

The Roundtable of Work

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All labour that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence - Martin Luther King, Jr.

Consider these scenarios - a doctor treats a patient; a lawyer fights a case for the client, a teacher imparts learning to students, a movie star entertains the audience; a professional cricketer has spectators enthralled; and a janitor keeps floors spot clean to help people move about in hygienic conditions. Each of these services is, in a sense, a performance for a fee.

They why is it that the doctor is treated differently from the rest, for doing what is his or her prime duty, after having taken an education in medicine. Why is this basic duty glorified the way it is? Why is a lawyer deemed honest by virtue of his position and not conduct? Why is a cricketer worshipped as a demi god for doing a paid job?

When a janitor is hardly even acknowledged for the crucial job he or she performs, film stars and cricketers are conferred with the titles of thought leaders and philosophers simply because they globe trot and accumulate insane wealth to endorse social causes they don't necessarily believe in.

Why can't every worker - whether an artisan, scientist, philosopher, baker, or carpenter - who serves society in different ways be treated with the same respect, which has nothing to do with remuneration.

Why should jobs be hailed and belittled based on collars provided all of them are done with hearts and souls put together. Why is the work and worth of people toiling in the fields, mines, mills, shop floors, hotel lobbies, and hospital wards hardly ever acknowledged? Why we can't have a roundtable of work where every stakeholder is guaranteed a place of pride.

No wonder, while we invariably talk big about our egalitarian and democratic values, scores of our comrades doing so-called menial or routine jobs suffer the wrath of discrimination and poor working conditions, while applauding the heroes on the silver screen performing impossible feats within the simulated confines of a make-believe world. These field performers deserve a roundtable of work which would earn them respect

and dignity, not the roundhouse punches of film heroes which only makes them feel inferior without rhyme or reason.