

Road connectivity to Shri Amarnath Shrine

Every year, lakhs of devotees plan to pay obeisance at pilgrim places despite the most difficult terrain and almost negligible facilities. In between, some major tragic incidents do happen, like the Kedarnath flooding in 2013 or, more recently, the Amarnath tragedy of last year. But despite these horrifying incidents, these pilgrimage places haven't lost their significance. The present Govt, keeping in mind difficult terrain, the condition of roads, all-weather accessibility, and the comfort of devotees, conceived the Char Dham (Kedarnath, Badrinath, Yamunothri, and Gangotri) Yatra Project, a twelve thousand crore project with a road network of 890 km in all. The work is on a war footing and is expected to be completed in time. Like Kedarnath, Badrinath, Yamunothri, and Gangotri, we have Shri Amarnath ji in Jammu and Kashmir, which is considered one of the major pilgrimage shrines located at a height of 3888 meters from the sea level. The shrine is covered with snow except for a small window of a few days when this yatra is conducted every year, spanning initially 20 days and now 60 days. From a few thousand pilgrims in the 1980s, the number of pilgrims has now grown to lakhs. Keeping in mind the most difficult terrain to travel and the absence of a proper track, several deaths occur as the endurance of the journey is too much for an ordinary human body to bear. Several restrictions have been imposed, including the requirement of a medical certificate from a medical board before commencing the yatra. The LG himself visited the site after the tragedy and was dismayed by the track condition and subsequent dangers involved on the entire stretch of the yatra.

After last year's yatra mishap and the hardships faced every year, the LG Administration has decided to go for a proper road on the pattern of the Char Dham Yatra. NHDCIL has already made the plan, and if approved by the Govt, proper road connectivity will be ready within five years. It is a historic decision, and the LG Administration is making every effort to improve facilities for pilgrims to make their journey memorable. Two more Yatri Niwas are in progress at Baltal and Chanderkot, along with the office of the SASB at Pantha Chowk. The proposed road route is from Pahalgam via Panjarni and Sangam to Baltal. The only concern is the fragile environment and ecology of the region. All aspects have to be properly evaluated by experts with proper scientific data to back up the clearances, and the utmost precautions have to be taken not to bypass any norm to create a situation of mortification later on. The administration must also plan some prefabricated structures for lodging pilgrims instead of the tents provided now, as the place is too cold for a tent stay. With easily accessible road connectivity, more pilgrims will throng the cave, meaning more waste material to manage. Everything has to be taken care of and only after proper backup plans project can be started. Unlike the NH-44 condition, where NHDCIL hasn't been able to complete road widening even after ten years, the same experiment cannot be repeated at Shri Amarnath Ji Road. The intentions are clear; the need of the hour is to go forward with such a project, but only with the utmost precautions.

Srinagar tops in SSG

Ever since its launch in 2014, Swatch Bharat Mission has turned the outlook of many cities in the span of eight years. Open Defecation Free (ODF) has been achieved with persistent efforts and more plans are being devised to improve the conditions of not only towns but even rural India also. One such effort is survey and rankings under Swachh Sarvekshan Grameen (SSG). Number of parameters are taken into account like toilets, drain network, house to house waste collection, segregation of waste collected, solid waste management, upkeep of water bodies of the area and general cleanliness of the area among other things. The Srinagar District has topped the rankings this year among 156 districts of the country. It is indeed a big achievement keeping in view of the winter months when snow makes the drains and lanes cleaning an onerous task but the authorities and whole team of Srinagar District deserve much appreciation for the feat achieved. UNESCO has picked up Srinagar among 49 cities as part of the creative city network under the Crafts and Folk Arts category also and all these combined efforts by Srinagar Administration go a long way from tourists point of view. Srinagar has already achieved a record tourist footfall this year and LG Administration is trying its best to keep up the momentum of good work with innovative plans and applying best of technologies available. The top ranking to Srinagar is a morale booster for the other districts of the UT to perform and get due recognition. Srinagar District can lead the way by sharing the things done with other districts' authorities, a role model to be followed by other nineteen districts. The perceptions must change, Srinagar has done it and others have to perform now.

Col B S Nagial (Retd)

The misrule of Pakistan in Pakistan Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (POJK), which include Azad Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan, reached a flashpoint when the people wrote to Italian Senator Luigi Compagna in Inside over. (The Print, dated 03 Feb 2023). Latterly, Pakistan's economic meltdown has badly affected the region. Pakistan is disseminating about failed causes as millions of its people clamor for wheat and foodstuff and face the darkness due to power cuts. In POJK, the public wretchedness is no less than in many parts of Pakistan. Rather, it is more in this region.

Continuing with the historical rhetoric, 'Kashmir Solidarity' day was celebrated by Pakistan on 05 Feb 2023. Pakistan tried hard to sell fake news about Jammu and Kashmir, whereas the real story is being played on the streets more so in POJK. People of POJK are out on the streets and struggling for wheat flour, pulses, and power supply. Facing sharp rising inflation and unemployment, a vortex of misery and hopelessness as Pakistan itself has been spiraling down for the past several months.

Military leadership and political leadership are at each other's throats. Millions affected by floods and enormous food crises remain mute spectators to the failure of leadership at all levels. The absence of leadership at this desperate point in history is horrendous. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has travelled to more capitals and countries than most earlier leaders in the quest for funds. His other contemporaries have been rambling as climate change leaders.

On 16 Dec 2022, massive protests erupted in POJK. People are comparing these similarities between the conditions of then East Pakistan in 1971 and in Azad Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan now. Leaders make a clarion call for freedom from suppression and occupation of the Pakistan military and Punjabi establishment.

Nevertheless, the humiliation for the people of POJK increased manifold when their leader, so-called President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, flew out when angry mobs were on the streets. He left for a two-week visit to Turkey, the UK and Belgium. The exigency of such a tour

Protests in POJK

is not known to the public. The public anger has only heaped further in his absence.

However, this is not the first time their leaders have abandoned to run away from reality. People have been protesting for a long time against the imperiousness of the Pakistan military, which administers POJK as a colony. It is

nance and fear of a public uprising.

Pakistan's governance of POJK has been enigmatic in this area, which has significant strategic consequences. Some have alleged that Pakistan has refrained from granting legislative autonomy to POJK because of this strategic significance, fearing repercussions. The establish-

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alleged that there has been a massive scale of land seizing by the military authorities. Under the garb of CPEC, Pakistani and Chinese business houses, supported by their respective militaries, have been exploiting both the people and natural resources.

Also, in Gilgit Baltistan, people have been vexed against the local authorities and federal government for grabbing land openly by the military leaders. In Dec last year, Manawar saw a furious public protest at the confinement of young people for dissenting against the Pakistan military. The Pakistan military is allegedly grabbing public properties under numerous excuses in collusion with local politicians. The Pakistani military quickly fastened on the protesting people and branded them, terrorists.

It is learnt that the Pakistan military and political parties have also been converting the mountainous region into a sectarian centre. Clashes over petty matters are becoming common. People consider such sectarian conflicts are being fashioned to disguise the failure of the govern-

ment has brutally crushed political unrest in POJK in the past. On the other hand, this movement could acquire a violent shape due to continuing wretchedness and lack of hope for betterment.

Pakistani leadership must ask itself, whose side are they, their people or empty ideologies? Prevailing poverty and chaos will only increase the possibility for the youth to be indoctrinated into extremist ideologies, a danger to Pakistan's security and the world. In the meantime, Europe and the US are busy with the war in Ukraine, while tomorrow's security threats are born in today's economic desperation.

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There has been an enormous shift due to three

things. One the abolition of Article 370, the work that needed to be done to tell the world that the change has been good for the people of J&K, and it was a clear signal to Pakistan that these changes will change the geo-strategic realities as it will have to answer the questions about the territories of the erstwhile princely state of J&K under the illegal control of Pakistan.

Dreams of the people of J&K and Ladakh were fulfilled. There was a massive flow of tourists in J&K. Huge investment has been made in J&K to develop roads and infrastructure. Whereas the people in PoJK are reeling under poverty. They lack access to the basic amenities of life. They were suffering from political and economic suppression. They watched what was happening on the Indian side of the LoC, and now they are raising their voices to get similar treatment. However, the Pakistani Government is killing their voices and aspirations through military oppression.

Conclusion: Through naked aggression, Pakistan occupied a large portion of the erstwhile state of J&K, kept it under its illegal occupation despite UNSC resolutions, and named it 'Azad Kashmir'. Before the Maharaja of J&K could finally sign the accession on 26 Oct 1947 in India's favour, a tribal raid stage-managed by the Pakistan Army triggered immense impairment in terms of loss of lives and property in parts of J&K. Prefaced on close geographical proximity and a principally Muslim majority population in the erstwhile state of J&K per se, Pakistan, after independence, has been inexorably laying claim on the entire area of J&K, which is undoubtedly baseless. To fulfil its speculative claims, Pakistan's three conventional wars and culpable proxy war in J&K have drawn the territory into a flashpoint.

Pakistani leaders have claimed Jammu and Kashmir as central to their foreign policy. If we look at Pakistan's policy toward J&K closely, it indicates that it has been more of a political comfort for Pakistan since 1947. It was a smokescreen to cover up widespread inefficiencies and an intricate foreign policy mechanism to use state-sponsored terrorism in the quest for strategic depth.

Online Education Vs Traditional Education

Dr Rashpal Singh

Education means all round development of mind, soul and body. By means of education a human being becomes a knowledgeable person who can differentiate between right and wrong. From many years, education in both ways formal and informal is followed by mankind across the Universe. Even ancient man was educated and he discovered Fire and Operations of Wheels in Stone age and 4th Millennium respectively. Centuries changed over the period of time. Then Vedic System of education came into existence in c- 1500 to c- 500 BCE in late Bronze age and early Iron age. The Vedas brought biggest impact on Indian History of Education. Main aim of Vedic Education was to attain salvation through education. Vedic Education helped in observance in celibacy, control over senses and purity of life. Vedic Education System had followed Simple Living and High Thinking but modern System is reverse of it. Passed over the centuries system of Vedic Education transformed into modern System of Education in which American Educator Horace Mann (1796-1859) brought Unified School System with varied curriculum. In our country after Independence First Commission of Education was set up in the year 1948 know as University Education Commission by Dr Radhakrishnan which laid emphasis over that all the Educational Institutions will start their work with two minutes of silence prayers. Commission advocated for more professional courses like agriculture, commerce, engineering and law. The Study of Agriculture in Primary, Secondary and Higher level will boost the Economy of the Country. Then 1964-68 Khotari Commission was set up by Smt Indra Gandhi aiming over radical restructuring and provision of equal opportunities for all. Education Policy of 1968 Promoted Compulsory Education upto the age of 14. Thereafter again a Policy of Education in the year 1986 came and its main aim was to remove disparity between various social groups.

As suggested by Kothari commission uniform system of 10+2+3 was implemented Nation wide. NPE 1986 also emphasized over the opening of National level Institutions like UGC, NCERT, NIEPA, AICTE, ICAR, IMC etc. which would help the country in shaping up youth. The scheme of Navodaya Vidyalayas and Free Education for Girls Child was the highlights of the Policy. Again this Policy was reviewed in the year of 1992 in which a common minimum Programme was ex-

-19 was traced from Wuhan China and this dreadful virus spread across the globe like fire in forest. In India Virus of COVID -19 was traced from Kerala on January 27, 2020 and the same happened in the other countries. Fearing spread of Covid, Government of India imposed countrywide lockdown. While Covid hit other sectors, it also affected education.

Ministry of Education Government of India initiated the Process of E- Content via DIKSHA



cuted for taking admission in Professional and Technical Institutes and would be done through All India level Entrance Tests. Computer Education was also a great highlight of 1986-92 policy across the country. After a span of 34 Years NDA Government led by Narendra Modi brought a New Education Policy 2020 in the entire country. NEP 2020 promotes local language teachings upto Class 5 and choice of Vocational Education from Class 6th. Old Structure of 10+2+3 was replaced with 5+3+3+4. Base of Pre Primary and Primary Education has been elevated for building strong pyramids over it. Education Budget was enhanced to 6 percent of GDP by Union Government. On 31st December 2019 first case of COVID

learning App. NCERT New Delhi played a key role in the development of e Content while taking the services of SCERTs and DIETs across the country. Students from Class 1st to 12th Classes were benefited. Teachers across the country have used various online Platforms for reaching out to their respective students via WhatsApp, Zoom app, Google Meet, Webex etc. Many constraints were seen in the online education for want of digital devices with proper internet facility due to economic conditions. It's true that various online Platforms like TV Channels and Radio lessons were telecast by Doordarshan and Parsar Bharti in collaboration with NCERT New Delhi and SCERTs. But all these efforts might have brought visible

changes but Traditional Education System has its own strong value. No system can change the place of a teacher in a classroom. Although Online may be good system to education but at the same time students are spending much time over the Digital Devices and skills of reading and writing came down which might be a great concern of Digitization. There are number of benefits of Online Education but at the same time disadvantages have also been seen. Engagement and mood of the students can't be judged by the Instructor online mode. During online classes it was found that students have felt isolated type of environment and lack of Time Management with many distractions. Physical distance between students and teachers was also biggest factor in online platform.

Social division remained the biggest challenge during online education. In Online System of Education students can't be judged in extra curricular activities which is very important part of Traditional System of Education. Time Management is the biggest challenging factor in online Education. Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi during had valuable words on Pariksha Per Charcha held on 27/01/2023. While speaking on the occasion he said students face many problems due to mismanagement of time and thereafter a huge bunch of subjects come in the way and a bit confusion arises during the days of examinations. He also said students might learn time management from their mothers. Exactly it's true that Online System of Education may be the alternative but not the replacement of Traditional System of Education as it develops behaviourism, cognitivism and Constructivism. Traditional System of Education promotes peer learning with child's talent and Physical Skills which has been found absent in Online Education. Although Online Education across the country remained a great alternative of traditional system of Education during COVID period.

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Rights of Persons with Disabilities

M Ahmad

Finally, the Government of Jammu and Kashmir has framed the Jammu and Kashmir Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rules 2021, in order to ensure smooth implementation of Central Laws aimed at promoting and protecting the rights and dignity of people with disabilities in various aspects of life. In the Rules, every aspect relating to rights and entitlements, limited guardianship, education and employment of persons with disabilities has been taken care of and timeliness fixed so that they don't face any sort of difficult. In exercise of the powers conferred by Sub-Section 1 of Section 101 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, the Lieutenant Governor of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir has made the Rules notified on 15th March 2021 in order to ensure effective implementation of the Central Law and the same have been notified by the Social Welfare Department and the rules are now called as J&K Rights of PWDs Rules 2021. The highlights of the said rules are as under:

* As per the Rules, head of every establishment will ensure that provisions of the law are not misused to deny any right or benefit to persons with disabilities covered under the Act and initiate action on the receipt of complaint from an aggrieved person regarding discrimination on the ground of disability.

* If the aggrieved person submits a complaint to the Commission for Persons with Disabilities, the same shall be disposed of within a period of 30 days.

* Government shall frame a State Level committee for research on disability with members from Health, Education, Social Welfare and organisations working in the field of PWDs.

* Chief Judicial Magistrates, after satisfaction as per prevailing laws, is competent to grant limited guardianship to a PWDs.

* Moreover, every Government establishment will appoint an officer not below the rank of

Gazetted Officer as Grievance Redressal Officer to look into the grievances of persons with disabilities.

* A nodal officer will be designated in each Chief Education Office of the Department of School Education, every urban local body and in both the Directorates of Social Welfare within



three months to deal with all matters relating to admission of children with disabilities and the facilities to be provided to them in schools in accordance with the provisions of the Act

* Board of School Education will develop training courses and also facilitate training of teachers in basic Braille-sign language and special education within one year of the notification of the Rules and shall also take steps to develop syllabus and learning material in audio and visual for-

mate.

* As far as employment and vacancies for persons with benchmark disabilities are concerned, every establishment will publish equal opportunity policy for persons with disabilities within a period of six months from the notification of these Rules.

will indicate the number of vacancies reserved for each class of persons with benchmark disabilities in accordance with the provisions of the Act. The reservation for persons with disabilities in accordance with the provisions of the Act shall be horizontal and the vacancies for persons with benchmark disabilities will be maintained as a separate class.

* As far as accessibility is concerned, every establishment will comply with the standards relating to physical environment, transport and information and communication technology.

* Every establishment shall publish equal opportunity policy for the PWDs within a period of six months from the date of notification of these rules.

* Every establishment covered under sub rule 3 of rule 12, shall maintain all related record and shall provide the same to District Level Committee for PWDs for inspection and verification.

* No person with disability shall be considered to be a subject of research except when the research involves physical impact on his body.

* Government shall appoint Commissioner Disabilities for the redressal of the issues related to PWDs.

* The Government shall develop norms for the recognition of Special Schools run by the Government or private organisation.

* The Government of J&K shall frame various schemes to provide assistance to PWDs.

* Moreover, the Government will create Union Territory Fund for Persons with Disabilities for providing financial assistance in the areas which are not specifically covered under any scheme and programme of the Government of Jammu and Kashmir. Moreover, the fund will be utilized for such other purposes as may be decided by the governing body headed by Administrative Secretary of Department of Social Welfare.

(The views expressed by the authors are their personal)

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