

### Delay in formulation of EVP

The UT of Jammu and Kashmir has failed to come up with an important Electric Vehicle Policy (EVP). The General Administration Department (GAD) of the J&K Government formed a committee, led by the Administrative Secretary of the Housing and Urban Development Department (HUDD), which included members from other departments as well. Almost a year has passed but no sign of an EVP.

State-level EVP have different focuses and strategies to cover various vehicle categories. These policies commonly include targets for sales share and new vehicle registrations. They set stock share and purchase goals for public fleets, such as Government vehicles and transit buses. On the demand side, capital subsidies are a widely used tool in these policies. States and UTs adopt different policies, some offering incentives on first-come, first-served vehicles for a fixed number of vehicles and others offering a percentage of value. Other common incentives include exemptions or reductions in vehicle registration fees, road taxes, parking charges, and occasionally vehicle purchase taxes. Some states and UTs, in their efforts to transition a significant 3-wheeler fleet, have implemented a scrappage programme that allows owners of conventional rickshaws to trade in their old vehicles for credit towards purchasing an electric one. Supply-side policies are also crucial in state-level EV policies. These policies often provide incentives and capital subsidies to support EV manufacturing, research, and development. Some Governments offer tax breaks for land used in the construction of EV manufacturing facilities, waive stamp and electricity duties for EV manufacturers, and offer reduced utility rates. Regarding charging infrastructure, states offer various incentives for private EV charger installations and establish targets for public charger deployment in densely populated areas and along busy roadways. Many policies modify zoning laws to include requirements for charging infrastructure in large-scale commercial complexes and residential buildings. Furthermore, several states have invested in battery-swapping kiosks to encourage the adoption of electric 2-wheelers and 3-wheelers in the redshiring and delivery sectors.

Jammu and Kashmir appear to be lagging in these developments. The Transport, HUDD, and PDD need to collaborate to devise a practical plan for establishing charging stations and the PDD should supply electricity to these stations at subsidised rates. However, as of now, no such policy has been put into effect. While there are subsidies available for the purchase of electric vehicles, the absence of public charging stations means that owners must either charge their vehicles at home or company sites for a fee. The reality is that no permit is required for electric taxis or buses, but the lack of essential infrastructure can pose challenges for electric vehicle owners at some point. Even after the policy is rolled out, a significant amount of time will be needed to establish the necessary infrastructure and regulations. Despite this, it appears that the relevant authorities are not in a hurry to implement the EVP. All the benefits offered become ineffective in the absence of the EVP.

Jammu and Kashmir, as a popular tourist destination, attracts a significant number of electric vehicle owners. However, these owners are currently left to fend for themselves when it comes to charging their vehicles. Despite the Government's introduction of a fleet of electric buses in both Jammu and Srinagar, the absence of adequate charging infrastructure prevents them from operating on long-distance routes.

It's essential to recognise that delayed approach rarely leads to the desired impact. In the case of Jammu and Kashmir, without adequate electric charging facilities and the implementation of an EVP, it's unlikely that the set targets can be achieved. Considering that the Union Territory of Ladakh has already formulated and adopted its EVP, the prolonged delay in Jammu and Kashmir is difficult to justify. Therefore, higher authorities must step in and expedite the resolution of the issue promptly.

*Namrata Biji Ahuja talks to Dr Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; MoS PMO, Personnel Atomic Energy and Space about a range of issues.*

Excerpts:-

**Q What does the success of Chandrayaan-3 signify for India and the rest of the world?**

A It is a landmark and the entire nation is excited about it. It is a conquest for India, which started late in this rather sophisticated area of space technology. Today, India reaffirms its position with the capability to take a lead in global issues whether it is space, clean energy or climate concerns. From the scientific community's point of view, the celebration is a reflection of the headway that has been made as far as unfolding the mysteries of the moon is concerned. From a layman's point of view, it might be more of romanticism getting behind those mysteries and fantasies that have enchanted him since childhood with folklore, cinema and songs. From the point of view of science, it is a headway in discovering the actual elements that determine the entire milieu of the moon. For example, Chandrayaan-1 gave us evidence of the presence of water molecules embedded in the mineral elements, which is an indicator of the compatibility or the possibility of human life there. It is in this regard this mission would set out to work.

**Q How do you see India taking a lead in space exploration with this success?**

As far as the journey to the moon is concerned, I think it has placed India in the elite league of three or four nations, and also what is often not talked about is that most countries have not been successful in the first attempt. Which means India's human resource and capability are in many ways ahead of others. What we were lacking was possibly an enabling milieu and I have been saying on behalf of the entire scientific community that we want to thank the Prime Minister. Without him it might not have been possible. The patronage, promotion and freedom that we receive from him is remarkable.

Till a few years ago, Sriharikota and ISRO were banned to the rest of the world. Now the entire world is owning them up in the manner in which they are celebrating, whether it is schoolchildren, housewives, youth or mediapersons. And they could own up the mission because they were

exposed to it, as the gates of Sriharikota were thrown open by Prime Minister Modi. When the launching happened on July 14, we had more than 1,000 mediapersons present on the premises. And this is the same Sriharikota which had forbidden mediapersons or anybody else, and therefore there was no sense of belonging to that mission.

On the one hand, the unlocking of the space sector has led to increased funding and private participation. We already have more than 150 startups and some of them have started making good fortune out of their projects. On the other hand, there is a sense of belonging as far as Sriharikota and all its work is concerned.

**Q How do you see India's space technology compared with other countries? There is an argument that we are giving budget allocation to space missions when there are more pressing problems here.**

A Our ability to reach out to space is now proven beyond doubt as the prime minister himself said space is no limit. So we have gone beyond space to discover the unexplored areas of the universe. The other part, which I think is quite unique to India, is that we have in the past eight or nine years, particularly after Prime Minister Modi came in, been given the freedom to apply space technology to areas of infrastructure development. If you see from a larger perspective, this is actually going to add to India's capability to bring ease of living to its citizens.

The budget allocation is not as high as it is being talked about. Chandrayaan is about Rs600 crore whereas some of the welfare schemes cost much more than that. Space technology in the Indian context does not mean just sending rockets. It has today entered virtually every Indian household, ministry and department. [For instance,] in railways for guarding unmanned crossings and railway tracks through warnings about possibility of a potential obstructing agent. If we look at urban development and building smart cities, heli surveys to determine the water underneath for irrigation, mapping of farms and land through the ambitious Svamitva programme replacing the patwari (village registrar) system, and the Gati Shakti programme are using space technology. If you talk about the success stories during the Covid pandemic, it is again telemedicine.

Space technology has been optimally utilised in the past eight to nine years in infrastructure development, which is not seen to this extent even in countries like the UK or the US where it is more confined to experiments and sending rockets and spaceships. This is particularly an achievement

for a developing country, as it not only proves cost effective but also hastens the pace of development.

**Q ISRO has been working on a limited budget and there have been cost constraints for some of the missions. Do you feel the budget allocation should be increased?**

A Even though I agree with you that ISRO was constrained of funds to an extent, we made up for that with human resource because the passion and commitment was so much. If you see the archive pictures of Dr Vikram Sarabhai and ISRO scientists carrying rocket parts for assembly on a bicycle, you will understand that they were adamant about going ahead. So we made up with our passion and commitment for what we did not have monetarily.

Having said that, if we want to compete and do what we believe in and march ahead in the global competition, I agree funding has to be increased. And I think the decision of the prime minister to unlock the space sector and throw it open to the private sector is a step in that direction. We have more than 150 private startups in three or four years supplementing the funds. The move to set up the Anusandhan National Research Foundation, recently passed by Parliament, sets aside Rs50,000 crore to promote research and development in the next five years. Of this, about Rs36,000 crore is going to be raised by private sources, whether it is philanthropists or industry.

If we have to go beyond this, we cannot be tied down by the constraints of funds. It cannot be a limiting factor and if that has to be done, we cannot leave everything to the government resources because it has its own limitations. All of us have to synergise. The era of working in silos is over and the demarcation between private and public is gradually going away. If you see the space sector in the US, a lot is being handled by the private sector. We are also moving in the same direction because we are now in a position to accept global competition and live up to global standards.

**Q How tough is lunar landing for a human or an unmanned spacecraft?**

A The lunar landing has happened and we have seen that it has to be very precise and monitored very minutely. In the case of the earlier mission of Chandrayaan, in the last few minutes it did not happen the way we expected. The pace, velocity, gravitational balances have to be taken care of. This time, we took care of all concerns based on the past experience, also adding on with technological upgrade. So it has happened very smoothly. Of

course, there are certain sensitive moments for any scientific mind. For me, it was the moment when Chandrayaan was to get out of earth's orbit and head towards the moon's orbit. I was watching it anxiously because it is like changing track while driving a car and you have to take care there is no mishap when you are doing it. And that happened successfully in the middle of one night when it left the earth's orbit and then took a trans lunar route and finally entered the moon's orbit. Then it kept descending and came to the innermost orbit. The last few minutes were obviously watched very closely, and the added stress was that the entire world is watching.

**Q When can we expect a human mission?**

A We will have at least two missions before we send a human being. We will have the first mission possibly in September or early next year, where for a few hours we will send an empty spacecraft that will go up and come back into the waters to see if we are able to control its safe return without any damage. If that is successful, then we will have a second trial next year by sending a robot called Vyommitra. There will be no risk of life here but it will come back in the same route and brought out with the collective effort of multiple agencies as if they are bringing back the human beings safe to the surface. And if that is also successful, we will send the final mission, which will be the human mission. This could possibly take place in the second half of 2024. Initially we had planned it for 2022, but it got delayed due to Covid. In fact, when the lockdown happened, some of our potential astronauts undergoing training in Moscow for different exposures had to be called back.

**Q How do you see India emerging as a space power?**

A To an extent, we have already emerged as a space power and the rest of the world has started expecting us to take the lead. During the recent visit of Prime Minister Modi to Washington, DC, the entire bilateral agreements were technology driven. And within technology, it was the space sector dominating. For example, India became a signatory to the Artemis Agreement, where more than two dozen countries are signatories and the US had been persuading India. The US has also approached India to send its astronaut to the International Space Station, which means they value India's resources. So we are not only placed equally, but in certain ways we are also looked upon as leaders. The ascent of India has begun through the space sector.

# Supreme Court handbook on combating gender bias

Jagmohann Sharma

Supreme Court of India has come out with a Handbook on combating gender stereotypes. Announcing this on Aug 17 morning, Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud said this is in order to identify and remove the use of words and phrases, which are loaded with gender stereotypes, in judgments and court language. Archaic terms that disparage women can still be routinely heard in Indian courts long after falling into disuse in other countries. The idea behind it is to assist judges and the legal community to identify, understand, and combat stereotypes about women in legal discourse. It contains a glossary of gender unjust terms and suggests alternative words and phrases which may be used while drafting pleadings as well as orders and judgements. The hand-book advises against the use of adjectives such as "dutiful", "faithful" and "obedient" for a "wife"; replaces "housewife" with "homemaker", an "affair" with a "relationship outside marriage", "prostitute" with "sex worker", and the troublingly euphemistic "eve-teasing" with the more accurate "street sexual harassment". It is for lawyers as well as the judges. This endeavour indeed deserves a big applause. But is that enough to change the basic mind-set of our Indian society considering the way it assumes, and treats women in our day to day life.

Gender-unjust terms	What should be used instead...	Stereotype	Why the handbook says they should be avoided
Affair	Relationship outside of marriage	Women are physically weaker than men.	While men and women are physiologically different, it is not true that women are physically weaker. A person's strength does not depend solely on gender but also on factors like genetics, nutrition
Career woman	Woman	Women who work outside of the home do not care about their children.	It has no correlation with a woman's love or concern for her children. Parents of all genders may work outside while also caring for their children.
Eve teasing	Street sexual harassment	Men who sexually assault or rape a woman know to them... The woman may be a colleague, employer, neighbour, or family member, etc.	Very often men sexually assault or rape a woman known to them... The woman may be a colleague, employer, neighbour, or family member, etc.
Fallen woman	Woman	Rape is a crime which taints the honour of the survivor/victim. If the rapist marries her, her honour is restored.	Rape is not tant the honour of the survivor/victim or her family. The marriage of the rapist to the survivor/victim does not restore her honour. It inflicts the trauma. Rape is a criminal offence, which cannot be undone by marriage.
Housewife	Homemaker	Transgender individuals cannot be raped.	Transgender individuals can be raped. In fact, transgender individuals are one of the groups which are most vulnerable to sexual violence because they are stigmatised and face structural discrimination.
Ladylike	Use a gender neutral description of behaviour or characteristics (eg. amusing or assertive)	Unmarried woman	Unmarried woman
Marriageable age	A woman who has attained the legal age required to marry	Mother	Mother
Mistress	Women with whom a man has had romantic or sexual relations outside of marriage		
Prostitute	Sex worker		
Provider/Breadwinner	Employed or earning		
Provocative clothing dress	Clothing/dress		
Sex change	Sex reassignment or gender transition		
Spinster	Unmarried woman		
Transsexual	Transgender		
Unwed mother	Mother		

Whether it is the parents deciding the study and career goals of their daughter, or a husband deciding the duties, authority and decision-making limits of his wife in home affairs despite the fact that she is the ultimate home maker, or setting a time span for females of the family to step out and being back home, all such decisions are male dominated in most of the Indian family units. Ironically this prevails in a country which considers a girl or a woman as an embodiment of the supreme Goddess. Women are however taken for granted whereas the religious scriptures refer to them as a source of blessings.

They are considered a weaker being in a country where the word "Shakti" & "Naari" are used in a similar context. The term SHAKTI refers to the dynamic energy that is responsible for creation, maintenance and destruction of the entire universe. The Indian philosophy has always seen this SHAKTI in the form of a female incarnation whether it is mother-nature, our own mother land, Aadi-Shakti Maa Durga or our own mother who gives birth and nurtures us into what we are today. It is not just hearsay, but I have started believing that women are in no way inferior to men. In fact there is a strong realisation within me that women are manifold stronger vis-à-vis the men. They are synonymous of the real power and ultimate source of energy in every single unit and particle of the universe be it a living or a non-living thing. I consider myself fortunate enough to get a chance to work at the Regional News Unit, All India Radio Jammu and even luckier to get the responsibility to compose a monthly program on women safety and empowerment. This provides me an opportunity to meet a number of women working under extraordinary circumstances to prove their might in divergent fields of life against all odds. During all my programs and panel discussions one thing emerges undoubtedly every time and that is the basic mind-set dictated by the society. This sets the so-called inherent characteristics of women 'e.g...' Women are physically weaker than men;

unmarried women are incapable of taking important decisions about their life; women are meant only to have children etc. Some roles are attributed as women only like they should do all the household

chores; wives should take care of husband's parents; women should be submissive or subordinate to men; women who do not work outside home do not contribute to household or contribute very little in comparison to their husbands and many more! It is a patriarchal mind-set indeed. I am sure Supreme Court's handbook that offers alternative language to combat gender stereotypes will definitely bring a lot of change in the scenario at-least with the judiciary, in courts, tribunals and other legal and judicial platforms. These 31pages of a simply drafted booklet is designed to dislodge the words, thoughts and narratives imbedded over the centuries. We need a thought process revolution within our society where women have to face a lot of discrimination, challenges, threats and odds every day and every moment. There should be appropriately modified curriculum being a part of schools, colleges, workplaces and society as a whole where Patriarchal thought processes are deeply rooted and residing in our brains.

What do you say...? (The author is presently working at Akashvani Jammu as Dogri News Reader cum Translator.)

# Restoring women and children's future in Healthcare in J&K

Dr Navneet Kour

Women and children are the oars of the boat which we call society- without them societal growth, change, progress and even sustenance would evade us. In our country, and our state especially, women are being reduced to secondary citizens and children to mere assets and property, and even liabilities in the underprivileged areas. To empower the women and child population of our Union Territory J&K, and eventually the country, we need to begin with their wellbeing and thus focus on their future in our healthcare structures and systems.

The United Nations states that "Poor health constitutes suffering and deprivation of the most fundamental kind." With the increasing urgency in healthcare requirements for women and children especially in rural and underprivileged areas, there is a need to address the medical and healthcare opportunities for them.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines health as the "state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." With this definition as our guiding light and in the unique context of our state, the approach to improve the status of women and children through healthcare needs to be multi-pronged.

The first step for bringing about any progress needs to be through an increase in knowledge and awareness, opening up mindsets and perspectives to make the society malleable and prepared for the oncoming changes. Similarly, in the context of women and children empowerment in healthcare, there needs to be added focus on educating the masses about their healthcare rights. Programs will consist of issues and topics of female and children's health like menstrual health, sanitation, cleanliness, sexual health and harassment (for example: teaching young children especially girls the different between 'good touch' and 'bad touch'). A multi-stakeholder awareness programs and workshops should be organised for the family for educating them on child growth stages and accompanying requirements of the child and the changing needs of the family. Another important aspect of healthcare empowerment for women and children of our state where they are forced to be dependent on the males in their family, it becomes the role of the Government, NGOs, and social workers to conduct lifestyle and health skills workshop for women and children. These skill-building workshops will allow them

to be self-sustainable and independent in their own health affairs. This approach will inculcate in the females, especially girls, with greater hygiene awareness thus allowing them greater care for their own bodies.

An important part of the Indian societal living is the essence of the family and familial living as the centre of existence, life, and functioning. Women and children are deeply embedded in the family and the private sphere of societal living more than men are and are often kept away from the public sphere. Thus, for increasing health restoration and empowerment of women and children, making them independent and making them empowered in terms of health within their own families becomes imperative. This will involve community engagements at the familial and not just the individual level. As social and Human Rights Activist and workers in the field, this will involve seminars and programs on multiple family health issues especially contraceptive health awareness and making contraception accessible and available to women-giving them power and autonomy over their own body. Family health and nutrition will also become an important cog in the machine promoting healthy family habits of hygiene, cleanliness, cooking and nutrition. For this, training on developing and maintaining kitchen gardens for each family or for a group of families will be an innovative way of giving them the power of nutrition in their own hands and further building a sustainable system of nutrition for them. It is often observed that in underprivileged communities and in families below poverty line, the constructs of family planning are missing because of age-old beliefs in children as financial shareholders and economical helping hands but this idea leads to greater burden on the financial and health resources of the family. To counter this dilemma, informed, intensive, and regular family planning workshops and interventions should be conducted in the target populations. Through these initiatives, women will have greater confidence and independence over their own health behaviours, which will trickle down to the children thus restoring their health rights with added support from family support systems encouraged by teams of social workers.

An immediate point of concern is the availability of and accessibility to clean, drinking water, as well as clean water for females during times of menstruation. For this, we as Social Activists, social justice workers need to ensure that potable water is made available to

families from the underprivileged sects. Initiatives like chlorine tablets installation, awareness building for clean water through boiling, etc can make this a reality with even minimal financial investments.

With the changing times today, greater emphasis is being put on people's mental health and well-being. In a Union Territory like J&K which has its many ups and downs, an added importance is seen for mental health. The children and women of our society, especially those of the lower socioeconomic strata, face a lot of these challenges in the form of domestic violence, sexual slavery, migration, militancy threats etc. With this in mind, social activists, social workers and counsellors need to come together for mental health training and mental health workshops, providing counselling and therapeutic sessions for individuals from distressed situations and backgrounds. To make them self-sustaining and independent in matters of their mental health, initiatives like Social Activist worker led self-help groups in these cases will give them independent skills as well as social support networks.

We need to build a vast system and intricate network of social workers, trained professionals and volunteers to ensure that social justice and healthcare empowerment reaches individuals, especially women and children, far and wide in our Union Territory. These clusters of volunteers and Social Workers and Activists will be responsible for regular canvassing and awareness building initiatives, ensuring that all target populations are aware of the services and Government aids available to them. Further more, through engaged medical teams and medical profiling, proper streamlined programs can be designed to assess and then alleviate the real time healthcare issues emerging in the target populations. Through such a dynamic community engagement between professionals, social workers, and underprivileged systems, an enduring and functioning system of healthcare efficiency will develop in our state thus restoring and further ensuring children and women's healthcare rights. In a similar string as this, special institutions and education centres need to be set up for children with special and diverse needs. For this, professionals with proper qualifications and regular training need to be embedded in our state to ensure that these children are not left behind, further strengthening children's rights at the crossroads of diverse needs and healthcare.

In a state with a unique existence like ours, Government accountability and social service involvement needs to become one to ensure social justice for all. Through the aforementioned volunteer worker network, Government schemes and social service initiatives can reach the interiors of our state and eventually the country. A multi-stakeholder approach like this will ensure proper applications and conduction of Government schemes to reach the grassroots of our society. As social activists & field workers then have the onus to help people in need meet the Government aid meant for them. Initiatives like the National Rural Health Mission and the Kendriya Bal Suraksha Yojana and many other Government Schemes need to have a system of workers to take the schemes to the people. Announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Ayushman Bharat scheme offers free health insurance of upto 5 lakh for people from underprivileged sectors of the society. Similar to this, the Swadhar Greh scheme envisions a supportive institutional framework for women victims of difficult circumstances providing them with shelter, food, clothing, and health as well as economic and social security are assured for such women. Unfortunately, such schemes and health opportunities evade the target and through our initiatives these can be made to reach the people. Organisations like the Care, SUPPORT NGO, Directorate of Health Services, NHM National Health Mission, Indian Red Cross Society, community health workers (Anganwadi workers), local NGOs, District Hospitals etc become the vehicles of change in this context taking forward the schemes and initiatives of the Jammu & Kashmir UT and Central Government and allowing them to reach those in need.

Further, initiatives like free and/or subsidised medical aid, free immunisation, regular blood tests and cancer screenings for women, fundraising with community engagement for healthcare projects, provision of free sanitary kits, and funding proper public restrooms for communities in underprivileged areas. Such initiatives will bring an increase in healthcare provisions and thus provide a direct inroad for individuals for health and hygiene endurance and empowerment.

In this tone, to wind up these ideas, we need to understand that through multiple initiatives through a network of workers can empower children and women in our state for their healthcare (The author is Founder Chairperson of NGO SUPPORT & Creative Self Employed Entrepreneurs Cooperative Ltd)