

## DRUG ADDICTION- BIGGEST CURSE OF LIFE

Drug addiction has become a major cause of concern all over the world. It is a devastating condition that hinders the progress of any country. Drug addiction is synonymous with substance abuse. This addiction affects people mentally, physically and emotionally.

Substance abuse in India includes narcotics, opium and heroin. A drug addict loses his control over the mind and engages in activities which are considered illegal for mankind like- kidnapping, murder, robbery, theft and the list is endless. People addicted to drugs can sometimes become very aggressive and even become life-threatening. Addiction is the biggest curse of human life. Addiction to anything turns into drug addiction. People become addicted to certain substances or drugs like heroin, marijuana and narcotics which affect them mentally, physically and emotionally. This addiction is called intoxication. In which the person does not have control over himself. This curse proves harmful for the person as well as his family and society. Drug addiction badly affects physical health. This puts the addict at risk of health problems such as cardiac arrest, stroke and abdominal pain. It also causes mental health problems like depression, insomnia and bipolar disorder. Drug addiction affects human behavior apart from affecting the health of the individual. The love and support of our near and dear ones can play a vital role when it comes to getting rid of drug addiction. This can help the drug addict stay determined and motivated to quit this disgusting habit.

## How to protect children’s privacy in the limitless world of the Internet

■ VIJAY GARG

The Indian Parliament finally passed the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2023 after a decade-long nationwide discussion on data protection law. This was the third time, the previous two drafts of the bill were released in 2019 and 2022. However, there was no clear vision on protecting the privacy of children in any of the drafts. In short, the new law fixes the age of consent for online services at 18 years. Online if you are under The platform will have to take parental consent, failing which a hefty fine of up to Rs 200 crore can be imposed on it. However, the platform is prohibited from tracking the consumption behavior of the child when he/she uses the Internet after obtaining parental consent. This is where the difficulty lies. After all, how can an online platform prevent a child from being exposed to harmful or illegal content without monitoring their internet behaviour?

If the child is putting herself at risk of injury or other danger If this is happening, how will the platform be able to take preventive steps like informing parents or law enforcement agencies? The law sees parental consent as the last resort for verification. This thinking is, then, data from the National Sample Survey show that less than 40 per cent of Indians are digitally literate. As such, it is possible for children to give consent without their parents' knowledge using their phone or e-mail. Not only this, rules like parental consent are not mandatory for some online forums are, and this exemption can be given to platforms like 'education, skill, music websites, which take all kinds of precautions' and 'which are not social media platforms'.

But there is a problem with this too. First, the rule appears to run counter to the data minimization principle (platforms should only keep data for as long as is necessary to fulfill that purpose). But here it is not clear that how taking the ID of the parents will ensure the safety of the children while using the internet. Verification exemption by platform This law can increase red tapism in the growing digital economy in order to obtain the certificate. It is also not clear whether online platforms will have to apply to government authorities for every change to make their services more valuable to children. Furthermore, the rationale for singling out certain categories of online forums is not understood at the moment. The purpose of any online platform today is not entirely clear. For example, YouTube is probably the world's largest provider of technical education platform, but the government can classify it as social media. As such, the law will not differentiate between entities that may offer equally strong protections when processing children's data, but have either closed their doors or are unable to secure them for any other reason. Related verification certificate has not been taken. Its loss will also ultimately be to the young internet users of the country. In this case, steps could have been taken under the standards accepted by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which India has also signed.

The platform will have to be prepared for efforts such as default setting, location monitoring, risk awareness, issuing directives on harmful use of data. Then, the government is also free to blacklist platforms that violate the rules. Of course, children's privacy in the world of the Internet is a global debate with no easy answers. But the stand we have taken on this issue is neither according to the reality of the country nor the challenges of the Internet.

## FENCE EATING THE CROP

■ K.V. SEETHARAMAIAH

It has been reported that Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested Enforcement Directorate (ED) officer for accepting Rs. 5 crore bribe from a businessman Amandeep Singh Dhall, an accused in the Delhi excise policy case. The crux of the matter is that the complaint against the Enforcement Directorate official was filed by the probe agency itself. CBI is an investigating agency and ED is also an investigating agency. Both of them are in place to weed out corruption and criminal activities. Interestingly, an FIR was filed by the CBI at the request of the ED itself against two accused officials Pawan Khatri, an Assistant Director and Nitesh Khohar; an Upper Divisional Clerk. In the instant case one investigating agency official has sought the help of the other to file an FIR against its own officials. While two ED officials fed prey to the temptation of money, the same ED got its officials booked for the offence they committed. Obviously, it is thorn removing thorn. Investigating agencies officers taking bribe, anti-corruption bureau being neck-deep in corruption, judges taking bribe and teachers taking the bribe for giving marks are nothing but "fence eating the crop". Money has such an attraction which brings about cleavage between husband and wife, parents and children, teachers and students, friends and friends and relatives and relatives. Money cements the relationship just like more often it divides. Money cements the relationship when someone gives money in times of dire need for it by the other. It strains the relationship when someone does not give it in times of need even when asked. T.P. Kailasam was questioned "What is money"? He said "it is matter of money". Matter of money is matrimony. There is a dialogue in a Kannada film. A person asks another person, "given a choice between money and education, which would you prefer to have?". The other person says "Money". "If I am given a choice, I prefer education", says the first one. The other one says "everyone prefers to have what one does not have". The message in the film is obvious. The first one prefers to have education because he does not have it. The second one prefers money because he does not have money. The characteristic of the money is that the more one would have it, the more and more one would like to have it. Insatiable desire for more and more money among politicians and bureaucrats sits in driving seat to make as much money as possible by them. Corruption is more a norm than an exception.

## Rainwater Harvesting: A Sustainable Solution to Water Scarcity

■ DR. BANARSI LAL

Nationally and internationally, 2023 is an important year for the water-related goals. The United Nations (UN) adopted a resolution in 2017, declaring 2018-28 as the International Decade for Action on Water for Sustainable Development. Water is an important resource for the development of any society and is helpful to maintain the integrity of the ecosystems. It is a critical resource for the growth of any economy. Water management is very essential to get the food security and prevent the soil erosion. It has been observed that demand of water has been increased almost eightfold in the last 100 years. There is availability of about 1,400 Million Cu. Kilomteres of water in the world but only 0.003 per cent of this can be used for the hygiene, drinking, agriculture and industry. But all this water is not accessible because part of it flows through in to the rivers during the seasonal floods. The average annual rainfall overland is 1, 10,000 Km3, but about 70,000 km3 evaporate before reaching to the sea. The remaining 40,000 km3 is available for human use but two-thirds of it run off in floods. About 60 per cent area in India is still rain fed so the monsoon rains play a significant role in India. Global population is increasing at an alarming rate whereas the natural resources such as land and water are static. The world may face 40 per cent shortfall between forecast demand and available supply of water by 2030.It has been observed that the global water withdrawal grew 1.7 times faster than the population. Climate change may worsen the situation by increasing the frequency and intensity of floods and droughts, making water more unpredictable by altering hydrological cycles.

About 80 per cent of land is rain fed in the world and this land contributes about 60 per cent of food production. Rest 20 per cent comes under irrigated agriculture which contributes about 40 per cent of food production. It brings the self-sufficiency in

the developing nations across the globe. The complexity of problems in rain fed agriculture is greater than that of irrigated agriculture. In India about 127 million ha cultivable land comes under rain fed condition which is approximately 70 per cent of the total cultivated land. Agriculture is the largest consumer of freshwater and during the last 30 years food production has been increased by 100 per cent. Over 1 billion people across the world are involved in agriculture. And they generate about \$ 2.4 trillion in economic every year. Thus the importance of rainwater harvesting is increasing over the years. In India huge amount of budget is being invested on rainwater harvesting to mitigate the climate risks. Cost-effective technologies and an in depth analysis on rain water management are needed for the sustainable agriculture. There is need to adopt alternative food crops and irrigation practices for sustainable agriculture. Millets can be promoted under rain fed agricultural system as they can be grown with less water. Rainwater is recognized as the viable alternative to mitigate the demand of washing, sanitation and crop irrigation. It is also helpful to mitigate the demand of droughts. It will give the food security and reduce the impact on humans and environment. During rainfall 70 per cent of annual ground water is contributed by the states such as Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Meghalya, Gujarat etc. There is 61 per cent contribution of recharge rainfall both from the monsoon and non-monsoon to the country's to the country's total annual groundwater and the remaining 39 per cent recharge comes from other sources such as recharge from tanks, canal seepage, ponds and water conservation structures.

Monsoon plays a significant role in the Indian agriculture as the major sown part of the country is still rain fed. The summer monsoon accounts for 70 to 80 per cent of the annual rainfall over the major parts of the South Asia. Timely rainfall is important

for the Kharif season crops. Coastal areas of the country such as Tamil Nadu receive the much of the rainfall from the North-East Monsoons, between October and December. Average rainfall in India is 1183 mm out of which 75 per cent is received during the monsoon period i.e.July to September. This results runoffs during the monsoon period and thus there is need to work on the rain water harvesting so as to save the water for the rest of the year. If even 5 per cent of water is harvested, it would produce a substantial quantum of water to the tune of 900 million litres. Due to lack of storage infrastructure, and storage procedure only about 18-20 per cent of water is used. Thus, rainwater harvesting is very important. It is expected that about 24 million hectares of rainwater can be harvested by making the small structures for water harvesting. If monsoon water is properly harvested, 30 per cent of it can be harnessed for the Rabi season crops. About one tone of yield can be supplemented by utilizing the rain water. The remaining 70 per cent of the harvested water can be will help in recharging the groundwater aquifers which may help to raise the groundwater level by 2 metres. Our agricultural system is mainly depending on monsoon because we are growing water loving crops such as paddy and sugarcane. We need to grow less water loving crops such as pulses and oilseeds so that we can counter the erratic monsoons. With new innovations we can conserve the rainwater and ensure the bright future for our environment and crop production. Such as we can utilize the artificial intelligence in agriculture that can optimize the water usage. Rainwater harvesting can be very handy to increase the declining water levels. The surface runoffs can be utilized efficiently. It can reduce floods on roads and roundabouts. Rainwater is simple, eco-friendly and economical.

Farmers use their own indigenous techniques to harvest rainwater. These innova-

tions are helpful to mitigate their water needs. It is estimated that for every square foot of imperious surface, a one-inch rainfall will collect 0.623 gallons of water. We can harvest the rainwater at our rooftops of our houses. Rainwater is salt free and slightly acidic and plants can be grown with slightly acidic water. In India, different types of water harvesting structures are innovated, designed and used across the nation since old times. Through these techniques water is harvested by making small structures. These structures support the landscape and maintain biodiversity. These structures help to maintain the green cover and maintain flora and fauna in the environment. But with the passage of time these structures have become obsolete and their revival is needed. The govt. has taken several initiatives to manage the country's groundwater resources. These initiatives include formulation of master plan for artificial recharge to groundwater, circulation of a model bill to all the states/UTs and Implementation of the National Aquifer Mapping and Mangement Programme to map major aquifers. The other initiatives such as Har Khet Ko Pani, Pardhan Mantri Sinchayi Yojna, Atal Bhujal Yojana etc. focus on improving the ground water. Jal Shakti Abhiyan was launched in 2019 in 1592 blocks of the country. It is an innovative scheme focusing on the water conservation and water harvesting. Community based water management approach is needed. The focus should be given on the water reuse and recycling technologies. Smart water management system can help us to improve the reliability of water supply, reduce wastage of water and minimize the costs on water. The message of water conservation should be communicated at all levels through the information, education and communication so that challenge of water scarcity can be mitigated.

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## Raksha Bandhan-the festival of love and bonding

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

Raksha Bandhan is a popular and traditionally Hindu annual rite or ceremony that is central to a festival of the same name celebrated in South Asia .It is also celebrated in other parts of the world significantly influenced by Hindu culture .It is one of the important festival of Hindus and in Santan Dharma its significance cannot be exaggerated .On this day ,sisters of all ages tie a talisman or amulet called Rakhi around the wrists of their brothers .They symbolically protect them ,receive a gift in return and traditionally invest the brothers with a share of the responsibility of their potential care .Raksha Bandhan is observed on the last day of the Hindu lunar calendar month of Shraavana ,which typically falls in August .The expression Raksha Bandhan (Sanskrit ,literally 'the bond of protection ,obligation and care) is now principally applied to this ritual .So this festival is the bond of love, affection and protection between the brothers and sisters and has an important place in Hinduism .Until the mid 20th century ,the expression was more commonly applied to a similar ritual ,held on the same day ,with precedence in ancient Hindu texts .In that ritual ,a domestic priest ties amulet ,charms or threads on the wrists of their patrons ,or changes their sacred thread ,and receives gifts of money .This is still the case in some places .On this auspicious occasion sisters tie rakhi or thread on the wrist of their brothers as a mark of love ,affection ,symbol of protection and bonding between the brothers and sisters .This festival is celebrated every year with great fervor and enthusiasm and with the ritual of this festival the bond and love between the brothers and sisters is strengthened .This festival coincides with the Shravaan Purnima and this day is celebrated and culminates with the Darshan of Lord Shiva and his consort Parvati at the natural cave of Shri Amarnath Ji in the Himalayas of Southern district of Anantnag .By contrast ,the sister-brother festival ,with origin in folk lore and culture ,had names which varied with location .Some were rendered as saluno ,silana and rakri .A ritual associated with saluno included the sisters placing shoots of barley behind the ears of their brothers .Of special significance to married women

,Raksha Bandhan is rooted in the practice of territorial or village exogamy .The bride marries out of her natal village or town ,and her parents by custom do not visit her in her married home .In rural north India ,where village exogamy is prevalent ,large numbers of married Hindu women travel back to their parents homes every year for the ceremony of tying Rakhi to their brothers .Their brothers who typically live with their parents or nearby ,sometimes travel to their sisters married home to escort them back .Many younger married women arrive few weeks earlier at their natal homes and stay until the ceremony of Rksha bandhan .The brothers serve as lifelong intermediaries between their married sisters and parental homes ,as well as potential stewards of their security .In urban India ,where families are increasingly nuclear ,the festival has become more symbolic but continues to be popular .The rituals associated with this festival have spread beyond their traditional regions and have been transformed through technology and migration .Other factors that have played a role are movies ,social interaction and promotion by politicized Hinduism as well as by nation state .Among females and males who are not blood relations ,the act of tying the rakhi amulets has given rise to the tradition of voluntary kin relationship ,which has sometimes cut across lines of caste ,class and religion. .In fact Rakhi or Raksha Bandhan is a Hindu festival celebrating the relationship between the brothers and sisters .This year Rakhi will be celebrated on 31st of August 2023.But unfortunately a confusion regarding the date of Raksha Bandhan has been created by some unscrupulous religious brokers as there is confusion whether Rakhi will be celebrated on 30 or 31st August because of Bhadun .However the religious scholars have made it clear that the festival of Raksha Bandhan falls on 31st of August as it always coincides with Shrawan Purnima .Raksha Bandhan is celebrated across the country as a symbol of bond between siblings .Rakhi is an ancient Hindu festival .Rakhi celebrates bond between the brothers and sisters .Sisters tie Rakhi on the wrist of brothers as a mark of love and brothers pledge to protect and guard their sisters through thick and thin .The festival is very famous with

several cultures in the country as the concept of duty and love between siblings is universal .On the morning of the festival day ,brothers and sisters gather together with their families .Sisters tie rakhis (threads) as a symbol of protection .Rakhis are also used celebrate other relationships between neighbors and friends .Raksha Bandhan is a monsoon festival ,which has a deeper meaning .The rainy season eradicates all the filth and convolutions of life .The season gives us affluence and a new hope to relish life to its fullest .That is why Shrawan month is considered as holy to celebrate the untainted bondage of love between siblings and the advent of good fortune .Raksha Bandhan also known as Rakhi or Rakri ,is a joyous festival celebrated by Hindus worldwide to honor the bond of love and responsibility between brothers and sisters. .However ,the significance of this festival goes beyond biological relationships as it brings together the people of all genders ,religions and ethnic backgrounds to celebrate various forms of platonic love .The term 'Raksha Bandhan 'translates to the knot of protection in Sanskrit .Although the rituals associated with festival vary in different regions ,they all involve the tying of a thread .The sister or a sister like figure ties a colorful and sometimes elaborate thread around her brothers wrist ,symbolizing her prayers and well wishes for his protection .In return ,the brother presents his sister with a meaningful gift .The origins of Raksha Bandhan can be traced back to ancient times. References to this festival can be found in legends related to Alexander the Great dating back to 326 BCE.

Hindu scriptures also contain several accounts of Raksha Bandhan .There are many stories how this festival started in Sanatan Dhrama .But in all probabilities ,the most popular story in Indian mythology is that of Lord Krishna and Draupadi, the wife of the five Pandavas .The story goes ,on Maker Sankaranti ,Krishna cut his little finger when handling sugarcane .His queen Rukmini immediately sent an official to get bandages .Meanwhile Draupadi ,who was watching the entire incident ,cut off a little bit of her saree and tied his finger with it to stop the bleeding .In return Krishna

promised to help her when required .That is the story behind the help Krishna provides during the unceremonious disrobing of Draupadi .Krishna came and made her saree never ending ,saving her the embarrassment by giving her protection when she needed it most.And this is how it is believed that Rakshabandhan started. Another story as per Shrimad Bhagavtam describes another event centered around Bali Maharaja ,who was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu .Won by the Bali's devotion ,Lord Vishnu agreed to eternally protect Bali Maharaja by becoming his door-keeper .Goddess Laxmi ,Lord Vishnu's consort wanted him to come home ,disguised herself as a poor woman seeking help ,and approached Bali.While there ,she tied a thread around Bali's arm .When Bali asked her what she wanted as a gift in return ,laxmi asked to grant leave to her husband ,who now revealed his identity .As Laxmi was now his sister and he made the promise to grant her wish ,he agreed. .Another story says that Lord Krishna advised King Yudhishthera to tie Rakhi .There is also the story of Yamuna tying a rakhi to her brother yama. As the time passed the festival of Raksha Bandhan started to be observed as a symbol of duty between brothers and sisters .The occasion is meant to celebrate any type of brother-sister relationship between men and women who may not be biologically related.

The bracelet symbolizes the brothers oath to protect his sister throughout her life ,and the sisters prayers and blessings for protection and wellbeing of her brother .He then gives a gift ,signifying his acceptance of this duty .Though Raksha Bandhan is specifically related to the bond of a brother and sister ,the festival is ultimately a message of the universal brotherhood and sisterhood that can be recognized amongst people cutting across religions .Raksha Bandhan is a festival furthering communal harmony and communal amity and thus the significance of this festival is great for the pluralism and secularism .May the bond of ,love ,duty and protection between brothers and sisters thrive and strengthen with each passing day and give meaning to our relationship.

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

## YOUR COLUMN

### Coping up Suicidal Tendencies

Dear Editor,

Kota, the specialized Coaching /training Hub in Rajasthan has again been in news, albeit for the wrong reasons, as two more students ended their lives by committing suicides. This is very sad and distressing. Every years, thousands of students primarily preparing for various competitive exams Like JEE and NEET etc visit Kota to join coaching/ training Centers overt here. In today's competitive world, academic studies and coaching/training put them under tremendous stress and strain. Additionally parent's high expectations too add to the pressure of these already burdened students. They expect their children to become Doctors, Engineers, IAS and IPS Officers despite the fact that their interest may lie in some other field. Acute depression emanating from tremendous pressure as well as early warning signals need to be discerned and timely emotional and psychological support provided by expert counselors and psychologists.

Institutional mechanism to address student's anxiety and worries during exams needs to be in place. Besides, there is an urgent need to make them understand that failure in one

Exam is not the end of life. There are possibilities galore in this competitive world and there is nothing to neither lose heart nor take extreme steps like ending one's life. Taking extreme step is no solution to any problem. Nation can't afford to lose our brilliant youths like this at their prime age. Life is very precious and must be shielded against all such negative tendencies in our young students by having regular interaction by teachers with them.

All sort of psychological and emotional support at these coaching centers and other educational institutions be provided to them in order to curb such unwanted extreme tendencies. Only collective and timely efforts would go a long way in stemming these negative tendencies in them. Apart from imparting them knowledge and education, students need to be trained to face lives changes boldly and confidently, unwavered by the today's competition.

Ravi Sharma, Dhariwal

### Save Balol River From Pollutants

Dear Editor,

It has been noted with concern that Auto / Tractor Trollies filled with Excavated garbage including plastics and polythene dumped solid wastes on the banks of Balol River near NITS College Indira Nagar (Miran Sahib) on R S Pura Road. I

asked them not to pollute the River water but they replied that BDO Miran Sahib ordered for the same. Then I contacted BDO Miran Sahib on his mobile he replied that government (revenue officials) permitted him to do so. Meanwhile Naib Tehsildar and Tehsildar R S Pura were contacted through their mobiles, they replied not to the satisfaction.

Thereafter SDM R S Pura contacted on her mobile, she assured to visit on spot for resolution of the case but no any kind of action taken in this regard till date by the concerned officials. Also tried to contact DC Jammu on her mobile but he didn't pick the call. Government at national level is celebrating Amrit Mahotsav and saving water through harvesting including rain water harvest and constructing Amrit Sarovars during Amrit Kaal all over India but officials in J&K UT are dumping garbage in the live water of Balol River to pollute it permanently which is already polluted to great extent.

Through your esteemed newspaper I would like to draw attention of the higher authorities and concerned officials not to pollute the Balol river with pollutants to save the water of Balol River and general public from water borne diseases. During rainy season as garbage dumped is mixing with water of Balol river due to rain and flood.

Pt Chaman Lal Sharma, Bhour Camp (Jammu).