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New Delhi

PRESS RELEASE

A Round-Table Meet Organised by NBT INDIA (MHRD) on "Managing Psychosocial Pressures During Pandemic" for the psychological challenges faced by various segments of the society

"Family is supplementing the Medical, Educational, Work, Entertainment Infrastructure As Never Before"

"As a Response to Pandemic and need for Mental Health Awareness NBT to get its books for Children and Young Adults Vetted by Psychologists Before Publishing"

The National Book Trust, India (under Ministry of HRD, Govt. of India) organised a Round-Table Meet on **"Managing Psychosocial Pressures During Pandemic"**. A panel of esteemed psychologists and counselors spoke on the psychological challenges faced by various segments of the society - Parents, Teachers, Women, Students & Youth, Professionals, Corona Warriors, Corona-Affected Persons and their Families, Persons with Disabilities, Elderly, Writers, Publishers, Illustrators and Book-lovers, etc.

The programme started with the Keynote address by **Prof. Govind Prasad Sharma, Chairman NBT** on Reading as Therapy during Pandemic. While emphasizing on the importance of books and reading in our everyday life, he said that Reading not only makes us knowledgeable but also psychologically and emotionally stronger. And also helps us reconcile with ourselves. He said, "Books make us ask some basic questions like all the readers and well-informed people wish to know 'How did Corona start'? 'Is it man made or natural disaster'?" We hope to continue creating awareness in the field of Mental Health Awareness through other publications and programmes.



Shri Yuvraj Malik, Director NBT while presenting the lead address on the Role of NBT in Post-Pandemic Publishing informed the 100+ participants about National Book Trust, India under MHRD and its activities as the national body for book publishing and book promotion. He said, "As a national institution we are quite conscious of our role and the expectations that our authors, readers, and other stakeholders have. During the global Corona Pandemic, we took it upon ourselves to remain engaged with the likely changing reading needs and to come up with programmes and initiatives that show our commitment to promote book-mindedness and the culture of reading in the country.

Considering Mental Health Awareness as a major component of the Pandemic times of uncertainty and anxiety which needs to be addressed in a comprehensive manner, we undertook this study, and are all committed to make it a sustainable campaign and a major area of discussion as well as publishing. **In fact, as a corollary to this study we have taken an in-principle decision with due approval of our respected Chairman that from now on all our new titles, especially those for children and young adults, will be vetted and evaluated by psychologists who may have some background in publishing as well, so that the kids get quality content because the very term 'quality' has now undergone a change in the Pandemic times.** We are moving to a situation where it will be imperative to include Mental Health Awareness Education in school curriculum."



Shri Yuvraj Malik further added, "During the Lockdown period we opened the vast treasure of children's literature produced by us over the decades and made available more than 100 titles in various Indian languages as free downloads. This was received well by the community of readers and we have received numerous feedback, accolades, suggestions either directly or through media for the initiative.

Further, a three-month first ever Online Publishing Course is being launched by the NBT from July to meet the growing needs to have well-trained professionals for the publishing industry. The Online course is going to be one of its kind because it will be able to integrate both the local publishing practices in various Indian languages as well as bring in some international speakers to give a rounded perspective to the participants."

He also said, "We are also going to engage with the various school networks in a more structured manner and are already in the process of making modules for Foundation Book Publishing Workshops for kids so that they can have exposure in creative writing, illustrating for the Books, editing skills and get an idea about how Books are made. In this connection our major focus is on mentoring kids as future authors,


illustrators, editors to create a better ambience of reading in the society and the values that are attached to it. There are many other programs and initiatives in the pipeline including a Stakeholders' Meet that we are going to organise for the New Delhi World Book Fair 2021 edition to get a feedback about organising the same in the best possible way in the present times of physical distancing."

Moderating the programme, Shri Kumar Vikram, Editor & Project Head of NBT's 'Corona Studies Series', underlined that NBT's role of a national body for book publishing and promotion in these times has become all the more important since well-organised information in the form of books have long-term impact on the readers and the same is being provided by the Trust through these initiatives.

Concurring with the leading question posed by the moderator, the panelists agreed that the structure of 'Family is now the amphitheater of all our activities and we have to keep our morale booster for the new demands on family. The home is nowadays acting as office, school and college classrooms, nursing centres for the quarantined, entertainment centres since the avenues for travel and entertainment are restricted. Hence the family as the basic unit of support system during the Pandemic needs to work in cohesion and the points of conflict and discord should be consciously minimised to meet the stresses of the times.'

MANAGING PSYCHOSOCIAL PRESSURES DURING PANDEMIC

A ROUNDTABLE OF NBT STUDY GROUP OF PSYCHOLOGISTS AND COUNSELLORS




'Reading as Therapy During Pandemic'

KEY-NOTE ADDRESS

Prof. Govind Prasad Sharma

Chairman, NBT India



20 June 2020

Saturday

11:00 am

PANELLISTS

- Dr. Jitendra Nagpal
- Sqr. Ldr. (Ex) Meena Arora
- Lt. Col. Tarun Uppal
- Dr. Harsheeta
- Ms. Rekha Chauhan
- Ms. Sonie Sidhu
- Ms. Aprajita Dixit

MODERATOR

Shri Kumar Vikram

Senior Editor & Project Head
NBT India


'NBT's Role in Post-Pandemic Publishing'

LEAD ADDRESS

Shri Yuvraj Malik

Director, NBT India

Organised by



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मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार
NATIONAL BOOK TRUST, INDIA
Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India

Speaking on the occasion, **Dr. Jitendra Nagpal**, MD, DNB, Senior Consultant Psychiatrist & Incharge, Institute of Mental Health & Life Skills Promotion, Moolchand Medcity, New Delhi underlined the fact that Mental Health and its well-being is not equivalent to mental illness. It is important that everyone takes care of their mental well-being and talks to people/professionals if required, because a sound mind makes up for a sound body and its health. Speaking on the segment of Elderly in the society during these times, he said that elderly are the harbinger of positivity and mental health in every family and their first counsellors. They need our undivided attention, and we need to give them the responsibility of providing us with sound advice, which will be beneficial in both ways.

Ms. Aprajita Dixit, Child and Adolescent Psychologist, Family Counselor and Academic Coordinator, told the participants that during these difficult times although social distancing is the norm, however emotional distancing need to be followed, we all need that emotional connect with our family and friends for our healthy mental well being. Talking on the segment of Children, Adolescents & Youth, and the impact of pandemic on their mental health, Ms Dixit said that we should let the children ask questions and encourage them to share their anxiety so that solution can be reached and they can be made to feel loved and wanted.

Ms. Rekha Chauhan, renowned Psychologist and Counselor with extensive experience in guiding & training adolescents, teachers, principals, parents and corporate employees, talking on the subject said that while people are feeling mixed emotions mental health needs most attention, and therefore in these times communication and expression are most vital for healthy well-being. Talking on the segment of Persons with Disabilities, she said that at this time anxiety and loneliness are common during these times so it is important that therapy and enhancing mental health, along with patience and remaining connected is important. Especially the care-givers of children of this segment need to ensure that children eat healthy, talk out their feelings and feel loved.

Sqdr. Ldr. (Ex) Ms. Meena Arora, highly skilled ICF Certified Behavioural Coach, informed the participants that despite everything compassion has grown among people, and whether it is family, society or workplace, people have started realising the importance of life, nature and every small thing that was taken up for granted. Talking about the segment on Corona Warriors, she said that we as a society and as family need to support our corona warriors who are themselves risking their lives for us and are at the most risk-prone state - on mental as well as physical health-wise. She proposed yoga and other therapies for them to keep their physical health upbeat in order for their mental well-being as well.

Ms. Sonie Sidhu, Counsellor, Psychotherapist, Hypnotherapist & Life-Skills Coach, working with Indian Army as Counsellor & Psychotherapist said that we all need to strengthen our inter-personal relations and be more cohesive. Talking on the segment of Women, Mothers and Parents, Ms Sidhu said that it was a fact that the pandemic has changed the complete manner in which a family used to run, hence it is important have empathy towards every member of the family and change our perspective from negative to positive.

Dr. Harsheeta, working as Scientist 'C' at Defence Institute of Psychological Research, DRDO, Ministry of Defence, and as a Psychologist for selection of Commissioned Officers for Army, Navy and Air Force said that family system is our building block and its importance has come back in our lives, where mental health and well-being are part of our development. Speaking about the segment of Corona-affected, Dr Harsheeta talked about immunity-building, exercises as well as compassion and empathy from others for the mental well-being of affected people. She urged that society should drop the discrimination and stigma against corona-affected people and support them.

Lt. Col. Tarun Uppal, Cyber Security Trainer, Organisational Psychologist & Neuro-Linguistic Programme Trainer, and an expert in Stress Management, underlined that instead of just concentrating on the negative effects it has had, we need to look at the positive side of the pandemic and reap positivity in times of difficulty. Speaking on the segment of Working Population, Lt Col Tarun Uppal said, "We all are not in the same boat, but in the same storm", meaning that the pandemic has had different kind of impact on the working population in different ways. Even sectors and industries like tourism and start-ups have been hit badly. While some are facing salary cuts, others have completely lost their jobs, and yet others have switched to digital platforms which is the need of the hour.

The Round-Table ended with a question-answer session from the participants.

It is to be mentioned here that NBT-India launched the **Corona Studies Series** to document and provide relevant reading materials for all age-groups for the post-Corona readership needs, under the first-sub series of a set of seven books focused on '**Psycho-social Impact of Pandemic and How to Cope With**' prepared by a Study Group comprising of seven psychologists and counsellors constituted by NBT. The titles launched following the Study, look at the various aspects of Psycho-social impact on seven different

segments of the society through personal interviews, case studies and community perceptions based on the response to the on-line questionnaire floated through the website and other social media handles of National Book Trust, India. Enlivened with some beautiful illustrations, made by some of the very accomplished illustrators, **the books also provide very valuable and practical tips to cope with the mental stress and anxiety that may have been caused due to the Pandemic and the Lockdown.**



Handbooks of Impact and Practical Tips to Cope up with

Study conducted by an NBT Study Group of eminent Psychologists and Counsellors

Written for
 Women, Mothers and Parents; Elderly Group;
 Children, Adolescents and Youth
 Corona Warriors; Corona Affected Families
 Persons With Disabilities; The Working Population

Published by



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