

EXCESSIVE USE OF MOBILE

It is true that mobile addiction has become a prevalent issue in today's society, and it has had a significant impact on people's lives, particularly on their mental and physical well-being. The widespread use of smartphones has led to increased screen time for many individuals. People often find themselves spending a substantial part of their day staring at their mobile devices, whether it's for social media, gaming, or other digital activities. Prolonged use of mobile phones, especially for social media, can contribute to mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. Constant exposure to curated and often unrealistic online personas can negatively affect self-image.

Excessive mobile phone use can have physical consequences, including eye strain, headaches, and disrupted sleep patterns. The blue light emitted by screens can interfere with circadian rhythms and lead to sleep disturbances.

Make Jammu Neat, Clean and Green

Of-ten repeatedly, it has been in regular columns of dailies, weeklies and other prints-medias regarding garbage piling up everywhere and every now and then and as a corollary, the complaints column is flooded with ever-increasing malice in and around Jammu, a city of temples and elsewhere also the situation is likewise same. This way, the life has become totally unhygienic and there is cruelty amongst stray cattle who subsist upon the rotten polythene garbage and waste refuse of banquet halls and other unhygienic dumping.

It is disgusting rather dismayng that this unhygienic scenario is aggravating and amounting to multiple diseases gripping the rural populace as well. And still sad is the way in which the innocent stray animals feed upon these dead and thrown out stuffs from the ceremonial occasions of various hues. Over the years, polythene culture in most of the states including that of ours was completely banned but his practice continues as ever before. Imagine the eating up of garbage along with other polythene by stray cattle, which over the past few years have taken a heavy toll of cattle population. This is grave tragedy and warrants immediate aversion. The people, even those deemed to be much civilized have forgotten the civic sense and throw away the rotten stuff on the road side alongside nallahs, instead of putting these in municipal bins.

The menace has engulfed almost all inhabiting areas in and around Jammu city; leaves aside posh colonies like Gandhi Nagar, Trikuta Nagar etc. The Jammu Municipality is endeavouring hard in conducting trails/survey to make this city of temples neat, clean and green by keeping the garbage-bins in almost all the locations yet we Jammuites should apply our senses and lend a helping hand to the authorities concerned for the rational disposal of garbage.

This menace has mostly been emanating for the last few decades with ever escalating ceremonial functions like marriages, mundans, Naamkarn and the like with new names and fames. This is newly born culture preferably amongst rich elites so to be nomenclaturised as "Neo-Rich. In such a fashion show, the less privileged common man has to bear the brunt against extravagant expenditure which is beyond his limits. In other words round, it tantamount to mere wastage of the wide-variety of stalls displayed beyond expected menn.

All these factors are responsible for accumulation or pilling up garbage thus providing a multi-magnitude of ailments. The rot-tening breads, the hovering of flies, mosquitoes and breeding bacteria to the extent of dengue fever are directly or indirectly going to inflict the exposed eatables viz sweet shops and the like causing gastro-intestinal and other ailments and that is why the hos-pitals, other nursing centres are flooded with patients.

As per record, there are more than 1500 "Safai karamcharies" in Jammu Municipality. Though the strength is low for a bigger city like Jammu with a population over ten lakhs or so. The number need to be raised and they should energize their efforts for the cleansing operation.

Not only that, the public should realized and join hands with the authorities concerned in making Jammu city neat , clean and green. This is the call of the hour and let it become a slogan "Make Jammu neat clean and green."

Suggestive measure:- Hygienic dumping and disposal:- Arguably, it is no doubt a denying the fact that ceremonial functions such as marriage, birthday, Mundan etc are celebrated with much fan and fare but when the function is over, the waste refuse should be rationally disposed off. In order; therefore , we are to extend an helping hand towards the concerned authorities, so that such waste material is not haphazardly dumped and it is finally disposed off properly.

Aversion of polythene culture:- Over the years, there had been lot of lue and cry regarding blanket ban on polythene culture but its spirit and sanctity has not been carried out fully. The scenario still seems to be there as ever before. Though in HP including most of the other hill tourist spots of our state, the civic sense has been applied and tourism deptt have perhaps played a vital role in this behalf.

Massive afforestation:- Avenue plantation, a component of arboriculture need to be encouraged so as to provide greenery and delimitate the emission of poisonous gases as plants and trees are in variably the lunges which absorb Co2. Here, the forest department is rendering Yeoman's service but other sister departments viz Agriculture, Horticulture should also come forward as vast areas avenue lands and other wastelands, institutions, health centres, offices and so many other suchlike areas are available.

This shall provide extensive greenery to this city of temples giving a picturesque look to the locals and boost tourism as well.

Boosting floriculture: There are plenty of park areas in and around Jammu city, apart from the avenue bunds and dividers. No doubt, some efforts have however; been made but these need to be invigorated by raising turfs so that these give carpet-type look, coupled with ornamental plants creepers, flowers such as roses both locals as well as exotic. There is a wide variety of roses and its hybrids varying from the tiny cri-cri to argue blooms of American heritage and from the soft translucent pink of Michele Mainland to the brilliant vermilion of super star.

Among other flowering plants include gladiolus, chrysanthemums, carnations, daffodils, Ranunculus, dahlis/Lilies, Tulips, etc and so far as climbers and creepers are concerned these include Bougainvilleas, clerodendron, begonia, Jasminum, etc. Making river Tawi healthy, With exploding population face to face with increase in number of vehicles, there is ever-mounting rush of heavy vehicles for cleansing in the only river Tawi. The practice should be lawful averted and defaulters brought to book. Apart from this, every sort of filth being dumped into the river thereby making it filth reddened. This as well warrants a complete check to restore back to its prisManaging the canals and other water bodies: On the same analogy; these as well warrant proper maintenance and cleanliness. All Jammuites should launch a mass campaign for its cleanliness and the concerned agencies together with NGO 's and all citizens shall have to extend full support. Conclusively, therefore, it is added over here that it is incumbent upon every citizen of Jammu to apply there civic sense and at the same time make all out efforts to ensure Jammu city neat, clean and green. It is mandatory on the part of every citizen. So, let us pledge to facelift Jammu to captivate and attract the pilgrims and visitors alike this will promote local tourism and boosting the local economy.

NEP-2020 and Higher Education: Unlocking the Locks

■ DR. RAJKUMAR SINGH

Higher education is the educational level that follows secondary education and usually includes college, university, and postgraduate studies. It is typically pursued after completing a high school diploma or its equivalent and offers more specialized and advanced learning in a particular field of study. Its key aspects include: a. Universities: These institutions offer a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs across various disciplines. They often conduct research and grant degrees such as bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees.Colleges: These institutions can offer programs similar to universities, but they might be smaller in size and focus more on undergraduate education. b. Community Colleges: These provide two-year associate degree programs and often serve as a stepping stone for students who plan to transfer to a four-year university. c. Vocational and Technical Schools: These institutions focus on providing specialized training and education in practical skills for specific careers, such as culinary arts, automotive repair, and medical technology. These institutions normally offer a. Associate Degree: A two-year degree typically obtained from community colleges, vocational schools, or technical institutes. b. Bachelor's Degree: A four-year undergraduate degree that provides a more in-depth education in a specific field of study. c. Master's Degree: An advanced degree that can be pursued after obtaining a bachelor's degree. It usually takes one to two years to complete and involves more specialized study. d. Doctoral Degree (Ph.D.): The highest level of academic achievement, requiring several years of original research and the completion of a dissertation. It is often pursued by those aiming for careers in academia or research. e. Fields of Study:Higher education offers a vast array of fields, including but not limited to arts, humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, engineering, technology, business, law, medicine, and more. f. Admission

Process:Higher education institutions often have a competitive admission process. Higher education and NEP- 2020 The NEP 2020 covers all levels of education, from early childhood to higher education, and aims to bring about significant reforms to address the evolving needs of society. Its impacts include: a. Multidisciplinary and Flexibility:The NEP 2020 encourages a multidisciplinary approach in higher education. It aims to break down rigid barriers between disciplines and promote the integration of various subjects to provide students with a broader and more holistic education.The policy promotes flexibility in curriculum design, allowing students to choose courses from different disciplines and customize their educational paths according to their interests and career aspirations.b. Four-Year Undergraduate Programs:The NEP 2020 recommends shifting towards a four-year undergraduate program with multiple exit options. This enables students to leave with a certificate or diploma after completing a certain number of years, and a bachelor's degree at the end of four years.c. Research and Innovation:The policy emphasizes the importance of research and innovation in higher education. It encourages universities to establish research-intensive environments, increase funding for research, and promote collaboration between academia, industry, and research institutions.d. Quality and Accreditation:The NEP 2020 focuses on improving the quality of higher education by setting up a new accreditation framework. Institutions will be assessed based on various criteria, including teaching quality, research output, and governance.e. Faculty Development:The policy stresses the need for faculty development programs to enhance the skills and knowledge of educators. f. Technology Integration:The NEP 2020 recognizes the role of technology in education and recommends the integration of technology for effective teaching, learning, and assessment. It promotes the use of

online resources and digital platforms.g. Holistic Development:The policy aims to foster the holistic development of students by integrating extracurricular activities, sports, and vocational training into higher education programs.h. Internationalization:The NEP 2020 encourages internationalization of higher education by promoting collaborations between Indian and foreign institutions. i. Language of Instruction:The policy suggests offering programs in regional languages to promote access and inclusivity. j. Governance and Autonomy:The NEP 2020 recommends enhancing institutional autonomy and reducing regulatory interference. It envisions the establishment of Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) as a single regulatory body for higher education, replacing multiple existing bodies. n. Equity and Inclusion:The policy aims to promote equity and inclusion in higher education by providing scholarships, financial aid, and support for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. It seeks to prepare students for a rapidly changing world and foster a culture of research, creativity, and lifelong learning. Comparison of 1986 and 2020 The National Education Policy (NEP) of 1986 and the NEP of 2020 are two distinct policy frameworks introduced by the Government of India to shape and reform the education sector in the country. While both policies aim to improve education, they have different focuses, objectives, and approaches which include: a. Emphasis on Multidisciplinary and Flexibility (NEP 2020):NEP 2020 places a strong emphasis on promoting a multidisciplinary approach in education, allowing students to explore a wide range of subjects and disciplines.NEP 1986 had a more traditional disciplinary approach to education, with a focus on specialization within specific fields of study. b. Four-Year Undergraduate Programs and Multiple Exit Options (NEP 2020):NEP 2020 recommends the adoption of four-year undergraduate programs with multiple exit

options, enabling students to receive certificates, diplomas, or degrees based on the number of years completed.NEP 1986 generally followed a three-year undergraduate program without the provision of multiple exit options. c. Research and Innovation Focus:Both policies recognize the importance of research and innovation in education, but NEP 2020 places a greater emphasis on research, establishing research-intensive universities and promoting a research culture. d. Autonomy and Decentralization:While NEP 1986 aimed to enhance institutional autonomy and decentralization of decision-making,NEP 2020 emphasizes autonomy but proposes a new regulatory body, the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI), to oversee higher education institutions. e. Language of Instruction (NEP 2020):NEP 2020 recommends offering programs in regional languages while ensuring proficiency in the medium of instruction. f. Technology Integration:NEP 2020 highlights the integration of technology for effective teaching, learning, and assessment, acknowledging the role of digital tools and online resources in education. g. Equity and Inclusion NEP 1986 focused on addressing disparities in access to education, while NEP 2020 seeks to provide quality education and support to disadvantaged groups, focusing on early childhood care and education. h. Vocational Education (NEP 2020):NEP 2020 places a strong emphasis on vocational education, aiming to integrate vocational courses into mainstream education and providing practical skills to students.i. Accreditation and Quality Assurance (NEP 2020): NEP 2020 introduces a new accreditation framework to ensure quality in higher education, evaluating institutions based on various criteria including teaching, research, and governance. While NEP 1986 laid the foundation for modernizing education in India, NEP 2020 seeks to further transform the education landscape to prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century.

(The author is a Youth Motivator).

HAIR-CUT, MANGE RAM STYLE!

■ CAPTAIN PURUSHOTTAM SHARMA (RETD)

It was a very cold day in the late fifties at our Army Command Headquarters at Shimla when a young Captain came to meet his old friend who happened to be one of our officers of his rank peeped into our Colonel's office room without caring to give a look at the name plate with designation fixed at the front of the entry door. The Young Officer had his hair Raj-Kapoor-hair-style which his headgear could not manage to take care of.

"Yes!", roared the Colonel. "Sorry, Sir, I want to meet Captain.....", said the poor Captain. "But am I a captain"? the Colonel fired. "No Sir" responded the poor Captain,his saluting in a casual way added fuel to the fire. "Don't you have haircut in your unit?" inquired the Colonel. "Yes, we do have Sir". "Then why didn't you have your haircut?" The Colonel further probed. "Sir, I was on ten days' casual leave". Captain defended himself. "But casual leave counts as duty and this does not mean that you should forget your haircut. Go and have your haircut done right now and show it to me before leaving Shimla for your unit." Commanded the Colonel. The captain rushed to the Mal and had his hair done up from a Hair-Dresser with pleasant fragrance of the powder spread around the head but the headgear was still not in 'co-

operation' with the long hair which were still 'profusely' visible to the onlooker. "Hun! Is this the haircut we are supposed to have in the Army?" questioned the Colonel. "No Sir", replied the young officer. By then the episode had prompted me to have the relevant Army Order on the subject properly tagged to ensure its update-ness and give three readings to it for getting fully educated on the subject. My expectation turned true and I was summoned by my GSO 1 to explain the provisions of the Army Order in detail which I did efficiently with a hope of receiving a 'Shabaash' from him. I was in his good books for my perfect saluting, ideal wearing, haircut and soldierly display at all times. He made the young officer to give athorough reading to the Army Order and act accordingly. He did so for about 15 minutes. After that, the Colonel asked the young officer, "now tell me, is your haircut as per the specifications, the length of the hair and the side-burns in particular?" "No Sir", replied the poor Captain. "Then go and have your haircut from any Army barber and show it to me O.K.", the Colonel commanded. "Right Sir"said the captain in obedience.

The poor guy then asked me if I could direct him to find an Army Barber. I gladly made one of our peons to accompany him to Mange Ram (a Haryanvi) who did his work strictly as per the specifications although his scissors did root out some

hair here and there and razor made few cuts also which soldiers do not have to bother about. No powder, no shampoo! Not a single hair could now dare to appear out of headgear!

The young officer was this time frightened to make entry into Colonel's Office Room. At the door, he would take one step forward and two steps backward! By then, I had developed a little sympathy for him and helped him to muster courage and get inside. This time the young Captain's saluting was his Academy style and haircut pleasing to the Colonel.

"Did you have your Lunch?" inquired the Colonel. "No Sir. My wife is waiting at the outer Gate of the Headquarters and we'll have lunch together", replied the young officer. "Alright, then today's lunch at my place", the Colonel invited the officer and his wife with a big smile playing on his face. He directed the couple to walk down to Chhota Shimla where the Colonel's wife was waiting to entertain the couple to lunch. After some time, Colonel also joined them. He and his noble-hearted wife gave an affectionate treat to the young couple like their own son and daughter-in-law. This way the young couple established a sweet relationship with Colonel's family.

"But, one thing please, do tell your Commanding Officer about this incident, O.K." commanded the Colonel. "I will Sir", said the captain in t perfect obedience.

STEVIA: CALORIE FREE SWEETENER

■ DR. VIKAS SHARMA

The blooming health awareness has raised eye brows of many to search for herbal alternatives that can pose therapeutic potential and also can supplement the hunger of the population. Diet consisting of limited carbohydrate and fat has necessitated the use of various alternatives that can substitute the prevailing platter. In view of the above, various herbal alternatives have cropped up, Stevia being one of the candidates. The plant Stevia being a native of Paraguay, is an alternative source of artificial sweetener posing zero carbohydrate and fat. It is highly nutritious owing to its numerous therapeutic potential being antioxidant, antimicrobial, mental sedative, digestive and anti diabetic to name a few. Stevia is a candidate of anti hypertension, it is extensively used in the confectionaries / bakeries as an alternative source of cane and beet sugar and being a key source sweetener for the diabetic world, it has got some cosmetic implications as it helps in skin toning too. Since centuries, Stevia has been consumed in China, Indonesia, Canada, Japan and Argentina as a magical potent.

The plant taxonomically nomenclatured as Stevia rebaudiana, is a member of the compositate / asteraceae family and has herbaceous growth habit with alternate leaves arrangement. It is a perennial plant growing up to 65-80 cm with sessile leaves. It is a semi humid plant and can be grown as any other vegetable as a kitchen garden crop. Being less in calorie, it has been colossally used from centuries in various parts of the world including Japan, Central & South America, Brazil and Paraguay. The use of S rebaudina can



be found in various parts of the geographical coordinates as an anti hyperglycaemic sweetener which can also help in controlling weight in obese persons. Biochemically, the diterpene glycosides hold the lion share in grooming it as a natural sweetener, which includes proximately 0.3% dulcoside, 0.6 % rebaudioside C, 3.8 % rebaudioside A and 9.1 % stevioside. Moreover, the chemical composites include stigmasterol and campesterol. The leaves of the species are rich in sweetening compounds such as stevoside, rebaudioside A, D and E, dulcosides A and B, all belonging to diterpene glycosides. The novel chemical composites especially the glycosides are responsible for reducing the level of cholesterol, triglycerides and low density lipoprotein cholesterol.

Literature showed that the stevia extract pose a hypolipidaemic effect and can be a boon for various cardiovascular diseases. The herbal sweetener shows various uses as being safe for diabetes, as it does not affect blood sugar levels along with being renal safe. Moreover, stevia has proven anti fungal and anti bacterial along with versatile properties. From centuries, stevia has been used as a flavour enhancer, symbiotically used as a herbal tea sweetening agent owing to be 30 times sweeter than cane sugar. Statistics suggest that by 2024, 40% of the Indian population will be affected by diabetes, so the call of the hour is to search for better sweetening alternatives. Scientists claim that stevia sugar can be a better alternative as other sugar alternatives pose some detrimental side effects.

Stevia pose a myriad of legitimate therapeutic potential in synergetic to being a flavour enhancer. Besides steviosides, being a booty of beneficial compounds including sterols, triterpenes, flavonoids and tannins support the use of stevia as a medicinal herb. It is believed that the presence of stevosides, produce a dozen of empirical and semi controlled hypoglycaemic actions. Various researches suggest the long term use of stevia as a cardio tonic, can aid in various cardiovascular diseases and can produce a mild strengthening of the heart and vascular system.

Therefore, stevia, as an emerging source of calorie free sweetener, owing to being 20 to 30 times more sweeter than cane / beet sugar, aids in digestion and weight reduction simultaneously, posing zero carbohydrate and fat.

(The authors is Assoc. Professor from the Division of Biochemistry SKUAST-Jammu).

YOUR COLUMN Financial Irregularities During Pandemic Time

Dear Editor, The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has reported that over 50 per cent of Rs. 140 crore paid for O2 during Covid has been siphoned off. In this connection, the ED has reportedly recorded the statement of several people including contractor Romin Chheda of Highway Construction Company. Chheda is a politically influential contractors working in the BMC and his company was involved in renovation and development work of civic-run zoo in Byculla. The financial irregularities have been detected by the ED in the supply of oxygen to hospitals and field COVID centres during the pandemic. BMC had reportedly paid Rs. 140 crore and out of that amount less than half of the amount has been said to have been spent on it. The remaining amount has been siphoned off. ED has claimed that Chheda sub-contracted the work to another company,

a paper company, which eventually purchased the oxygen and required equipment from a Delhi-based supplier. While examining the documents, the ED has found that the Delhi-based supplier had raised the bill in the name of the paper company and subsequently an inflated bill was raised in the name of the company through which Chheda bagged the contract. Chheda has allegedly paid only 40 per cent of the Rs. 140 crore to the Delhi-based supplier and a part of the amount has been spent on transportation and for creation of storage facilities. ED had reportedly searched Chheda's premises in July and recovered Rs. 1.2 crore cash from his office and home. COVID Second wave claimed the lives of many people. A large number of families were bereaved during that period. While a number of families were in grief, it was a God-sent opportunity for contractors and hospital authorities to make money through unfair means. Beds in hospitals were hired for bribe money apart from collecting legitimate fees. Artificial scarcity of beds was created. Those who greased the palm of hospital authorities got the beds and saved their lives. Poor people who could not afford to pay hefty sums of money as bribe had to lose their lives. During the second wave, vaccination had not been developed.

Therefore, the disease claimed heavy tolls. Even now there is no report to suggest that COVID-19 has been eradicated. US President Joe Biden's wife has tested positive. The arrival of Biden for the G20 meet was also in doubt earlier. After finding that he tested negative, he could take part in the G20 summit in Delhi. No country should be complacent on this disease which at one point of time threatened the very existence of mankind. Vaccination should be administered and it should be the continuing process. If the disease raises its ugly head, it not only plunges the families in grief but also it impairs the economy of the nation as a whole. Investment on the manufacture of vaccination with associated expenditure in administering it to the people is no dearer than the expenditure likely to be incurred if the disease plays havoc more formidably than before. The interest of children has been totally neglected and the government should not forget that they are the budding and promising citizens of the country. No effort should be spared to keep the pandemic under check and no chance should be given to the suppliers of oxygen or contractors or hospital authorities to take advantage of the difficulties the people face.

K.V. Seetharamaiah