

JAN. - 2005

Authored By Prof. Vijay Page - Director, MET Institute of Management

The Tradition of NEW YEAR

“Men are April when they Woo-December when they Wed”

- *William Shakespeare*

Every year as the mercury sinks, everyone experiences a charged atmosphere around us. The media is full of year-end reviews, doling out facts and figures about the year that has gone by. While it is busy matching achievements against failures, the public at large is expectantly waiting for the year ahead. The young and faithful joyfully sing with the church choir, feverishly mailing New Year greetings to their friends and loved ones. In schools and campuses there is an atmosphere of mirth and merriment as festivals and carnivals are celebrated with gay abandon. The New Year party's and celebrations is one such event that everyone eagerly awaits.

History states that the New Year celebrations started in ancient Babylon almost 4000 years ago. There in 2000 B.C., the New Year was launched on March 23rd as it heralded the arrival of the spring and planting of new crops. The festival itself was celebrated for 11 days packed with wide ranging events. The Romans continued this tradition but in 46 B.C., Julius Caesar established January 1 as the New Year Day synchronizing the calendar with the Sun.

In India traditionally, the New Year begins with Diwali *Padwa*, which normally coincides with the Kharif harvest season. The countryside is lush green, the rivers are in full flow, and the farmers are busy collecting their harvest. Undoubtedly the religious festivals are integrated with the crop cycle since there cannot be merriment on an empty stomach. With the Diwali New Year traders, businessmen as well as rural folks launch their activities on a clean slate.

However, besides fun and festivities the young and old alike use the New Year as a springboard to leap higher in the year ahead. Many New Year resolutions are made and followed up with gusto and zeal, at least initially. A study in the U S shows interesting nature of New Year resolutions.

Table

New Year's Resolutions	2004	2005	% change
Health & fitness	22%	26%	+4
Career	18%	13%	-5
Time Mgt. & Organisation	11%	13%	+2
Personal Growth & Interests	15%	12%	-3
Personal Finance	11%	12%	+1
Family & Relationships	8%	8%	+0
Education & Training	6%	8%	+2
Improvement & Real Estate	5%	4%	-1
Recreation & Leisure	3%	4%	+1

As would appear from the above graphic, majority of the New Year resolutions are about health, career and personal growth. Interestingly the health concern in the U S

shows a marked improvement in 2005 while career seems to have taken a steep fall, indicating growing awareness about health. A pilot sample survey among youths in Mumbai however shows highest concern about career followed by family and health.

An interesting concern however is how long do these resolutions last? I suppose much depends upon how one goes about making such resolutions and the subject they seek to address. Therefore, it is necessary that the youth organize the thought processes and develops goals, which are achievable. The fear of failure or non-accomplishment of the goal should not deter them from not attempting the New Year resolutions. You must always set a goal and strive hard to achieve it. As late Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru has put it sweetly and simply,

“ A journey is always worth the making though the end may not be in sight.”

So happy New Year to all and let your New Year goals be successfully achieved.