

Efforts to improve School Education

During COVID-19 lockdowns, the worst sufferers were the students of Government schools, especially in rural areas where poor had no mobiles to attend online classes. This was not an ordinary situation, poor students who usually come to school for a midday meal were severely affected, not only by the loss of their studies but also by a one-time meal. The situation has improved dramatically since the last academic year, and now LG Administration is focusing on the education sector with innovative plans like "Aao School Chalein" and "Class Campaign" to get the students enrolled in school again. A 14.5 percent increase in enrolment is a testimony that the education sector of UT is moving in the right direction. To improve the education standards of rural schools also, new hard zones and soft zones are to be classified, and every teacher has to serve both zones for the benefit of students. This is one of the plans, but there are several new methods already employed to make studies interesting in an interactive way instead of just cramming. The New Education Policy (NEP 2020) is a sincere effort to make education in sync with market requirements and de-stress students. Efforts are underway to streamline the transfer policy to get staff out of their comfort zones. The attachments with the directorate office were routine, and the whole system was chaotic beyond comprehension. At many schools in rural areas, there used to be a cartel of staff; out of the sanctioned strength assigned, only a few were present by mutual agreement. Students suffered immensely. The information technology solutions of biometric and IRIS-based attendance were applied but were of no use.

The Education Department has now come up with an out-of-the-box solution: GPS-based attendance with a simple app-based attendance system that not only tracks attendance but also the teacher's geographical location, ensuring the presence of teachers in the school. The whole set of information is available in real-time to all concerned officers. Teachers have to apply for leave online now, and officers can sanction or reject such applications; no more fraudulent leave applications will be produced during inspections. In a matter of seconds, the entire system has been transformed by a single app. The Education Department has not stopped here; a feedback app for teachers' performance has also been developed. Students from the sixth grade onward will be rating their teachers based on set parameters. This will reveal the true performance of the teachers. Good performers will be rewarded, and non-performers will be taken care of by the department. When combined with the "hard zone" and "soft zone," these measures will go a long way towards improving the standard of education in schools. The Government is sincerely trying to improve school infrastructure, and all efforts are being put into bridging the gap between Government and private schools. The necessities of classrooms, toilets, drinking water and staff are being taken care of on a priority basis.

KU South Campus, missing Science Streams

Kashmir University is one of the most prestigious universities in India, and despite decades of trouble, it has managed to maintain high standards and academic excellence. Universities, unlike degree colleges, cannot be established in every district or city on such a large scale. Campuses had been opened to bring quality education to the doorsteps of deserving students, and one such effort was the South Campus of Kashmir University at Fatehgarh, Anantnag in 2008. Fourteen years and still counting, South Campus is unable to commence the basic sciences PG stream, which speaks about the sorry state of affairs. Despite full support from Gol and UGC, if the Campus cannot build the requisite infrastructure, recruit faculty, and get the requisite permissions, something is seriously wrong and needs to be thoroughly investigated. Things become even more serious given the climatic conditions, the shortage of hostels on the main campus, and the financial aspect involved for the students of South Kashmir, as well as the fact that in-demand courses like chemistry, biology, and physics are missing. The public and students have raised the issue many times in the past, getting assurances but seeing nothing on the ground. It leaves a big question mark on the functioning of the university and defeats the very purpose of its establishment in the first place. When universities in other parts of India are introducing more advanced streams of robotics and genetic engineering, why is this South Campus unable to introduce basic sciences? The matter is serious enough to get the attention of the highest authorities; an immediate inspection, the removal of any shortcomings, if any, an application for the requisite approval, and thereafter the commencement of classes are the calls of the hour. Students in one area of our university cannot be left to suffer because of the whims and fancies of a few academicians. This matter should be redressed in a time-bound manner now. Education is the right of youth, and all efforts must be made to ensure this.

Drug menace v/s Low alcohol beverages

Gopal Sharma

Drugs have cascading and devastating impact on the psyche of the youth on one hand and on the other hand, it benefits the country of its human resources which is the backbone of any country. Drug abuse is assuming frightening proportions in the restive Himalayan region because of our neighbours. There seems to be firmly entrenched corridor for illegally routing drugs from Pakistan to Kashmir, from there to the rest of India leading political observers to coin the term narco-terrorism.

According to national comprehensive survey conducted by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, there are more than 60 million drug users in the country of which a large number of users are in age group of 11-18 years. In view of youth falling prey to drug abuse, the Central Government in the month of September and October last started Pan India 'Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan' that was implemented in 272 districts and 32 states/UTs and was monitored at the highest level so as to ensure maximum engagement and its impact on youth of the nation. As per data, a total of 9,45,40,957 people were reached out during this campaign out of which 3,08, 80,645 were youth.

Today, the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is facing a very grim situation since there is neither a denial, nor acknowledgement of drug menace breathing around us. A recent report by the National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre in AIIMS revealed that over six lakh people in J&K are victims of drug abuse. Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences reported that 489 drug abuse were reported in the facility in J&K in 2016, 7420 in 2019, 3536 in 2020 (fall owing to covid-19) and 90% of this drug users are between the 17-33 age group.

In Jammu division, the areas like RS Pura, Rajouri, Poonch, Kathua etc and entire Kashmir division is infected with the drug addiction. Families of these addicts are the silent victims of this snow balling threat. Excise Department and other Departments like Police, NCB have witnessed numerous helpless parents calling out for help of their sons, daughters, husbands, fathers but unfortunately only few back home have been treated and

are healthy because many do not register themselves with de-addictions centres because of the stigma attached to it or leave the treatment half way, resulting in untimely and tragic deaths of youngsters.

The Police, Excise and Food & Drugs Departments have been doing regular awareness campaigns in collaboration with doctors, educational institutes etc especially, in rural areas and amongst youth through Nukkad Natak, radio advertisement, activity-based programmes with youth at universities, schools etc. Even religious institutions and social platforms were utilized in J&K to discuss the hazards of drug intake and addiction and the response of these campaigns has been satisfactory.



Though Government agencies and social and religious organizations have launched vigorous campaign against the menace of drugs but there is urgent need to motivate society, especially the youth, towards low alcoholic beverages and gradually containing the use of drugs and alcohol in the Indian society, thus, saving our coming generations from its ill effects. As mentioned earlier as per statistics the youth between the age of 17-33 are more vulnerable and are potential targets of drug peddlers. To overcome this situation, the Excise Department must encourage low alcoholic beverages like beer, RTD, wines etc as an alternative to youth who may fall prey to deadly intoxicating substances.

Moreover, low alcoholic beverages have far low alcohol content as compared to hard drinks and are therefore, a part of dietary habit in major part of the world. However, the most important thing remains that it is regulated and controlled by Government authorities thus ensuring that its standards and safety as compared to lethal drugs or dangers of consuming illicit liquor with no standards that unfortunately leads to incidents like Bihar hooch tragedy killing as many as 70 souls.

The easy availability of these dangerous drugs like Bhuki, 'Chitta' etc through drug peddlers make it difficult to protect the youth from their shackles. Furthermore, the availability of low alcoholic

drinks, tournaments, treks, frank and inhibition free communication with children allowing them to choose their paths, cautioning them about their life if they choose drugs over purpose driven goals.

Excise Department must also take initiatives to encourage use of low alcoholic beverages rather than hard drinks having harmful impact if not taken in moderate drinking habit. Now, the question arises what is the moderate drinking, it has been a convention that the moderate drinking is one drink/day for women and two drinks/day for men and one pint beer a day for a man would bring more benefits rather than harms. However, harmful/excessive drinking which is over and above moderate drinking must be discouraged to avoid any harmful impacts on the health of people, specially our young generation.

A Medical Journal quoting research in Europe recently suggests that beer has some health benefits, but one must not forget that it does contain some amount of alcohol. So, people dealing with certain health conditions should avoid beer. Do not consume beer if some one is pregnant or breastfeeding; suffering from gout, dealing with Insomnia; have liver-related complications and a stomach ulcer or resistance heartburn.

However, there are many benefits of moderate drinking of low alcohol beverages such as beer, cider and wines which are well documented and researched by scientists. Studies suggest that moderate beer drinking may make one less likely than those who don't drink to suffer from hearts attacks, strokes or heart disease. In fact, studies evaluating the relative benefits of wine versus beer versus spirits suggest that moderate consumption of any alcoholic beverage is associated with lower rates of cardiovascular disease (New England Journal of Medicine). According to Dr Cristobal Miranda of Deptt of Environmental and Molecular Toxicology, Oregon State University). Drinking beer could help reduce your risk of developing kidney stones. Beers that contain a lot of hops - for example, pale ales - are rich in kidney health-promoting phytochemicals (Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology). Beer is low in calories, low in carbohydrates and has no fat or cholesterol. It strengthens bones and reduces risk of Osteoporosis. It reduces stress, helps in improving memory and fights cancer cells.

Misinformation on Property Tax

Brig Anil Gupta

Even before the ink could dry on the Government Notification announcing the levy of Property Tax in the urban areas of Jammu & Kashmir (falling under Municipal Councils/Committees), social media was abuzz with comments with many naysayers even predicting the Dooms Day for the Bharatiya Janata Party. Many were competing with each other to build a new narrative to defame the Modi Government terming it as another gift of Naya Kashmir. Unfortunately, the keyboard activists didn't even bother to read the 16-page Notification issued by the Housing and Urban Development Department which is not only comprehensive but easy to comprehend. The formula given in the Schedule 1 appears to be lengthy and confusing at first sight but it isn't so. The many variables included in the formula are meant to ensure justice to all. The property tax which will be 5% of the Taxable Annual Value (TAV) for residential properties is probably the lowest among all other regions of the country. The TAV formula caters for the location of the property, type of construction, size of the property and the age of the property. The older the property, the lesser the number of floors, the lesser the built-up area, lesser the tax one has to pay.

The social media enthusiasts were quick to appeal to the sentiments of the people thus attempting to provoke them based on half-baked knowledge and imaginary facts. Many termed it as a burden on the already over-burdened employees and retirees. Surprisingly, among those making noises, many were the officers who had retired at very senior posts and probably had earned enough to build palatial houses in the posh localities. Many were scared as to how they would now justify their benami properties. The common

was sleeping peacefully unaware of what was happening. As far as the political parties were concerned there was only a single-point agenda of BJP bashing and were visibly happy that they have found another tool to hit the BJP. Some even did not spare the LG and his administration and questioned the validity of their authority to impose taxes, which according to them is the prerogative of the elected government only. These are the same political parties when in power never cared or planned to make the State self-reliant financially and remained dependent on the Central government for even paying salaries to its employees. These are the same politicians who kept employing people under different ill-planned schemes without budgetary provisions as these employments were over and above the approved establishment. The effect of which is being felt today when lakhs of casual labour employees are crying for regularisation. It is the same political set-up that had created an eco-system of systemised non-compliance of various Acts and statutes which were meant only for the Rule Books. The echoes of the same are being heard again today when some Kashmir-based leaders have made statements that we would not allow this Order to be implemented. Probably, they are living in the past least realising that they no more call the shots and the Administration is strong enough to ensure the implementation of its orders.

Why the opposition to the Property Tax is what is bothering me? Why misleading and factually incorrect information is being circulated that has the potential of not only misleading but also provoking the innocent public? The very concept of local self-government hinges on the principle of self-reliance. Starting from the Panchayat upwards, all are required to generate revenue for the development of the area under their jurisdiction. Do we not want development? How

long can we remain dependent on the doles from the Central Government? There are various avenues of resource generation and the levy of property taxes by the municipalities is a world-wide accepted norm. The tax collected by the ULBs will be ploughed back for the development and upgrading of essential services in the areas under their jurisdiction. The ultimate beneficiary is going to be the tax-payer only. Another ill-informed propaganda is that the rates are too high. Their assessment is not based on the facts but probably on the length of the formula. The following few examples of annual rates of property tax in various localities under JMC should set at rest the fear psychosis being created by the rumour-mongers. While calculating a few assumptions have been made. The property is a double-storey with RCC construction. 70% of the plot area has been assumed as a built-up area. The property is self-occupied for more than 6 months. The Land Value Factor (LVF) has been taken from the Notification issued by DC Jammu dated 31/12/2022 specifying the rates of the immovable property of Jammu District for the Calendar Year-2023.

(a) Gandhi Nagar. It is the costliest locality in Jammu. The Property Tax (PT) for a more than 60-year-old double-storey (DS) house over one Kanal is 5540 per year. PT for a DS house of the same age over 12 Marla is 2445. In other parts of Gandhi Nagar for houses which are 10-20 years younger, the PT will be 7458 for 1 Kanal and 2821 for 12 Marla.
(b) Trikuta Nagar/Channi Himmat. For 1 Kanal 30-40-year DS house PT is 6822. For 10 Marla, PT is 2419. For 7 Marla 20-30-year DS house, it is 1681.
(c) Shastri Nagar/ Sainik Colony/Nai Basti/Rehari Colony. 1 Kanal 20-30-year-old, PT is 6907. For 12 Marla, PT is 3047.
(d) Greater Kailash/Nanak Nagar/ Bhagwati Nagar/

Bakshi Nagar/Sidhra. PT for a 12 Marla DS house 20-30-year-old, PT is 2710. For 40-50 years old it is 2107, for a 10 Marla more than 60-year-old PT is just 1210 annually. For a 7 Marla, 50-60-year-old DS house, PT will be only 896.

From the above, it is evident that baseless rumours to misguide the public are being spread. Some self-styled well-wishers of the common men even went to the extent of linking the same with the revocation of Article 370, inferring that had 370 been in vogue, the tax could not have been levied. However, they conveniently ignored the fact that under the J&K Urban Immovable Properties Rule 1962, property tax was being paid by the citizens of J&K till as late as 1982. Unfortunately, the Congress at the Centre and NC in the state had joined hands to ruin the economy of the state. Taking advantage of the weak and appeasing policies of the Central Government an environment of non-compliance has been created in the State thus denying the national exchequer the various taxes needed to be paid. Not paying Taxes was part of the narrative of not paying anything to the Indian State. There was no accountability of funds received, and no record was maintained of their utilisation nor any contribution to the national exchequer. Though the times have changed, the mentality has yet not changed. Those who created the eco-system of non-compliance are still active with the same vicious propaganda and are busy misleading the gullible public on the issue of property tax, which the citizens pay the world over. The Administration has been very considerate and sympathetic while formulating the rules for Property Tax, Exemption of property up to 1000 sq ft is an example of the same.
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Agri Business-An Inclusive Management Approach

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India has travelled a long distance from the period of globalization to the present era of intensive market driven economic system based on segmented markets. These markets may seem to be unique but they are integrated; governed by geographical, climatic, cultural, economic, political and civilizational moorings. The inherent thrust in this approach is the achievement of the national resurgence. This premise has made a tremendous influence on internalizing the need for developing the infrastructure and superstructure for the business education.

Over the decades the policy of the Indian state in higher education was catalyzed by global requirements that had less thrust and focus on the Indian business and professional needs in terms of capacity building. It looked elsewhere to develop the human resource that created the business and management professionals from tax payer's money to serve the organizational and market requirements of the producers who were not Indian or had no sensitization of the Indian markets and producers. It can be best described as the colonial hang over or residual of transition from colonial market interests to the indigenous Indian market interests.

Time has come to redesign our policy framework on business management education at the University and College level to make it compatible with national goals making India resurgent when the world has recognized its worth for economic well-being as a sustainable model of human development amid vicious challenges like COVID pandemic and economic meltdown; when all non-Indian business management models crashed. It goes to the credit of Indian Business Management practitioners, entrepreneurs, market ideologues and researchers who have experimented with the models that keep India as the nucleus of their formulations by looking inwards and acting outwards for incisive development of the business ecosystem that values the Indian assets and posits India first as the prime objective.

It is in this context that we must see agriculture as the prime national mover shaping both the micro and macro-economic standards and leading the policy makers to translate this ground reality into policy imperative. Agriculture has made tremendous impact on socio-economic, socio-cultural, socio-

political and socio-religious paradigm of nation building on the basis of Indic civilizational foundations. Not only that it has given the sense of a nation to the masses and galvanized the national resources during the freedom struggle besides creating the impetus for the mainstream business model.

It is in the context of Agri Business that we can situate the national discourse and narrative that evolved during the freedom struggle and has led to the gradual national economic and business resurgence in the present era. It prompted the core nationalist ideologues like Swatantrya Veer Vinayak Dadodhar Savarkar, Sri Aurobindo, Lok Manya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay & Dattopant Thengadi to lay the foundation of Swadeshi and Swarajin terms of rural industries, cooperatives, ethnic village festivals, agro products with sustainable agricultural eco system. It ultimately led to the national churning of consciousness to identify rural eco system; not only as a rallying point of people for socio-political activism but to make people confident with conviction that Agri Business is the cardinal principle of self-reliant India. It created the brand India that led to the emergence of sustainable international brands like Khadi and AMUL to name a few based on Agri business as the success stories in production, marketing and branding.

It is in this context that there is an urgent need for the Business Education in terms of an MBA that caters to Indic economic and market imperatives. MBA (Agri Business) is the new paradigm that factors in all the market and economic challenges of the emerging global market trends that has put India at the cusp. India is the 5th largest economy holding the presidency of the G20 nations. It means that India has been recognized as the innovator and policy makers have to accept this leadership role with an inward focus on the business strengths. And that lies in Agri Business.

There is a reason behind this role as traditional non-Indian business models have either crashed or failed. Indispensability of India has been recognized and it must work on capacity building to be a market game changer. It is now a well-recognized fact that India is a business leader having a capacity of producer, developer and marketer of agricultural products that influences global supply chain besides the supply and demand needs of almost all consumers. Be it daily needs food products or life style products of the elites. Indian agriculture has reached anew

normal where it has crossed the production deficiency to embrace the production surplus, creating an opportunity for sustainable product diversification and innovative marketing. It include exploration of the new segments, targeting and positioning of the myriad agro based products. Besides identifying the new markets. The focus must be to shape the new curriculum in the Business Schools in Universities that must shape their research in national policy formulation in Agri Business Management.

It is an era that is demanding a paradigm shift from entrepreneurship to agripreneurship. The earlier it is accepted the best it is for the national economic and market health of India to lead the world. As the Chinese model is witnessing a repulsion in global markets due to its imperialist capitalist motives with hegemonistic thrust. That is nothing but neo imperialism meant to subvert the global business order by socio political and strategic subversion.

Jammu and Kashmir forms the bedrock of Agri Business imperatives as it is the frontline of biodiversity in the Himalayas enriching the agricultural resources that have created a niche world over. Himalayas define the civilizational and cultural ecosystem of India with its uniqueness having impact not only on the climate but the economic activities that are traditional in their origin. Farming prevalent in the Himalayan region has Vedic and pre Vedic roots that has not only developed the belief system rooted in the deities who have bearing on the diversity of the agricultural produce but are seen as the visionaries making food production and its utilization for welfare of all as the boon for making the life Divine.

Time has come to internalize this legacy in Agri Business curriculum to acknowledge the divinity inherent in agriculture and the various festivals and festivities that values farmers and Indic Agri Business imperatives in all market and business policies for integral paradigm in Agri Business Management (ABM).

As such the curriculum of MBA (Agri Business Management) has to be holistic that integrates the traditional management and market concepts with the Indic Agri Business opportunities having internalization of the market, economic, socio political and geo strategic challenges. Agriculture is not a mere production industry. It has cultural and civilizational undercurrents to uphold the national inter-

ests. Himalayas and the Himalayan states hold the key to Agri Business.

As such Jammu and Kashmir is the nucleus of Agri Business. SKUAST-Jammu has understood this national imperative and is successfully running the course of MBA (Agri Business Management) with a focus on the emerging challenges in agriculture, marketing and new business management. SKUAST Jammu has the expertise and wherewithal in terms of agricultural research, production, extension that has been recognized globally and farmers have benefited from the contribution of its scientists and academicians benchmark contributions. MBA (Agri Business Management) and PhD (Agri Business Management) has provided a new horizon to the Division of Agricultural Economics and Agri Business Management to contribute in terms of multi-disciplinary approach to lead the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and nation in giving a way forward to take Indian farmers from the phase of production and extension to sustainable Agri markets needs with a focus on proactive, inclusive and comprehensive marketing.

It is grooming the students and scholars in this new global order, where Agri Business is the Business of present and future for the sustainable national business development model. Division has gone beyond the traditional path of imparting professional education and gauged the sensitivity of the emerging markets and is nurturing the agripreneurship and startups with its Agri Incubation Centre under RTVVY-RAFTAAR project of Government of India. It supports two programs; UDGAM (Agripreneurship Orientation Programme) and PRAGATI (seed stage funding) with an objective of widening the canvas of Agri Business by involving non-agricultural innovators as well, besides those involved in agriculture. It is a comprehensive initiative to develop Agri Business capacity building by breaking the traditional barriers. Time has arrived for co-creation in Agri Business to involve the stakeholders of all hues. Ranging from policymakers, researchers, academicians and industrialist in utilizing Agri Business Management as the launch pad for Resurgent India in this Amrit Kaal of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsava.

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