and exit the room. Your child's lack of rest will inevitably impact their mood, performance, and overall personal development.

We restrict it to weekends, provided that school homework has been finished to a satisfactory level.

It is essential to educate your children on the importance of online safety. This includes

guiding them to create strong passwords, safeguard personal information, steer clear of suspicious links, and engage in responsible behaviour on social media platforms.

It is essential to restrict or withhold excessive information during a casual discussion.

Embrace the role of a digital exemplar: young people absorb lessons from those around them, so it's crucial to model responsible behaviour online.

Showcase the significance of interacting positively on social media, respecting others' privacy, and critically assessing the content you consume.

Demonstrate your ability to disconnect from technology and show that staying offline for several days won't result in any disruption.

If you find yourself unable to put down your phone for even a few minutes, it reflects poorly on your ability to set a positive example.

Moreover, inspire your children to participate in a diverse range of activities that extend beyond the realm of screens. Promote engaging in hobbies, participating in sports, enjoying reading, and cherishing moments with friends and family.

Ensuring online safety requires that your child is aware of the negative aspects of the online community. Parents should educate their child about potential dangers and provide appropriate solutions to equip them for any challenges they may encounter. Your child should feel comfortable disclosing their mistakes to you without fear. Serve as both their guardians and closest companions. It is essential to monitor your child's activities, regardless of how occupied you may become. Inform them of the potential consequences stemming from their specific actions.

Life isn't solely about the devices we use. Engaging in offline activities can lead to greater productivity.

Explore various indoor and outdoor games that can captivate your children and effectively banish boredom.

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World Population Day: Reflecting on our growing World and shared responsibility

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Every year on July 11, the world pauses to observe World Population Day, a day established by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1989. The occasion serves as a reminder to reflect upon one of the most pressing issues facing humanity today: population growth and its far-reaching implications. As the global population exceeds 8 billion (a milestone crossed in November 2022), this day calls for critical discussions on sustainability, health, development, equity, and the planet's future.

World Population Day was inspired by the "Day of Five Billion", observed on July 11, 1987, when the global population reached five billion. The UNDP decided to designate this day as an annual event to draw attention to the urgency and importance of population issues. From reproductive health and gender equality to education and environmental sustainability, the day emphasizes the multifaceted challenges and opportunities of living in an ever-more populous world.

As of mid-2025, the world's population is estimated to be over 8.1 billion. The rapid increase is primarily concentrated in regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and parts of the Middle East. Conversely, many developed nations, including Japan, Germany, and Italy, are facing stagnating or declining populations due to aging demographics and lower birth rates.

This demographic divide presents a complex picture. While some countries grapple with overpopulation and its strain on resources, others face labour shortages, aging populations, and the social and economic challenges that follow.

One of the core concerns linked to population growth is the strain on natural resources.



More people require more food, water, housing, energy, and infrastructure. This puts pressure on agriculture, water sources, forests, and ecosystems. Urbanization, a direct result of population growth, contributes to deforestation, pollution, and the loss of biodiversity.

According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), if current consumption and production patterns continue, and with a rising population, the global ecological footprint could exceed the Earth's capacity to regenerate by more than 50% by 2030.

Thus, sustainable development becomes a crucial theme. Balancing the needs of today without compromising the future is a responsibility that policymakers, civil society, and individuals must share.

One of the key pillars of World Population Day is the emphasis on reproductive health and rights. Access to family planning services, maternal health care, and sexual education empowers individuals-particularly women and

girls-to make informed decisions about their bodies and futures.

Despite progress, millions around the world still lack access to such services. According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), about 257 million women who want to avoid pregnancy are not using safe, modern methods of contraception. The consequences are dire: unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions, and maternal deaths. Promoting reproductive rights isn't just a health issue-it's a matter of human rights, dignity, and equality.

Empowering women through education and economic opportunities is one of the most effective ways to address population growth. Studies consistently show that when women have access to education, they tend to marry later, have fewer children, and participate more fully in the workforce.

Yet, in many parts of the world, gender inequality persists. Girls are pulled out of school for early marriage or household responsibilities. Women are denied autonomy over

their reproductive choices. World Population Day highlights these injustices and calls for global action to create equitable systems that support every individual's rights.

Education plays a transformative role in managing population-related challenges. A well-informed society is better equipped to make responsible decisions related to health, family planning, and environmental stewardship. Investment in girls' education, in particular, has a ripple effect: lower child mortality, reduced fertility rates, and stronger economies.

Innovation offers potential solutions to the challenges of a growing population. Advances in agriculture (like precision farming and vertical gardens), renewable energy, and water conservation technologies help mitigate resource scarcity. Digital health tools and mobile clinics are expanding access to family planning in remote areas.

However, technology alone is not a panacea. It must be integrated thoughtfully with policies that ensure equity, access, and sustainability.

There is an undeniable link between population growth and climate change. More people mean increased carbon emissions, higher energy consumption, and greater waste production. While developed nations still contribute disproportionately to emissions, population growth in developing countries-often in areas most vulnerable to climate impacts-compounds the risk.

World Population Day urges leaders to address this nexus with smart urban planning, sustainable agriculture, green technologies, and global cooperation on climate resilience.

India, now the most populous country in the world as of 2023, presents an interesting case study. The country has transitioned from coercive population control methods to more rights-based, voluntary approaches. Campaigns promoting small families, contraceptive use, and women's empowerment have

contributed to a declining Total Fertility Rate (TFR), which now hovers around the replacement level of 2.1.

However, regional disparities persist. States like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh still record high fertility rates, while southern states show declining population growth and even aging trends.

India's challenge lies in balancing population management with economic growth, employment generation, and environmental protection.

A significant portion of the global population is under 30. This youth bulge represents both a challenge and an opportunity. On the one hand, it places pressure on governments to provide education, jobs, and services. On the other, it holds the potential for demographic dividends-a boost in economic productivity when the working-age population grows relative to dependents.

Harnessing this potential requires investment in youth: their health, education, skills, and civic engagement. World Population Day is more than a symbolic event; it is a platform to advocate for holistic, inclusive, and human-centered policies. The key lies in empowering individuals, especially women and girls, respecting human rights, promoting sustainability, and ensuring that no one is left behind.

Addressing population issues is not about numbers alone-it is about people, their lives, and the world they inhabit. Whether it's ensuring access to health care in a remote village, implementing climate-resilient infrastructure in a megacity, or teaching reproductive rights in schools, every action counts.

As we observe World Population Day this July 11, let us reflect not only on the challenges posed by population growth but also on the opportunities to build a more just, equitable, and sustainable future. The road ahead demands cooperation, innovation, empathy, and an unwavering commitment to the well-being of people and the planet.

Understanding Human Behaviour-Fillip to Personality

PROF. K S CHANDRASEKAR



Human behavior is the potential and expressed capacity (mentally, physically, and socially) of human individuals or groups to respond to internal and external stimuli throughout their life. A study on human behavior has revealed that 90% of the population can be classified into four basic personality types: Optimistic, Pessimistic,

Trusting and Envious. Optimistic person believes that good things will happen and is generally hopeful about the future. They tend to see opportunities and potential in situations. Pessimists tend to anticipate negative outcomes. They may focus on the potential for things to go wrong and are often more concerned with avoiding bad situations. Trusting person is characterized by their willingness to cooperate and collaborate with others. They are less concerned with winning or losing and more focused on working together for mutual benefit. Envious individuals are primarily concerned with how they compare to others. They may feel unhappy when others experience success and may even find satisfaction in the misfortune of others. However, the latter of the four types, Envious, is the most common, with 30% compared to 20% for each of the other groups

Factors that influence behaviour are Situational - personal comfort, stress levels, work satisfaction, Historical - family background, events in life, culture,

personal history, Developmental - midlife changes, new roles - marriage, children, etc. and Dispositional - intelligence, other aspects of personality. In order to find whether a person is glass half full or glass half empty, certain questions need to be asked which include expecting the best or worst outcome, outlook affecting your motivation, trust and faith in people, expect the best, if something can go wrong, will it influence a person and whether good things happen to a person. Optimism is the overall view that the world is a great place and that things will turn out ok. The optimist believes (for example) that events will turn out for the best, or that people are trustworthy. Most people are generally optimistic about things that have turned out well for them in the past, or about things that have good associations for them. People can also be optimistic about their internal lives and still pessimistic about external world events.

The Benefits of being Optimistic are Live longer, A 10 year study on elderly revealed those with a positive outlook not only live longer they're also less likely to require permanent care. Optimists live roughly 8-10 years longer than pessimists. Beat Cancer, A 1 year follow up in a study on 101 French head and neck cancer patients found that optimistic people were less likely to die. Better Overall Health, An Australian study on 9501 women found optimistic people had greater overall health. The study used the SF-36 survey which measures overall vitality, mobility, pain and many other factors. Enjoy more love, It seems optimistic people were more hopeful about the future and were subsequently more constructive during relationship adversity. Career Success, A longitudinal study on MBA grad-

uates revealed optimists found jobs more easily and were more likely to be promoted. Finally Less Stress, Numerous studies into the relationship between our outlook and mental health have demonstrated that being optimistic improves our overall wellbeing, stress included. Pessimism is essentially the direct opposite of optimism in that it is the belief that the world is a bad place and that things will turn out for the worse. One may be pessimistic, for example about the prospects of getting a new job, or about the partner forgiving you for an indiscretion. The idea of "Person-Environment Fit" was first theorized by Powell Lawton nearly 30 years ago. This concept suggests that it is the interaction between the abilities of an older adult and the environment in which they live that creates the conditions for overall well-being. Person-environment fit (PE fit) theory explores the relationship between a person's characteristics and their environment. The theory suggests that a person can influence their environment, and that their environment can also affect them. The fitness between a person and their environment can affect their motivation and behavior. Sociologists emphasize that the personality of the individual develops in a social environment. It is in the social environment that he comes to have moral ideas, social attitudes and interests. This enables him to develop a social self which is another term for personality.

However, the environment plays a very important role in behaviour. Physical Environment includes the influence of climatic conditions of a particular area or country on man and his living. Social Environment is not the same everywhere. A child has his birth in society. He learns and lives there. Hence, the social environment has

an important point in the personality development of the child. Family is the cradle of all social virtues. The first environment the child moves in is his home. Here the child meets his parents and other family members, his likes, dislikes, stereotypes about people, expectations of security and emotional responses all shaped in early childhood. The type of training and early childhood experiences received from the family play an important role in the development of personality. The cultural environment refers to certain cultural traditions, ideals, and values etc., which are accepted in a particular society. All these factors leave a permanent impression on the child's personality. Schools play an important role in molding the personality of the children because a significant part of a child's life is spent in school between the ages of 6 and 20 years. In school, the teacher substitutes for the parents. The school poses new problems to be solved, new taboos to be accepted into the superego and new models for imitation and identification, all of which contribute their share in molding personality. According to research, people tend to be more satisfied and comfortable, less depressed and irritable, and more likely to report beneficial effects on their self-esteem in environments that they perceive emphasize the human relationship dimensions. Hence it is imperative that the younger generation in Jammu and Kashmir understand these aspects while growing so that they become a personality who values time, respects people and overall people around them always feel optimistic. School education can change and can become a harbinger of better things to come.

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