

Pendency of POC SO Act cases

Women and children are one of the most vulnerable sections of society among our huge population, and they deserve special attention, and the crimes against them need to be treated on a priority basis and with the utmost sensitivity. Keeping given these facts, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, better known as the POC SO Act, was passed to protect children from various types of offences like sexual harassment and pornography, and Special Courts have been established for the speedy trial of such offences and matters connected to them. But, as we've seen before, there's a big difference between what's said and what happens; despite Special Courts, nearly two lakh cases are pending under the POC SO Act, and the backlog is growing year after year. Our own Jammu and Kashmir is no different in this matter. UT of Jammu and Kashmir is facing the same situation as the rest of India, with the pendency of cases thereby increasing to almost unmanageable proportions. The disposition of only 72 cases in 2022 and the registration of 278 more cases in the same year show the wide gap between FIR registrations, investigations, and final judgments. When there are clear sections under the POC SO Act defining thirty days for the recording of status as per Section 35 and Rule 9 for the provision of interim compensation, yet the number of cases settled is very low, the matter is really serious because of the minor girl's future. The acting Chief Justice of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh High Court has rightly understood the gravity of the situation and taking cognizance, he has passed on the necessary instructions. The timely completion of investigations and the filing of a charge sheet are the most important parts of any criminal justice system, and usually, this is the grey area with which every state is grappling. No one is held accountable, and the administration must look into this matter seriously and pass on the necessary orders if necessary. No record in this regard has been shared in the public domain, but mere registration of FIRs can never deliver justice. When two UTs have almost nine hundred pending cases of Juvenile Justice, it is a serious matter that should be taken care of on a priority basis.

More serious is the data about Jammu district, which tops the list of FIRs and pending cases under the POC SO Act with 168 cases. Is the malice of drugs in any way responsible for such a high number of cases as compared to other districts? Authorities must look into this aspect on priority: what's wrong with our society? Are we not able to adhere to our high moral standards? All these are tough questions, but someone has to answer them. Given that underage children are the victims, dragging on cases for years is just too much to ask from the already traumatized minds of the victims. Set up separate police stations if necessary to expedite investigations and deliver justice on time. Judges can only pass on the orders to impel timely investigation, but on the ground, work has to be done by the Jammu and Kashmir Police. We have one of the best police forces, and channelling trained manpower with a psychological bent is not a difficult task. The Chief Justice has shown the way, and so can the Jammu and Kashmir Police, to establish a separate unit of the police to expedite the investigations for the pending cases. Someone has to take the initiative for this onerous task, as children cannot be left on their own to suffer indefinitely. On the judiciary part, if the number of present courts is not enough to handle the cases, more courts have to be established. A final call has to be made by the UT administration of Jammu and Kashmir, as Ladakh has negligible pending cases. The sooner we do it, the fewer victims will suffer.

Jal Jeevan Mission deadline

Jal Jeevan Mission, along with Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana, is the Government of India's flagship mission to provide water and electricity to every household in India, no matter how far away or difficult the terrain is. An eleven thousand crore huge plan is most important for every household. Several NGOs, paani samities, panchayats, and numerous other resources have been tapped to expedite the work, June 2023 is the deadline. It is not enough to simply provide a physical tap water connection; drinkable water must also be provided. It is not an easy task keeping in view the harsh weather, difficult mountainous terrain, and even the water-dry Kandi area also in Jammu and Kashmir. Many districts of Jammu and Kashmir are already water-stressed, especially in the Jammu division, specifically in the summer. As such, the matter is much more serious than what is being projected in the public domain. There has been no augmentation of water supplied to cities except through ground-water utilisation. A massive Chenab water lift scheme has been kept under the carpet, and underground water overuse is depleting ground-water drastically with each passing year. It is commendable that our Chief Secretary is so concerned about the water mission and is looking into every aspect involved. The other departmental staff has to rise to the occasion; finances are there, and timely completion will ensure the mitigation of the water woes of Jammu and Kashmir. This is a lifetime opportunity provided by the GoI, and the administration is earnestly trying to take full advantage of it. Timely completion is a must, and any delaying tactics are not acceptable.

Squadron Leader Anil Sehgal

Date : Twenty third September, 1940.
Place : Amar Kshatriya Rajput Sabha, Raj Tilak, Purani Mandi , Jammu.

Occasion : Loyal subjects of Maharaja Hari Singh, the ruler of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, are celebrating his birthday.

It is a gathering of admirers, loyalists and the faithfuls of the Maharaja. They all are singing praises of the king in a celebratory mood.

In midst of the prose and poetry eulogising the Maharaja, a ten-year-old boy named Kehri Singh is allowed to read a poem.

The boy reads his short poem in Urdu language and, as they say, sets the stage on fire ! After listening to the poem, the gathering is so enraged that they drag the boy out and throw him on the street.

They poem that angered the Maharaja's men was a depiction of the false pride and loyalty the Rajputs paraded for the Maharaja despite their own pathetic conditions in his regime as the subjects. The poem goes like this :

*Rano-ji ko nahin orhani
Bibi ke lehnga jarjar hai
Phir bhi barhi shan se Kehre
Ham Maharaja ke Bhai hein.
Daftar mein jitne chaprasi
Gad, jagati aur janglati
Chithare vardi, bane barati
Yeh Maharaja ke bhai hein
Bhai Mian ji panch-hazari
Bhitar bibi karmon ki mari*

The poem no doubt hit the Rajputs where it hurts the most. The poem of the young boy tore into the hegemony of the Rajputs over other state subjects, and thus exposed false dignity assumed by the proud members of his own clan.

Interestingly, Kehri Singh Madhukar himself was born in a Rajput family of Gurah Slatia in Samba, Jammu, to a military man !

This capacity to observe the things as they

A rebel Dogri poet

really are, without any adopted false perspectives, and then truthfully describing these in his poems is the biggest asset of this rebel poet of Duggar.

Madhukar lived all his life as an independent thinker and rebel poet who will not mince his words and who had the moral courage to speak his mind. All his life he fought against the oppression and injustice he saw all around by writing poems of social relevance.

Gurah Slatia is a part of the Kandi belt of Jammu region. Kandi means parched land. This dry land has given birth to celebrated warriors like legendary Dogra General Baj Singh and Brigadier Rajinder Singh on one hand and Dogri literary luminaries like Kis-ohan Smailpuri, Mohan Singh Slatia, Kehri Singh Madhukar, and, add to this the world renowned Basohali paintings too.

Madhukar began his literary journey by writing verse in Urdu. He later converted to the cause of Duggar culture and Dogri language under the aegis of Dogri Sanstha, which was headed by Ram Nath Shastri. He travelled to the villages promoting Dogri as an unpaid volunteer, singing his Dogri poems to the rural masses.

While working in Radio Kashmir Jammu, he came in contact with eminent poet Yash Sharma and prose writer Jitendra Sharma. Their influence ensured Madhukar's continued devotion to Dogri.

His travels to the villages of the Dogra region helped him understand the minds, aspirations and difficulties of the village folk in the Dograland, besides promoting the Dogri language.

Sahitya Akademi recognised Dogri as an independent modern literary language on Second

August 1969. The first Sahitya Akademi Award for Dogri language was given to Dogri writer Narendra Khajuria, in 1970, for his short stories collection Neela Ambar, Kaale Baddal.

The announcement for this award to Narendra Khajuria enraged Madhukar to no ends. Those in the know tell us how the senior poet Kehri Singh Madhukar had gone to the same premier Dogri organisation called Dogri Sanstha, wielding a danda (thick bamboo stick) in hand, protesting against the Sahitya Akademi award to Narendra Khajuria who was a brother of Ram Nath Shastri.

Madhukar believed and openly claimed that he deserved the award more than Khajuria and alleged that Shastri had conspired to influence the judges in favour of his brother.

Along with fellow Dogri poets Yash Sharma and Ved Pal Deep, Madhukar formed the most popular trio of poetry. This trident of Dogri poets entertained the Dogras for at least two decades in continuity by travelling far and wide and singing their poems to the masses.

Madhukar began his career with Radio Kashmir Jammu (RKJ), presently called All India Radio. He served a successful tenure with them from 1950 to 1955. Here, he wrote popular poems, radio plays and musical features highlighting Dogra culture and its rich traditions.

These works brought him recognition, popularity and prestige. Then, one day, he suddenly resigned from his position with RKJ without assigning any reason and without securing an alternate job. This landed him in great financial stress. Why he abruptly resigned from the radio is a mystery nobody has been able to solve.

Jammu Jottings

Adopt a stray, quit a fancy

Dr Sunish Sharma, Sugandha Khajuria

Nowadays, the social networking is full of some fancy breeds like Husky, Golden Retriever, Chow Chow which have now become a tool to gain likes, followers and prestige. Today the dog is like a status symbol. If you have an BMW, then you have to have a Chow Chow or a Siberian Husky at home. Such love and show off has made the elevation to ruthless breeding at breeding centres to produce such fancy breeds. There are over lakhs of pet shops and breeders who are operating by violating the relevant laws as the industry is getting profitable margins.

Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Pet Shop) Rules, 2017, was made to control the inhumane and unethical breeding of pets. With the inclined demand of fancy breeds in the market the pressure of breeding also increases which leads to the ruthless breeding of dogs. Unfortunately, even five years after the legislation was promulgated the inhumane breeding of fancy breeds to get fancy pups is still a market trend. The conditions are so

bad and the environment is so dirty in these breeding facilities that the breeding dogs even get zoonotic and other skin diseases. It is often seen that at such breeding centres the dogs are caged for the months and the females are forcibly bred with indie dogs. The idea of a purebred dog is a false hope that all the pet shops give to their customers. Breeds like Great Dane, Shitzu, Pug and Chow

The more we adopt these indigenous the less we will see the case of road accidents of stray dogs, animal cruelty and killing of dogs by poisoning. These animals also have feelings and are always hungry of love, which we humans can give by atleast adopting a stray one and quitting a breed one.

Chow are some animal breeds cultivated by the humans to get some traits. These breeding dogs are bred multiple times, until they get ill or die. Female dogs that become unfit for further breeding are

abandoned on the roads which not only risk their lives but also increase the trauma of their mental health which they already faced at their puppy mills. The traits of some breeds of too small like Shitzu and other breeds traits may seem like to be very fancy but can often be very disastrous for the dog as these breeds are born with too many inbred lines leading to inbreeding depression and various

genetic disorders. Most animals of Pug breed are susceptible to Brachycephalic Airway Obstruction Syndrome, which leads to a series of problems with their respiratory or heart system which is a genet-

ic disorder of this breed.

In 2016, India banned the import of foreign breeds to the country and the very next year brought the rules to prevent cruelty to animals but still the ruthless breeding of dogs, or their health is causing increased rate of genetic disorders among breed dogs. In 2020 broadcast of Mann ki Baat, PM Narendra Modi appealed to the Indians to adopt indigenous breeds of dog as part of the endeavour to achieve 'self-reliance' in the country but the ground reality remains the same with a love for pedigree dogs. The society must come forward to adopt the stray dogs as they are our indigenous. There is a need to think that, it is good to buy a pedigree breed for which the parent dog suffers or to adopt an indigenous stray who is in need of love, food, shelter and care. The more we adopt these indigenous the less we will see the case of road accidents of stray dogs, animal cruelty and killing of dogs by poisoning. These animals also have feelings and are always hungry of love, which we humans can give by atleast adopting a stray one and quitting a breed one.

Celebrating three birthdays in same year

BD Sharma

It was the seventeenth year of my age that I celebrated my birthday on sixth of October for the first time. I had come to know about this day being my birthday some months earlier only. Actually our dates of birth were entered in the school records in Bikrami Era, the calendar commonly used in the State till 1960s. But we had to record our dates of birth in Common Era in the examination forms for Matric exam as the same were required to be reflected in this Era in the Matriculation Certificates. So we had to convert our dates of birth in Common Era. It was done by deducting 56 years 8 months and 18 days from our dates of birth in Bikrami Era. In this way my date of birth got transformed from 24 Asuj, Samvat 2009 to 6th of October, 1952 CE. That is how I came to know that October, 6 was my birthday and I celebrated it for the first time by hosting a sumptuous party by offering a cup of tea and one Samosa each to my two college friends by spending a princely sum of Rupees two.

My birthday used to be celebrated earlier also but it was done according to another schedule. I noticed it when I went to my village a day later that year and I found my father celebrating my birthday by distributing small coloured "Bataashe" to the children as he had been doing in the past. When told that my birthday had already passed, he stressed that my birthday was celebrated on 24th of Asuj, which fell on that day only. I was further confused when my mother asked me to come home in the middle of the following week as a Puja had to be performed to celebrate my birthday. Again when told that my birthday had already come about, she replied that as per our family Pandit and as per my Janam Kundli my birthday fell during the following week. In accordance with the Hindu religious calendar my birthday would fall on Saptami Tithi of Krishan Pakash of the month. So the celebration of birthday thrice on different days during the same year remained an enigma to me for long.

This confusion got somewhat cleared many years later when I noticed that we were observing more than one calendars simultaneously. In fact the fault lay, in contrast to what Shakespeare said, in our stars whose position and profiles threw out a number of options for measuring time.

It is interesting to know that the years after Independence constituted a period of flux for us. If author is allowed to cite Charles Dickens, "it was the best of times and it was the worst of times". Childhood was a blessing, a time of leisure and pleasure, no work and all play, no school till the ripe age of six years unlike the kids of today who are rushed to the Kindergarten by the raw age of three years. But the bane was that we had to study and understand both the old ways of life as well as the new ones. For instance we had to learn the old systems of measurement of different quantities like length, weight and volume as well as those of the new systems. Thus there was burden of first learning conversion of Rati-Masha-Tola-Chhataank-Ser and later on that of Milligram/ Centigram/ Gram / Kilogram. Similarly first we learnt about "Inch/Gaj /Furlong/Mile" and later Centimetre / Meter/ KM, as also first "Pie-Anna-Chawani-Rupee" and later New Paisa/ Rupee. First memorize names of Bikrami months, Baishakh, Jaith, Asaadh.... and later January, February..... There was rather a

chain of dating systems from Luni-solar Hindu calendar to Solar Bikrami to Hijri to Gregorian calendar having different schedules of time which were being practiced simultaneously. There was thus a variation in dates of occurrence of an event which caused confusion in the mind of common man.

The origin and evolution of mechanism of measuring time is very interesting. For early man the three most conspicuous units of time measurement were year, month and day. It was so because all the

three measures were related to the natural cycles, the year, by earth's one revolution around the sun, the month, by moon's one circle around the earth and the day, by one rotation of the earth along its axis.

Many scholars believe that the Lunar calendar was the first to be developed by man because the phenomenon of waxing and waning of the moon was conspicuously noticeable to him. It took about 29.5 days with regularity and was termed as month (from Moon) or Maas/Maasa (from Amaavas to Amaavas). Twelve waxing and waning moon cycles took place for the period of one Year (Spring to Spring) or one Varsh (Varsha to Varsha). In this way one lunar year consisted of about 354 days. While evolving the lunar calendar, our ancestors numbered the days by "Tithis". The fortnight of the waxing of moon (from New Moon to Full moon) is called Shukal Pakash and these fifteen days were designated as Pratipada, Dvitiya, Tritiya.....Chaturdashi, Purnima. Similarly there were fifteen Tithis of the Krishna Pakash linked to the waning phase of moon from Full moon to New Moon. This cycle encompasses the time it takes the Moon to orbit the Earth in relation to the Sun and corresponds to one month.

The other important element defining time division of this calendar was Nakshatra. The time taken by moon to travel over the 27th part of the ecliptic was called Nakshatra. During the traversal of moon around the earth, the moon passes close to one conspicuous star in every Nakshatra. All these 27 Nakshatras were thus elaborately delineated and named after Stars as Ashvini, Rohini, Pushya, Magha, Chitra, Vishakha Shraavan and Revati etc. Interestingly enough the names of the twelve months of the lunar year were derived from the twelve Nakshatras in which the moon traversed on the day of full moon. In this way Chait, Baisakh... Sawan.. Asuj... Poh months were named after the Chitra, Vishakha, Shraavan, Ashvini and Pushya Nakshatras.

However the lunar calendar had one deficiency in that the cyclic pattern of seasonal changes didn't keep abreast with the calendar. For instance the rainy season didn't fall in the same month after few years so the calendar didn't help to foresee and foretell the occurrence of events. A solar year—the time taken by earth to orbit the Sun, did, however stay aligned with the seasons because the earth's movement around the Sun and more specifically the tilting of its axis with respect to its orbital plane determined the occurrence of seasons. Need was therefore felt to link lunar calendar with the solar calendar. In order to keep intact the familiar lunar calendar and to correct this seasonal drift our forefathers evolved the Luni-solar calendar. In this calendar, a month is still defined by the moon but there was a difference of about 11 days in a year between the two calendars. An extra month, known as Adhik Maas

is added periodically (after about three years) to stay closer to the solar year. This Luni-solar year begins with the sunrise of the day after the New Moon day, the Amavasya of the month of Chaitra (March-April). This calendar can be termed as Hindu calendar (the Panchang) and occurrence of majority of our festivals like Diwali, Holi, Shivratri, Janam Ashatami, Ramnavmi is determined by this calendar. This calendar also builds our fortune telling, with prescriptions for when to build a house, get married, celebrate birthday, have a funeral and other life events. Our Janam Kundlis (Birth Charts) are prepared according to this calendar and my mother, a deeply religious lady, would celebrate my birthday in line with this calendar. Panchang, however, is an intricate calendar which cannot be explained by a person of average intelligence like your present author. One needs to have a lot of punditry and expertise to understand and interpret it fully. It offers a multidimensional method of structuring time, combining information about lunar days, solar days, lunar months, solar months, the movements of the Sun and the Moon in relation to stellar constellations etc.

Our forefathers had also the genius of developing a purely Solar calendar. The months in this calendar are named after the Luni-solar months like Baisakh, Jeth, Ashaad etc but the year always starts from the Spring Equinox (determined through Panchang) falling on April, 13/14 every year. This calendar can be termed as Desi Bikrami calendar and was used in our State till the year 1954 in our civil affairs. Our dates of birth were, accordingly, entered in the school records as per this calendar. Baisakhi and Lohri festivals are celebrated according to this calendar. This calendar was useful for the farming and foraging societies as it was coterminal with the seasons and was thus appropriate for planning ahead various farming and migratory activities. As a farmer my father's almanac was also in accordance with this calendar. For instance, he would be worried if any year the Paent Chhalla (Dogri transmutation of Pehla Chhall, the first rainfall causing overflow of water bodies) didn't occur by the 13th/14th of Ashaad (about 1st July). His activities revolved around this calendar only and so it was by natural that he observed my birthday on 24th day of Asuj, the sixth month of this calendar.

The third calendar came in our lives late but it over whelmed all other calendars. Called variously as Isavi/ Angrezi/ Gregorian/ Christian/ Common, it had a very hazy origin. Initially one year was reflected in ten months only with March as the first month, when the first tree usually bloomed. The subsequent months were named as April, May, June, Quintilis, Sxtilis, September, October, November, December. Romulus, the legendary Roman king is thought to have given the name to the ten months. March (Martius) was named after his own father Mars. Aprilis, Maius and Iunius names were derived from Roman deities. Thereafter the names corresponded to numbers. Quintilis, being the fifth and Sxtilis, the sixth month. Names of seventh to tenth months were derived from the language precursor to both Sanskrit and Latin. Interestingly Sanskrit has similar words for these numerals: Sapt (September), Asta, Nava, Dasha (December). When the Romans conquered Egypt, they learnt to observe the solar calendar having 365 days with twelve months. Two more months January, after Junus, the Roman God of beginnings and endings, Feb-

ruary from Febua, representing the rites for purification on eve of spring, were added. This calendar was named Julian calendar after their Emperor Julius Caesar. The two months Quintilis and Sxtilis were renamed as July and August after the two great Roman monarchs, Julius Caesar and Augustus. The Julian calendar had 365 days and six hours and Romans added one day to February, the shortest of the month thereby giving the idea of the leap year. Since the year is actually 365 days, 5 hours 48.80 minutes so a discrepancy of one day crept in after 130 years. And after about 1500 years this discrepancy added up to 10 days between the calendar and the real solar year. This posed a particular problem around the equinoxes, which were occurring 10 days earlier than the days depicted in the calendar.

Pope Gregory got it rectified in 1582 by taking the years ending in '00 as leap years only if they were divisible by 400 thereby three leap years were eradicated every three centuries. This calendar, known as Gregorian calendar was put to use in the States under the influence of Roman Church. But the Protestant Britain and the Lutheran states of Germany didn't adopt the new calendar. Britain finally adopted the new calendar in 1752. She switched the start of the new year also from 25 March to 1 January. By that time the difference of 11 days had come to fore between the two calendars. To solve this problem, in that year, 2 September was followed by 14 September i.e. the Britishers slept on the night of 2 September and woke up on the morning of 14 September. Change was greeted by rioting mobs in the streets chanting "give us back our 11 days!". Parts of Germany had made the change in 1698 and Greece waited until 1923. Russia converted to Gregorian calendar after the 1917 Revolution.

Most funny thing was to happen when the Russian team arrived 12 days late to the London Olympics in 1908 because of its observing the Julian calendar till that time.

Nowadays almost whole of the world observes the Gregorian calendar, commonly known as the Common Era. Further technological advances in the recent past has made it possible to hone the accuracy of the calendar even more. For instance, it has been suggested that one day should be added every 3323 years and the years divisible by the number 400 will not be a leap year.

Years continued slipping away and celebration of my birthday by both my parents got gradually discontinued and so was my interest in celebrating it. Observance of the Desi Bikrami Era has become very rare now. Birthdays of the children are celebrated in accordance with the Hindu calendar by some religious minded families only. All my children, daughter Nidhi, son-in-law Himanshu, son Munish, and daughter-in-law Nidhi are also obsessed with the Common Era only. All of them gang up for celebrating my birthday on sixth of October every year with all those cakes, candles and claps. But I find myself uncomfortable and don't relish the occasion. I long to relive the time and revive the memory of the simple years in which my father used to celebrate it on Asuj, 24 by distributing small cakes of jaggery or coloured micro Bataashe or as my mother used to celebrate it on Saptami Tithi of Krishan Pakash of the Asuj month by organising a brief Puja and by preparing delicious Khameeray, Kheer and Aloo curry. Jaane Kahan Gaye wo Din!