

We need to fill leadership vacuum in Medicine

Dear Editor,

Paramdeep Singh justifies in December issue of the journal that why does COVID-19 pandemic build a convincing case for investing in *Young Physician Leader*. The author argues that as solutions for pressing issues of healthcare challenges are coming from youngsters around the world, we need to similarly invest in developing their such abilities.^[1] However, we want to underscore that 10 years ago Medical Council of India made elections of students' union mandatory in all the Medical Colleges.^[2] Newly constituted National Medical Commission also has similar rules.^[3] And like several other guidelines & requirements of the institutions, this rule is observed more in violation than in following in letter and spirit. Amazingly authorities remain oblivious to violation of rules and regulations which are often subverted by preparing paperwork only and youngsters remain devoid of their first experience of developing mutual camaraderie, cooperation, discussion and debate in their Medical College campus.

We need to recall that this nation got several of its top leaders on constitutional positions by the invention of student politics. From sitting Prime Minister to Vice President, a cluster of leaders in government and opposition have been instrumental to seek cooperation from all the sides in their youth in college campus.^[4] Looking through this prism, we discover that campus not only provides classrooms for formal academic activities, its vibrant and buzzing ambience also provides an opportunity to allow youngsters of different backgrounds to interact with one another – giving them valuable lessons, upon which they build their worldview.

United Nations envisages youth of today as leader of tomorrow. Therefore, this body wants them to take interest in art of listening to all the sides – a quality sorely needed nowadays – and then develop a basic understanding of challenges of our times.^[5] Greta Thunberg – a climate activist of Sweden – fills us with awe when she exhorts citizens of the world to obey rules of engagement to reduce Green House Gas emissions for our common future.^[6] When traditional leadership is failing us by making us vulnerable to climate – crisis, these young leaders fill us with hope and aspiration that future still holds a promise.

We need to support our students with leadership qualities & hone their skills to carry everybody together. When good person does not take up the job, the space gets filled with second-choice people. Hence, we need to develop orientation of young leaders that besides academic pursuit, drawing a big picture of universe is also their job and a necessity. In participatory democracy, real power rests with people, leaders arise among them and they govern the system. When College goers have some ability, want to assume a leadership role; all of us should show them correct virtuous path, guide them, point to their mistakes when they make, allow more free space for and flexibility of verbal interaction among them to put their point of view on table. This is what democracy is all about.

Crushing this process for want of some utopia will lead us nowhere!

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