

# Impressions

**Theme of this Bulletin:**

**Nirbhau- Nirvair  
(No Fear - No Hate)**

No. 22/16 – July 2022  
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[www.nevedac.com](http://www.nevedac.com)



Editor  
Dr. V.J.S. Vohra

**Fear never builds the future,  
But FAITH does, and also HOPE does**



[Disability leads to Ability of Super Humans](#)

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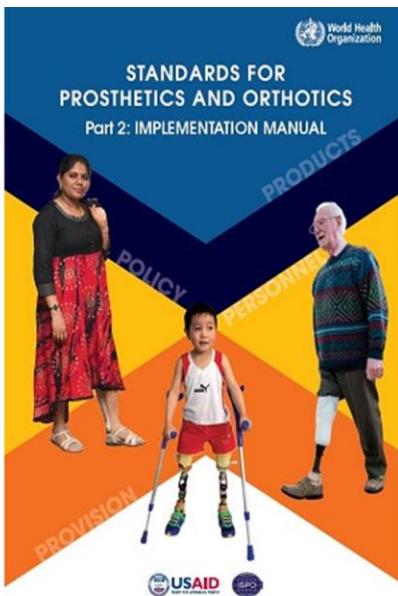
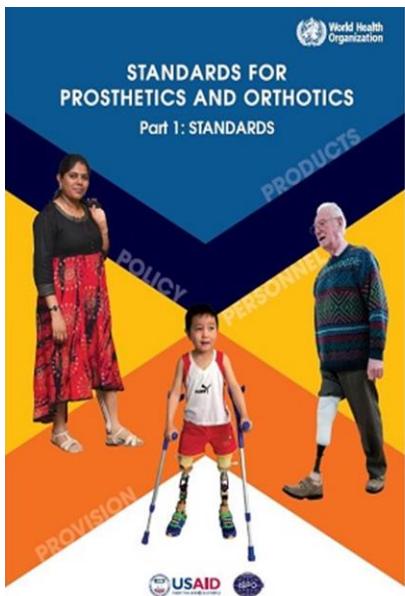
## World Health Organization Standards for Prosthetics and Orthotics

### Part 1 : Standards and Part 2 : Implementation Manual

WHO identifies the requirements to be considered in planning, developing and promoting professional recognition of the workforce. It stresses the importance of training various types of prosthetics and orthotics personnel to meet nationwide demand and urges the promulgation of State regulations to ensure that service users are protected from malpractice and poor-quality services. **Prosthetics and orthotics clinicians should be recognized as independent health professionals with a distinct professional title, profile and job description.** The section states the importance of a multidisciplinary team approach in prosthetics and orthotics, especially for people with severe or complex physical impairments.

Personnel who provide prosthetics and orthotics services are like other health care personnel, those in prosthetics and orthotics services comprise professionals, associates and assistants, with two broad job profiles: clinicians (prosthetists and/or orthotists and their associates) and non-clinicians (technicians and support staff). In collaboration with a team of health care, rehabilitation and administrative personnel, they provide prosthetics and orthotics treatment for people with diverse physical impairments or functional limitations.

**Many countries do not have professional regulation or recognition of prosthetists and orthotists, placing service users at risk for malpractice and poor-quality services. The introduction of professional regulations protects service users from these risks.** The regulations should define the minimum levels of education and experience required for these professionals to practise and the permitted scope of work. State regulation of prosthetics and orthotics clinicians harmonizes clinical practice.



All personnel in prosthetics and orthotics services throughout the health system should be accountable for their actions. A part of this accountability is achieved by prosthetists and orthotists assuming responsibility for the services provided by associate and nonclinical personnel under their supervision. **Recognition of prosthetics and orthotics clinicians as health professionals with distinct professional titles and profiles firmly establishes these services in the national health service and increases the motivation, retention and professional development of personnel, which in turn enhances service provision.** There should be a clear career structure and employment conditions that are aligned with other health care professionals, associates and technical personnel.

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Recognition implies that these clinicians have a clear career structure and that their employment conditions are aligned with those of other health professionals. The classification of prosthetists and orthotists should correspond to that of physiotherapists and occupational therapists, as they have similar levels of responsibility. Correct classification of prosthetists and orthotists is an incentive, as it offers increased opportunities for promotion. Prosthetic and orthotic professionals / clinicians should be regulated by the State within regulations for health professionals.

**Prosthetists and orthotists** are health professionals with overall responsibility for prosthetics and orthotics treatment, who can supervise and mentor the practice of other personnel. They are clinicians trained to assess the needs of the user, prescribe treatment, determine the precise technical specifications of prostheses and orthoses, take plastercasts, measurements and images of body segments, prepare models for the manufacture and fit of devices and evaluate treatment outcomes. They should have adequate understanding of the complete fabrication and clinical process in order to guide and supervise the work of prosthetics and orthotics technicians and support personnel. Prosthetists and orthotists have comprehensive training providing a broad range of clinical competence. They should increase their experience and expertise in order to assume leadership, advance models of service delivery and participate in research and evidence-based practice. They may also continue their education to masters and doctorate levels.

## The Status of Prosthetic Orthotic facilities and Disabled Persons in India

The Persons with Disability (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights, and Full Participations) Act 1995, was enacted to give an effect to the "Proclamation on the Full Participation and Equality of the People with Disabilities in the Asian and Pacific Region. Mobility is the first condition. Assistive devices like prosthesis, orthosis, and mobility aids play a crucial role in transforming differently-abled and make them mobile. Prosthetics and Orthotics are medical and health care specialty deals with design, elaborate clinical process and application of medical prosthetic and orthotic devices and research and development. Prosthetic and orthotic rehabilitation services provide complete care of rehabilitation services with promotion, prevention, and assistance to lost or weaken or deformed parts of the body.

There are issues and challenges of the Prosthetic and Orthotic Rehabilitation services in India. World Health Organization (WHO), and Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) have issued directives to address these issues and challenges. Disabled Persons experience a poor level of health which leads to secondary complications due to non-mobility, weight gain and lack of environmental access.

The national policy for persons with disabilities, 2006 recognizes persons with disabilities as human resources for the country and advocates equal opportunity as others for a better quality of life. The salient features include physical rehabilitation with early detection and intervention and provision of appropriate assistive devices. **It also advocates educational and economic rehabilitation for disabled persons so that they live in the society as a normal citizen, with dignity and pride.**

Rights for persons with disabilities Act, 2016 defines the person with benchmark disability and justify the propriety of persons with disabilities without discrimination and ensure inclusion in society. In addition to that Govt. of India run many schemes to serve the disabled like ADIP, DDRS, SIPDA, etc. to empower them through providing prosthetic and orthotic devices, and accessible environment, skill development, and in-service training.

As per World Health Organization (WHO), in low and middle-income countries such as India, only 10 percent of the population has access to needed prosthetic, orthotic, and assistive devices. The prevalence of locomotor disability in India is around 20% who may need prosthetic and orthotic devices to reach optimal independence.

**To deliver the prosthetic and orthotic services, each unit/cinic has to have qualified Prosthetic and Orthotic clinicians / professionals.** In the future, the population growth, older population, increased risk of accidents and other complications may result in demand for more prosthetic and orthotic service.

# Impressions

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## Statutory Warning Issued in Public Interest



भारतीय पुनर्वास परिषद्  
सामाजिक धर्म और अधिकारी भवालय  
दिव्यांगजन सशालिकल विभाग के अंतर्गत एक सामाजिक विभाग  
REHABILITATION COUNCIL OF INDIA  
A Statutory Body under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment  
Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)



### STATUTORY WARNING

Practicing without RCI Registration  
In Govt./Non Govt. Organization and by any Private Practitioner  
is an Offence under section 13 (3) of RCI Act No. 34 of 1992

It has been observed by the Council that Children with Disabilities (Divyangjan) are being trained/served by Quacks/Unqualified/Non-registered Personnel/Professionals.

If anyone found serving "Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)", without having RCI Certification, shall be prosecuted before the Court of Law under Section 13(3) of RCI Act, 1992 as under:

"Any person who acts in contravention of any provision of sub-section (2) shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees, or with both".

General Public is requested to report such instances to the Council along with documentary evidence by post/fax/email to enable the Council to take appropriate action such as filing of FIR against such persons.

"This Statutory Warning is issued in public interest".

(Dr. Subodh Kumar)  
Member Secretary

B-22, Qutab Institutional Area, New Delhi - 110 016  
Tel.: 011-2653 2408, 2653 2384, 2653 4287, 2653 2816 - Fax : 011-2653 4291  
E-mail : rci-depwd@gov.in Website : www.rehabcouncil.nic.in

Please Recycle

## STATUTORY WARNING

PRACTICING WITHOUT RCI REGISTRATION IN  
GOVT. / NON GOVT. ORGANIZATION / PRIVATE  
PRACTITIONERS IS ILLEGAL UNDER  
RCI ACT NO. 34 OF 1992 U/S 13(3).

It has been observed by Council that Children with Disabilities are trained/served by quacks/unqualified/ Non Registered Personnel/ Professionals.

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"This Statutory Warning is issued in Public Interest".

### Non-registration can have serious consequences :

- Not eligible to work in Government or Private Sector
- Not eligible to provide service in the field of disability Rehabilitation and Special Education
- Cannot practice as rehabilitation professional anywhere in India

For Registration apply through your institute from where you have qualified.



MY RIGHT IS TO BE SERVED BY QUALIFIED PERSONNEL  
DAYS OF CHARITY HAVE GONE

For further information, please contact:

Member Secretary  
**REHABILITATION COUNCIL OF INDIA**  
(Statutory Body of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Govt. of India)  
B-22, Qutab Institutional Area, New Delhi-110016  
Phone: 91-11-2653 2384/2408/4287; Fax: 91-11-2653 4291  
E-mail: rehabstd@nde.vsnl.net.in Visit us at: www.rehabcouncil.nic.in



**Padma Awards**  
Ministry of Home Affairs  
(Govt. of India)  
**Padma Shri (1988)**  
**Col. (Retd.) Darshan Singh Vohra**  
Social Work Chandigarh  
  
**Col. D. S. Vohra**  
(1919-1998)



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# Impressions

July 2022 - 4 -

## A look back at origins of Punjab HC, a debate sealed with a dog's nationality

Indian Express, Chandigarh Edition, 17 July 2022

**Author:**



**Dr. Balram Gupta**

The High Court of Punjab came into existence in 1955. A year later, the PEPSU High Court got merged with Punjab High Court. My father was working with PEPSU High Court on the administrative side. Therefore, we shifted to Chandigarh in 1956. I have seen this court grow in size and stature from its inception. The first wing of the High Court comprising the court of the Chief Justice and eight other court rooms became operational on January 17, 1955.

It was officially inaugurated by the first Prime Minister, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, on March 19, 1955. Le Corbusier conceived, designed and executed this great architectural marvel. It was not an easy exercise, considering that the labour force was not used to modern building techniques. He also had to find out how to beat the violent sun, the habit of siesta and laziness. The rainy season also had its own problems. The building had to be so designed so that the courts could function throughout the year in Chandigarh without migrating to the hills every summer. But he achieved this gigantic task in record time.

As the judges occupied the High Court building, soon Corbusier came on a visit. He found the oil stains in the pitch, left behind by the official Ambassador cars. Furious, he stormed into the Chief Justice's court and protested that this was not the parking lot. The Chief Justice told him that the judges cannot be expected to enter from the common entry. Corbusier then took up the matter with Nehru who told the Chief Justice to sort it out. The porch continues to be the judges' parking lot.

Then the courts faced a problem in acoustics thanks to the very high ceilings and spacious rooms. Corbusier sorted out this problem by creating a series of large tapestries to cover the interior walls behind the judge's benches for sound absorption. Corbusier designed the tapestries himself. Initially, these had to be woven in villages and prisons. But when this proved impractical, the entire 650 metre tapestries were executed in five months by a Kashmir firm.

Before the tapestries, even a whisper by the judges was audible to all. A beautiful young lady lawyer had come from Delhi to argue a matter before a division bench of JJ Ashok Bhan and MR Agnihotri. Bhan wanted to dismiss the petition but Agnihotri, whispered, "let us issue, notice of motion, she will come again." Of course, the lawyer heard it.

Corbusier believed in originality. The original wing of the High Court had Chief Justice's Court and eight other judges' courtrooms. The Chief's court is a beauty, a joy forever. During my term at National Judicial Academy, Bhopal, we had a regional conference in collaboration with High Court of Chattisgarh, [Bilaspur](#) during 2013-14. Then Chief Justice Yatindra Singh showed us his newly built courtroom and asked, "Is it not majestic?" I invited him to Chandigarh. He had a hearty laugh, and said, you are being diplomatic. The fact is the grandeur of Chief Justice's court in Chandigarh is unmatched. Close to the High Court, in Sector 4, is the residence of the CJ and eight other judges. They were designed and built at the same time. With their verdant lawns, these sprawling houses are perfect for judicial minds.

**THE BAR:** In front of Chief Justice's court, there is a Fountain of Justice. It continues to flow 24X7. It is the insignia and symbol of the role played by the Judicial and Legal Coparcenary of the region. It is a reminder that Justice is not to be sold. Not to be denied. Not to be delayed. The original first wing of the High Court, the library and the Bar room were too small in the plan. It was after partition (1947) that the High Court and the lawyers shifted to Shimla. The lawyers came from Shimla to Chandigarh to discuss the matter with Corbusier. When they pleaded for a bigger Bar room, Corbusier said "surely you do not expect more than 40-50 lawyers drinking at the same time during the court hours".

Most people confuse the Bar room with a restaurant bar. I once introduced a judge by saying that he had been elevated after a long standing at the Bar. I was quietly asked, whether he drank a lot. It is high time we understand the difference between the club bar and the court Bar. There is a Bar in every court which separates the Judge from the lawyer. The Judge sits on that side of the Bar and the lawyer stands to argue on this side of the Bar. Therefore, the lawyers' room is known as the Bar room. The lawyers and the judges constitute the Bar and the Bench.

**THE BRITISH CONNECTION:** Donald Falshaw, ICS, was the last British judge to serve the Indian High Courts. At the Punjab HC in the early 1960s, he was hearing a criminal appeal in which the counsel had difficulty in expressing himself in English. Justice Falshaw hurriedly went through the district court judgment and the counsel was asked, "What have you done? You gave such a deadly blow! There was no provocation". The counsel said, there was sudden provocation as the accused had taken away his 'she-dog'. The judge said, "Oh, you mean a bitch". The counsel said, "Yes, the same thing". The judge said, even then, it was just a bitch. The counsel said, it was not just a bitch, it was a 'foreign-bitch'. He added, "In fact, it was of my lord's nationality." Justice Falshaw put away the file and left the court-room. Justice HR Khanna, the bench partner with CJ Falshaw, recounts in his autobiography 'Neither Roses Nor Thorns' how judges used to meet in the conference room. There was a big square table. Justice Falshaw occasionally would come out with some witty remark. The other judges would crack a joke or talk about other matters. One or two judges were real good conversationists.

I recall that during my sojourn at National Judicial Academy, Bhopal, Dr Justice S Muralidhar, (then a judge of Delhi High Court and now Chief Justice of Orissa High Court) used to come as a resource person in different programmes. We used to share different court happenings. He suggested that in the High Court Judges programme, we must have a close-door session where judges could share interesting anecdotes. They are the spice of a life in black robes.

(Dr. Balram K Gupta, Professor Emeritus and Senior Advocate, was formerly director, National Judicial Academy and currently Director, Chandigarh Judicial Academy)

## Happiness leads to health and healing

### Author



**Maj. Gen. Krishan Chauhan**  
Retired Army Medical Corps

Optimism is not exactly happiness, though a happy person may be an optimist or, cautiously optimistic. Happiness is the very essence of life and every event of a human being is greeted as being happy i.e. birthday, marriage or anniversary. A person who has generally lived a happy life may reflect back as being contented or satisfied person.

Happiness doesn't mean lack of challenges or stress. It doesn't mean that a happy person is always lucky or never sad or angry. A person, however needs to pursue happiness even in adversity. We all are witness to many people around us who have survived the Covid pandemic. Many lost their close relatives or even their bread winners. Others lost their livelihood. It was the emotional resilience which allowed many of them to sail through the storm and regain their mental composure. Some, however, continued to remain sad, a few committed suicide or went into depression.

### UNHAPPINESS AND DISEASE

A prolonged state of unhappiness or sorrow in a person leads to anxiety and later to depression. Many of the lifestyle diseases we have in the world today, have no single cause but a group of risk factors. Depression is a risk factor in many of them like:

Obesity and overweight

Metabolic syndrome with high cholesterol/ lipids.

Heart disease and heart attacks

Diabetes Mellitus type II

Brain Stroke

Certain cancers.

Certain auto immune diseases.

### DO HAPPY PERSONS HAVE LESS DISEASE?

Laughter is the best medicine – an old phrase of English language but equally accepted by all cultures of the world. Scientists have proved that laughter results in the release of endorphins or feel-good chemicals. These chemicals not only reduce the stress but also the perception of pain by the person. At least for some time. But what about happiness? Atleast 30 studies in 46 countries have been conducted in groups of people and their results analysed. It is revealed that:

- In sick persons, happiness may not cure sickness or prolong life but it improves the quality of their life.
- In the healthy, happier people do live longer, fall sick less often and recover faster after sickness. Few of them

In a Gallup poll for Global Happiness Index, India was in the bottom 11 of 136 countries. If Indians are so unhappy people, then there would be disease and starvation all around. In fact, most African countries where disease and squalor are rampant as well as those facing bankruptcies like Sri Lanka, Pakistan and many more were declared more happy than India. When different parameters were used, another surveyor, IPSOS ranked India much higher. That only goes to prove that what one thinks of the term ‘happiness’ may not be true for another. Happiness is unlike Health for which the World Health Organisation has provided a comprehensive definition.

In ancient Indian texts, ‘**Ananda**’ or true happiness meant enlightenment of the soul. A few humans could achieve it in their life time, other pious souls achieved ‘**Moksha**’ after death. Momentary pleasures or joyous times are considered different than the state of happiness in which a person is. Some describe happiness as an emotional or a mental state which is positive or pleasant in a person, and which ultimately becomes a part of his / her character.

who are sick with serious diseases may not recover, is also true. But again, their quality of life is better.

### REASONS WHY HAPPY PEOPLE HAVE BETTER HEALTH AND LIVE LONGER

**Food.** Happier people have better choices of food and diet control. Thus, they are generally not overweight nor do they have metabolic disorders.

**Activity.** In general, they are more active, they exercise more or and play games. Some who don't exercise enough, physically work much more at home or at work place.

**Addictions.** Happy persons are not likely to be addicted to tobacco, alcohol or recreational drugs. These people know the difference between a momentary pleasure of such addictive substances and overall happiness of life.

**Stress.** Their reaction to stress is positive. They do not allow it to get built up to higher levels. Even after tackling highly taxing situation, they have better emotional resilience to regain mental peace.

**Immunity.** These people have stronger immune sickness and usually have lesser episodes of common cold. Their healing period in case of injuries or surgeries is much shorter.

**Sleep.** Happiness and lower stress levels ensure adequate and better quality sleep.

**Self care.** Happiness cannot occur if a person doesn't care after his/ her physical, mental and social health. Thus, such people get themselves periodically examined for early detection of diseases.

**Social circles.** People, in general want to make friends with a person who smiles and remains happy. Thus the happy person has a wider circle of relatives and friends. This social support group, in turn contributes to better mental health and the cycle continues.

**Inflammation and pain.** This has also been studied. Happier people have less chances of auto immune diseases like arthritis. Even if they do have, they have lesser pain.

**Happiness is our birthright.** Every parent wishes happiness and good health of their new born. Yet, many of us may grow up to stay unhappy for various reasons. The reasons may be in the family itself or in their close environment. However, every person should aim to be happy, and to remain happy.

While in adolescence and in early adult life, some people mistake momentary joy as long-lasting happiness. Also, there are many myths connected to happiness. It will be better if these are discussed in more detail, perhaps, next week. Please endorse your interpretation of happiness for the benefit of other readers.

PS. Nobody can make you happy until you are happy with yourself first.

## Royal City of Patiala - 'A Gupshup'

Continued from June issue

### Author



**Dr. Jaswant Singh Puri**  
**Doctor of Letters**  
**(Honoris Causa)**  
**Social Activist, Punjab Rattan**

The Gurudwaras and other shrines of Patiala including Church at Baradari and mosque are the places of worship and appreciation. The Gurudwara Dhukniwaran Sahib, the Moti Bagh Gurudwara, the Gurudwara on Rajpura Road just after crossing Bahadurgarh are historical ones by virtue of the visits of great and spiritually enlightened souls. Dera Baba Jassa Singh Gurudwara is a holy place located on Sular Road in Patiala. It is a sacred place which marks its existence by the presence of great saintly personality like Baba Hardit Singh, Baba Jassa Singh, Baba Nand Singh and Baba Gurmukh Singh Ji. Baba Gurmukh Singh Ji also established Gurmat College, Patiala who devoted and dedicated his life for the Sikhism. He had a deep visionary thinking for the future times. Presently, Professor Jasbir Singh is the Honorary General Secretary of Dera Baba Jassa Singh. The real name of Baba Jassa Singh Ji was Bibi Jas Kaur whose austere tests and dedication to Baba Hardit Singh at Tapiana Sahib transformed her to Jassa Singh and Baba Ji attired her in male clothes.

The Kali Devi temple on the Mall Road is a place of worship for all where all sects of people visit to pay their obeisance. Shri Kali Devi Temple was built by the Maharaja Bhupinder Singh in 1936.

The Maharaja was inspired to build the temple and erect the six feet tall statues of Maa Kali and Pawan Jyot who brought these from Bengal to Patiala. It has been declared as a national monument. Shrines and temples of Hanuman Ji on Rajpura Road, Samania Gate, Anardana Chowk are also marked by sanctity. Patiala is a land of Wedding Palaces which exhibits its royal touch. Palm Courts, Kohinoor Classic, Casbah Resorts, Chahal Farms, Alcazar Resorts, Amar Classic, Fort Patiala Marriage Palace, Spring Fields, The Grand Square, Silver Oak Farm, Green Park Farm, Jashan Banquet are superb and many more are magnificent by virtue and of their local colour.

Coming to the field of education, Patiala is the central hub of education where all faculties and streams are available to the aspiring students.

Government Medical Collage, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Commerce College, Law College, Government College of Physical Education, Govt. Mohindra College, Multani Mal Modi College, Khalsa College, Women College are imparting quality education to the students. Punjabi University, Patiala was established on 30 April, 1962. It is affiliated to UGC, NAAC, AIU. It is spread over 600 acres of land. It has more than 70 teaching and research departments and conducts various degree, diploma and certificate courses through distance learning. Recently Jagat Guru Nanak Punjab State Open University has signed a memorandum of understanding with the institute of Cost Accountants of India (ICAI) for students exchange and training programme. It will help to impart knowledge and skills for academic, research and training areas. On the recently held 39th convocation, Prof. Gagandeep Kang was honoured with Honoris Causa degree by His Highness Governor Banwari Lal Purohit and the Vice-Chancellor Prof. Arvind. Punjabi University feels honoured to become the first university of India which has established Baba Farid Centre for Sufi Studies in its campus to promote the rich diversity and uniqueness of sufism. It is a collegiate state public university located in Patiala, Punjab, India. It is the second university in the world to be named after a language after Hebrew University of Israel.

Another well known name to be associated with Punjabi University is Sardara Singh Johal who served as Vice-Chancellor of Punjabi University and Punjab Agricultural University. He was awarded Padma Bhushan in 2004. There is one Avinash Chander who has been associated with art gallery and museum of Punjabi University, Patiala for about fourteen years which was initiated and inspired by the former Vice Chancellors Dr. M.S. Randhawa and Mr. Kirpal Singh Narang. Punjabi University, Patiala has also honoured former V.C. Inderjit Kaur Sandhu by Women Studies Centre during the 13th International Conference on the theme "Women in Leadership Issues and Challenges" held on November 25, 2021. She is not the First Woman Vice-Chancellor of Punjabi University but also of any university in North India in 1975. Facing many challenges both in the office and life, she had high spirits even at the age of 98. She left a void in education when she left us recently on 26 January, 2022. She was the wife of famous author Giani Gurdit Singh. She studied at Patiala's Victoria Girls School and later did Post graduation in Philosophy from Govt. College, Lahore. She also became the first-woman Chairperson of the Staff Selection Commission, New Delhi in 1980. She formed Mata Sahib Kaur Dal during the partition which rehabilitated over 400 families.

# Impressions

July 2022 - 7 -

## Distinguished Professor's Lecture at St. Xavier's University, Kolkata ( SXUK)

### Author



**Utpal Chatterjee**

**Sr. Journalist and former Sheriff of Calcutta**

'Distinguished' is the highest rank a Professor gets in countries like the U.S. and U.K. There are three such Professors at SXUK. Apart from former Vice President of India Hamid Ansari and former West Bengal Governor M.K. Narayanan, there is Yours Truly (me). And it was my turn on 28 June 2022 to speak for over an hour to the entire faculty, cutting across all Departments, on "The Role of Holistic Education in Building Equitable, Safer and Happier Society." How very appropriate! "Holistic Education" was in vogue since the early 80s. You help increase the child's curiosity, compassion and help him, eventually, become a complete, educated human being who becomes an asset to the society at large. But it is easier said than done. So, treasuring values and emulating some of the greats who lived for others was something that cannot be ignored. Starting with the geniuses since Renaissance to the present, there were so many that could be talked about. A good deal of wit was, naturally, thrown in too. By the time I had spoken for 55 minutes, I felt uneasy because, as it was apparent, I was suddenly hit by dehydration and an alarming fall in blood pressure.

Those who were listening with rapt attention rushed to help. But trust SXUK to do their best in circumstances such as these and I was normal before long. But most the audience, all Professors, wanted an encore soon, very soon.

True, I have spoken so many time for two hours and more and everything went fine but not on so light a stomach. My heartfelt gratitude to the Vice-Chancellor, Father Dr. Felix Raj, for inviting me and for being such a practical and helpful host. Yes, an encore is coming up soon. The Professors' earnest wish would come true. And, the sooner, the better.

### A beautiful message

#### Shared by



**Lt. Col. Charanjit Kaur and  
Col. Paramjit Singh  
Retired Army Medical Corps**

A man, who regularly attended family and group meetings suddenly, without any notice, stopped participating. After a few weeks, one very cold night the leader of that group decided to visit him. He found the man at home, alone, sitting in front of a fireplace where a bright fire burned.

The man welcomed the leader. There was great calm and silence. The two men only watched the dancing flames around the logs that crackled in the fireplace.

After a few minutes the leader, without saying a word, examined the logs that formed the fire and selected one of them, glowing most brightly of all, and removed it to the side with a pair of tongs. Then he sat down again.

The host was paying attention to everything, was fascinated. Before long, the lone log's flame subsided, until there was only a momentary glow and the fire soon went out. In a short time what was previously bright light and heat had become nothing more than a black dead piece of wood.

few words had been spoken since the greeting.

Before preparing to leave, the leader picked up the useless piece of wood with the tongs and placed it again in the middle of the fire. Immediately, the piece of wood was rekindled, fuelled by the light and heat of the burning logs around it.

When the leader was about to leave and had reached the door, the host said: "Thank you for your visit and for your beautiful lesson. I'll return to the group soon."

Why is a group important in our lives?

Very simple: Because each member that withdraws takes fire and heat from the rest. It's worth reminding group members that, they are a part of the flame.

It's also good to remind us that we are all responsible for keeping each other's flame burning. And we must promote the union among us so that the fire is really strong, effective and lasting. Keep the fire burning.

#### THE GROUP IS ALSO A FAMILY

It doesn't matter if sometimes we are bothered by so many messages, quarrels and misunderstandings.

What matters is to be connected. We are here to meet, message, learn, exchange ideas or simply to know that we are not alone. Let's keep the flame alive.

## Covid-19 now endemic in country, say virologists

New variants will come, but people have gained hybrid immunity

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BENGALURU: Covid-19 has reached an “endemic” stage, say the country’s two top virologists -- Dr Gagandeep Kang, professor, Christian Medical College, Vellore, and Dr V Ravi, nodal officer, INSACOG lab at NIMHANS, and head of Research and Development, Tata Medical and Diagnostic Centre. That Covid-19 has become endemic does not mean the virus has disappeared; instead, one can infer that with enough people gaining immune protection from vaccination and from natural infection, there will be less transmission and much lower Covid-related hospitalisation and death. The virus will continue to mutate and circulate.

“Covid-19 has been endemic since last year. The virus has not gone away; new sub-variants will keep coming. We need to be aware of them but there is no need to get paralysed out of fear. We know how to deal with them,” said Kang. She added that maintaining genomic and clinical surveillance is, however, a must to develop an evidence-based scientific strategy to deal with future mutations of the virus. The new sub-variant of Omicron -- BA.2.75 -- reported in 10 states, including Karnataka, Delhi and Maharashtra, are because of “high mutations”.

“There is no need to be alarmist,” said Ravi. He explained that the “original Omicron had 51 mutations whereas its new strains -- BA.2.74, BA.2.75, BA.2.76 -- have 80 mutations, which means they could be more infectious but not more virulent. Covid-19 is now endemic, which means there will be low level of transmission, with some spurts. There will be many more infections than what is being reported. Testing is not being emphasized, unless there are huge cluster outbreaks,” said Dr Ravi.

Both Kang and Ravi added that the vulnerable population -- the elderly and those with comorbidities -- need to be careful and watch out for severe symptoms. They also said that earlier infections are no guarantee against new variants. “Being doubly vaccinated will not prevent re-infection but will help against serious infections,” said Dr Ravi.

The two top virologists stressed on the role of the SARS-CoV-2 vaccines in the country as protection against the virus, and the hybrid immunity that most Indians would have developed by now. “Around 90 per cent of the adult Indian population has received both doses of the vaccine. Those who have not been vaccinated are also vulnerable for infection, unless they have already had Covid. Many of them would not even know if they were asymptomatic,” said Ravi. Kang said that “80-90 per cent of the adult population in India would have by now developed hybrid immunity” (the immune protection in individuals who have had one or more dose of vaccine and experienced at least one SARS-CoV-2 infection before or after vaccination).

On the booster dose, Kang said though SARS-CoV-2 vaccines are good, the right time to boost continues to remain a challenge. “We need to plan studies that teach us how to use booster doses,” she added. Ravi said that vaccine coverage in India is far better than in many other countries. Masking in public, congested places is a must, but compliance is a challenge. “There is huge pandemic fatigue in public,” said the virologist.