

Swapping of employees

Mobility within and intra Government Departments of employees is very important. Besides, those institutions which have developed, by virtue of comprehensive policies being in place, the habit of keeping rotating the employees of all cadres within the same department periodically say within a span of two to three years and within cities, towns and villages if that particular department has such a wide reach and presence, chances of irregularities, corruption and misusing official position remain to the barest minimum levels. Besides, elements of indispensability and dictating terms and working according to whims thus affecting productivity and performance get vastly circumvented.

It is to be seen more so in respect of those Government employees who manage to "serve" in one department for years together usually at a place in one's home town or quite near to home. Not only that, even tables or the nature of work to be attended to continue to remain unaltered which leads to static conditions leading to affecting the speed and the quality of work as also productivity. Since in the absence of a formidable but an elastic transfer policy in respect of Government employees gives room to resorting to decisions of transfers on grounds not wholly in the interests of the working of the particular department but that of the employees concerned only, the consequential ambiguity generated has got to be cleared. That in other words means introducing reforms in the system and formulating changes as the times and the conditions both are warranting so.

It is to be noted that right at the time of appointment, the letter from the employer, the particular agency or the department of the Government concerned, must specifically mention that the employee was liable to be transferred to any place, town and village in the UT and from one to the other department at the sole discretion of the concerned competent authorities. Taking the employee's written consent beforehand will serve as a defence / immunity to the department concerned in case an employee took up the matter to a court. Since now it is all digital and recently e-HRD portal too is set up, all the particulars in respect of an employee will be now readily available at any moment to maintain a due date of transfers of employees and initiate timely necessary action.

In this connection, it is quite satisfying to note that it has been mooted to formulate a Transfer Policy for all non-gazetted employees too in Jammu and Kashmir working in Civil Secretariat to obliterate the system of allowing an employee to remain in one single department for unspecified number of years as it is at present. In other words, decks stand cleared for shifting them from one department to the other. In this connection, an official communiqué is expected to be issued shortly. That such transfers shall have the realms and limits of being confined to the Civil Secretariat itself and thus may not appear to be that impressive for reasons being that transfer and thus mobility at least within the province is out of the scope of the upcoming Transfer Policy.

However, such limitations are also required to be seen in the context of at least some change and reform in the system existing for years together is sought to be brought about and at least a semblance to the element of regularity of such transfers will get established to foster better results and minimise chances of manipulations of many hues that are inherent in one sticking to one department / one table for years unspecified taking the advantage of absence of a Transfer Policy. It is to be seen in another perspective that of parity and uniformity in that when Gazetted Officers are liable to and are regularly transferred after completing a minimum supposed tenure, why not, therefore, the non-Gazetted cadre? Unless existing systems related to Human Resources are regularly reviewed and seen which changes and reforms were required to be introduced necessarily, neither performance levels and delivery mechanism could improve nor transparency and output. In fact, employees themselves in majority of cases will find such changes favourable for them too as remaining at one place/ department / table brings in dormancy, boredom, inefficiency and lack of varied experience. The word of caution thus would be "Reform or Retard".

America certifies Pakistan to be most dangerous

Throwing a few crumbs, stale and out of "taste", to inflation and poverty ravaged Pakistan F-16 fighters and alms of a few millions of Dollars etc notwithstanding, it has been openly, publicly and authoritatively declared as the most dangerous country in the world. It is no statement from any Indian politician but by a person no less than the President of the United States of America, Joe Biden himself. It may be recalled that there is an advisory to its citizens from the US in respect of "reconsidering" travelling to Pakistan due to sectarian and terrorism violence especially in its restive provinces.

So, the temporary joy of Pakistani establishment having got a few crumbs from the US got transformed into utter disgrace, humiliation and embarrassment internationally. Biden referred indirectly to the threat of misusing the weapons by terrorist and jihadi organisations operating in Pakistan besides incompetence and lack of knowledge in handling huge stockpiled nukes by that country with political, economic and social riveness. The exact words verbatim of the certificate by Biden are- "one of the most dangerous nations of the world (as it has) nuclear weapons without cohesion". The treatment given to its only nuclear scientist of standard Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan is well known who was arrested for selling nuclear secrets of Pakistan and died in utter ignominy last year in October. The entire world otherwise have been expressing grave concern and anxiety over safety and security of Pakistan's nuclear weapons.

Ansh Chowdhari

A great amount of tragedy and destruction befell on the state of J&K in the month of October 1947. The agonised masses were seeking refuge as their ruler was facing an excruciating political ordeal. The state was being tormented by a planned and motivated invasion by the tribals of NWFP led by the Pakistani Army. These events ultimately concluded with the Maharaja signing the Instrument of Accession and hitching J&K to India and sealing its fate for once and for all. However, my main concern today is not about the events per se but of their relevance and their expression in the popular literature. My aim here is to talk about certain books that make us understand those events in a better format.

So, the first book I'd like to discuss is Prem Shankar Jha's 'Kashmir 1947: Rival Versions of History', which remains one of the most detailed accounts of the events leading up to the tribal invasion. The book is extremely important in terms of putting some contentious issues to rest. The most fundamental of these is that the Maharaja signed the Instrument of Accession on October 27th, which essentially gets its roots from Alastair Lamb's numerous books which the Pakistani side have picked up and have repeatedly used to present its case at the international fora. This book also piqued my interest because it doesn't remain fixated with the internal politics of the state of J&K and the individuals involved therewith. The book has created a grand canvas for itself, which the reader can easily decrypt and comprehend. Jha's meticulous research has led me to read some hitherto unknown facts, particularly his interview with Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, which have helped me corroborate those events in a proper chronological order.

Then there are the works of Kashmiri nationalists like Prem Nath Bazaz and PNK Bamezai, who have spent reams of paper in their lengthy and tortuous volumes on Kashmir's history. Coming from a similar ideological and political background, these two contemporaries were largely

The Longest October

anti-feudalism in their stance. They, unlike Prof Somanath Wakhlu, have painted a bleak picture of the Dogra state, owing to their ties to Sheikh Abdullah. Regardless of these reservations, their work is as fundamental and important in understanding modern Kashmir as Rajtarangini is for the ancient and medieval. Their extensive commentary on state internal politics and anecdotes makes them an interesting read. In his 'Inside Kashmir', Bazaz comes across as a fierce critic of Dogra Raj.

Books that deserve a worthy mention are the two biographies titled 'Karan Singh: Autobiography' and 'Looking Back' by Dr Karan Singh and Justice Mehr Chand Mahaja respectively. While the former deals with J&K as a passing reference within the large stream of the book, it nevertheless provides a glimpse into the personal attributes of the Maharaja. The latter tome too has J&K covered as a small segment, but it is a critical piece of information that helps us to understand the prevailing political and military crisis in the state. However, I must mention that this book has some errors with regards to the dates mentioned.

Coupled with these books, one can read 'The Integration of Indian states' by Mr VP Menon. Menon's book, as a primary text, gives a behind-the-scenes look at the inner workings of policy-making in Delhi and how a vexatious situation was largely salvaged by the collective consciousness of the people on the decision table in Delhi and Srinagar. The book also clears some air regarding the controversial issues surrounding the Maharaja's flight post tribal invasion which the Kashmiri leadership exaggerated and misused. Menon makes it clear that it was his advice that made Maharaja to leave the capital. When the above two books are read in conjunction with Menon, then one can clearly notice the mismatching dates that I have alluded to in the preceding paragraph.

Another work that should be mentioned is that of Col Ajay Raina. Even though his books on J&K are primarily military histories describing the

multiple war theatres in lucid format, the extensive research that the author has undertaken (including the footnotes) allows one to clearly go through numerous chapters devoted to the state's political situation. His 5-part book series on JK remains one of the most detailed accounts I've ever read. I must mention his two books namely 'In the Nick of Time: Saving Kashmir Valley' and 'Hold at all costs: The Siege and Relief of Poonch' which have clearly destabilised some of the entrenched narratives that have solidified over the years in J&K. For e.g., the book states that the actual invasion of the state began in Poonch on 9th October and not on 22nd as is generally understood.

As a supplementary addition to the aforementioned works, I would be failing in my task if I don't talk about Maj Gen Govardhan Singh Jamwal's book, 'Valour and Betrayal', which he has co-authored with Col Raina. This book is a niche product in the sense that, aside from being written by a veteran who was on the ground in 1947, it is distinct in that it attempts to present us with a day-to-day happenings of October 47, which no other book has even attempted hitherto. He has emphatically stated the critical role that JAK forces played under the capable leadership of Brigadier Rajinder Singh in thwarting the belligerent moves of the invading tribals with the fewest possible means at their disposal. This phenomenal work brings to life the otherwise occluded valiant and gallant attempt of Dogra forces in saving the valley of Kashmir.

Prof Harbans Singh Sambyal's 'Maharaja Hari Singh: The Troubled years' is another one that has been extensively researched. It happens to add new dimensions to the conflict that non-Dogra writers frequently overlook. The fiasco of J&K that began with the Indian independence has been explained through a series of nuanced and methodically organised chronological events.

Some other works that I'd like to mention in brief are:

* Christopher Snedden's books (Covers areas like Poonch and the Muslims of Jammu)

* Kashmiris fight for freedom by Justice MY Saraf (revealing and extremely comprehensive but has a clear tone of anti-Dogra sentiment)

* Danger in Kashmir by Josef Korbel

* Forgotten atrocities by Bal K Gupta (explains the travesty that happened in Mirpur post accession)

Despite all this scholarship, there are still many gaps in our understanding of the J&K conflict. There's absolutely no work on the raids that happened on the Jammu border. Only a few anecdotes tell us of the aggravated situation of that time. There's no research on the travails of Jammu city which was grappling with hordes of refugees and a grave famine like situation.

Except for Zafar Choudhary's Kashmir Conflict and Musims of Jammu, there is no mainstream literature that can enlighten us on the Muslim situation in Jammu after accession.

Apart from that, what saddens me the most is the silence of Dogra scholars on the J&K crisis. Only a few of them appear to have written some sort of literature related to the J&K conflict. When a community is cut off from its history and forced to swallow polarised versions of narratives, they expressly become myopic in their understanding. This could perhaps be the ailment afflicting our people. Chinua Achebe said that "If you don't like someone's story, write your own.". In this respect, Jammu's academia must take the words of Achebe seriously and for that to happen, it's essential that they must be fairly acquainted with the circumstances that made J&K join India on October 26th.

The month of October 1947 was a watershed in the history of J&K that turned the tables forever for everyone in this state. On many counts, the death, destruction and exodus of lakhs of people that followed was unprecedented. But what is required right now is a careful appraisal of the past, as well as a clear roadmap for an identity-laden and development-oriented future which regards the people of J&K as central stakeholders in that paradigm.

Bye Bye COFMOW..

Uchit Singhal

18th October 2022 sounded the death bell to one more PSU of Indian Railways. Central Organization for Modernization of Workshops was established in 1979 for modernising the Indian Railway Workshops and Production units. The modernization project was funded through World Bank credits. This also involved purchasing over 2200 machines valued at Rs.6274 Crores. It had thus emerged as a leading specialized organization in the fields of manufacturing and maintenance technologies. The percentage of over aged machines over IR had increased from 47% in 1952 to 77% in 1979. This was an obstacle to meet the production and maintenance services for a growing economy like India. However, this also entailed a massive investment; hence an agreement was negotiated with the International Development Association of the World Bank for providing a credit of \$95M for the first phase of

workshop modernisation programme that was envisaged to be completed during 80s. The unprecedented magnitude of this effort prompted the Government of India to set up a special organisation dedicated to these endeavours, leading to establishment of Central Organisation for Modernisation of Workshops (COFMOW) in 1979. This was followed by second and third phases of modernization for another 7 years with IDA credits of Rs.400 crores.



The organization evolved from a humble beginning from merely procurement of machines and plants to providing turnkey solutions for installation and commissioning. It developed a niche in its area of operation and management services encompassing not only Ministry of Railways but other ministries and departments and acquired unmatched expertise in developing specifications for machine, plants and equipment meeting client needs. Being a pioneer in the field, COFMOW offered its services to those needing modernization

or up gradation of their manufacturing/maintenance activities. Then why closure? Indian Railways is undertaking a massive restructuring plan based on the recommendations of Sanjeev Sanyal, former Principal Economic Advisor, who submitted his report in 2021. IRSDC (Indian Railways Station Development Corporation) and IRFOA (Indian Railways Organization for Alternative Fuels) have already been shut down following this major



exercise. He, in his report, has also suggested winding up of CORE (Central Organization for Railway Electrification) and CRIS (Centre for Railway Information Systems) along with merger of RVNL with IRCON and RaiTel with IRCTC. The report sought to make Indian Railways a lean organization with focus on more private participation and more Governance. As per the report, both IRCON and RVNL have similar business functions i.e. construction of Railway Infrastructure. While IRCON bids for private contracts and has significant International presence, RVNL functions as a subcontractor of IR by getting works on a nomination basis from Railways with no borrowing power of its own. Where IRFOA was recommended for closure due to no need of alternative fuels in wake of full swing focus on Railway Electrification, CORE was recommended for closure due to its tendering out the

All works have been transferred to the concerned Zonal Railways vide this order and all staff will be repatriated/redeployed elsewhere where they will be able to contribute more efficiently and meaningfully to the Indian Railways.

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Fact checking to fight fake news

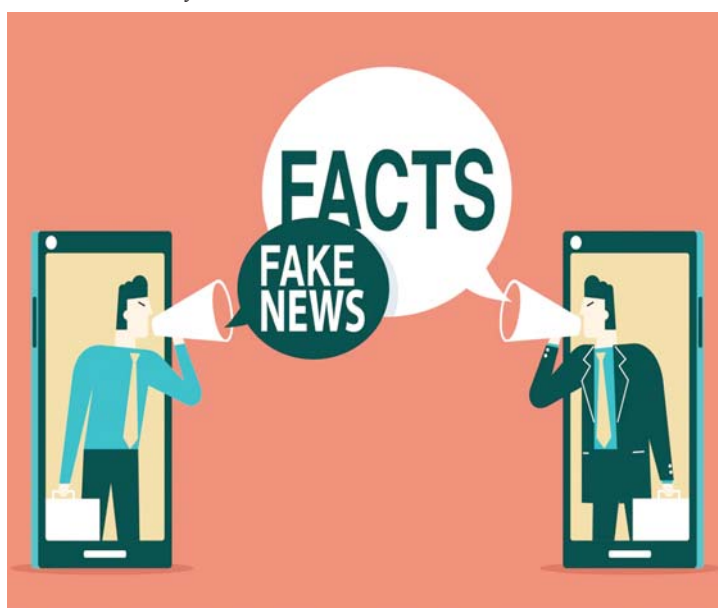
Dr. Satwant Singh Rissam

The growth of internet usage in India has made it simple for crores of Indians to get data with help of phones and computers. Unfortunately, the higher internet penetration and increasing social media consumption has brought with it the menace of 'fake news' in India. The high usage of the internet has made it very simple to spread 'fake news', which now is affecting our society in all manners. Nowadays 'fake news' is contributing to future social problems with the spread of misinformation. So, for this everyone should fight against the spread of 'fake news' by doing critical thinking and then refusing to share such news. Thus, in present times it has become severe to know the truth and check sources of information.

Recently, many social issues in India were propelled by 'fake news' during the Covid vaccination and farmers' protest. And in this manner, in the future also we can settle on some wrong choices and support inappropriate material. These wrong choices can prompt unseen social problems when such 'fake news' is shared on social media platforms and impact the social fabric. Although the key is to begin by doing critical thinking but then taking some extra steps with simple 'fact-checking' on daily basis will bring the desired results. Simple 'fact-checking' is significant as falsehood can influence our perspectives to a large extent.

Because 'fake news' always attempts to appeal to our emotions so our views regardless of our age, gender, location, or political beliefs can get affected due to misleading information. More importantly, we all, encounter 'fake news' on daily basis through social media and the result is that 'fake

news' is flourishing in India and has become the reason for the lack of trust in media. To battle 'fake news' by promoting public awareness has become vital. Many instances show that people shared 'fake news' as they found it interesting and relevant to what's going on in society. They didn't know it was 'fake news' and they shared it without malicious



intent. Many innocent acts of spreading 'fake news' caused serious consequences. For stopping this, we must work to fight 'fake news' that hurt individuals and society.

Young people who are not familiar with technology and older people are more likely to share 'fake news'. Although young people living in cosmopolitan cities of India can at times judge such 'fake news', the situation is different for those living in far-flung areas. It is important to encourage all citizens to think critically about content that is reaching us through social media which is a perfect breeding ground for 'fake news' and helps it to spread like wildfire. We can learn simple basics things to counter 'fake news' and evaluate sources of information with the right information and some small fact-checking knowledge for daily basis usage.

To begin with, the first question to answer in the search for the truth is- Is the sensational news believable? Always don't trust immediately what you read. Treat every sensational news with suspicion because there's a good chance that it's 'fake news'. When it comes to the credibility of information sources always evaluate a link/website by checking the 'Contact' information provided on

such link/website. There should be information provided about the owner/media house with contact details like number and email id's. Moreover, always look at the domain's URL as .com, .org, .net, domains can be purchased by anyone, and they may be at times source of 'fake news'.

The objective of the website becomes clear by looking at its 'About' section, so always check this section. Besides, check when this content was published and whether the website is being updated at a regular interval with other news. Lastly, perhaps the best way to fight 'fake news' is to make sure by double-checking a piece of sensitive news by verifying it from reputable and independent news sources because important news spreads quickly between different news outlets. If there are other news outlets reporting a similar story, then it's probably not 'fake news'. But if it's only on the website you're reading then chances are high that it's 'fake news'.

Although we should learn IT-based fact-checking skills but critical thinking on fact-checking can help immediately in every situation. These are all simple methods to understand the accuracy of a news story on daily basis. There is no need for IT techniques every time in fighting the menace of fake news and such little literacy will help a lot. Under Article 51A (h) even the Indian Constitution provides that, "It shall be the duty of every citizen to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform". Let's follow this all and stop consuming and sharing 'fake news' which will have a far-reaching impact on the social fabric due to a problem fueled by digital illiteracy.

Battle of narratives

Sir,

Reference "Battle of narratives and politics of History" Daily Excelsior October 13,2022. May I add to the knowledge of the writer that during the very first encounter with the invaders at Garhi on 23rd October 1947, Capt. Priithi Singh, when wounded, was sent back to Srinagar, whereas Subedar DuniChand (not Duni Ram) his second in command (still an unsung hero) with his own men and those retreated from the leading contingent under Capt. Priithi Singh (hardly 30 to 35 all belonging to 1st J&K Infantry now 1st JAK Rifles) sacrificed their lives to hold the enemy's further advance on that fateful day. This enabled Brig. Rajinder Singh properly plan to resist enemy at different places for the next three days or so.

Narsingh Dev Jamwal
Jammu

Truth about Smt Mali

Sir,

This has been noticed that from past one year, 1972 Padam Shri awardee Late Smt Mali Tantray D/o Hata Tantray is being falsely mentioned by officials and social media outlets as a Gujar community lady, which is either erroneous or fabricated. Factually, she belonged to the Tantray, a Pahari community. I personally being relative of Smt Mali Tantray, she was my mother's sister. I confirm that she was from Tantray community and all the decorations of awardee including Medal, Ribbon and the certificate are preserved in possession of her family. She was born, lived and died at Mohalla Nakka Tantray, Ward No. 03, Pyl. Arai Peeran Block Mandi Distt. Poonch, J&K. The proud family of the late awardee is disappointed with this false narrative.

Mohd Aslam Tantray
Sarpanch Pyl. Arai Peeran