

IWT- Time to rectify

Pakistan's disastrous foreign policy with India is a classic case study of how to tackle a rogue neighbouring country. Consistent denial and changing goal post are the official policies of Pakistan. Right from its inception it has been bleeding India one way or another; terrorism, narcotics smuggling, squabbling and every effort being made to put a spanner in the development of India. The latest is attempt to somehow stall Kishenganga and Ratle Hydro Electric Projects. The Indus Water Treaty is clearly in favour of Pakistan but still, India has been consistently honouring it, playing the role of a big brother despite being at loss. Signed in 1960, after long negotiations since independence, with World Bank as the third signatory in addition to India and Pakistan. There is a set procedure for the redressal of any concern and water commissions of both sides are meeting regularly as per the set clauses to sort out disputes and clear vague concerns. But Pakistan has breached the set procedures in the cases of the Kishenganga and Ratle projects. In case of any dispute first step is to sort it out mutually by Pakistan and India, if not resolved World Bank will intervene and try to resolve it, if still not resolved neutral observers can be appointed and if even they fail to break the impasse then Court of Arbitrary proceedings will be done. But in this case, Pakistan first refused to accept Indian clarifications, it asked the World bank to appoint neutral observers, withdrew that application and then asked for arbitration proceedings. World Bank has, for reasons better known to them, obliged Pakistan and both neutral observer and arbitrary proceedings have been initiated. Mockery of this wise decision is what to do in case both come out with contrary rulings. The IWT has been breached by Pakistan and India has rightly put Pakistan on ninety days' notice to respond. This is absolutely the right time to not only sort out this issue only but all the points of the treaty which are disadvantageous to India have to be amended. Sixty-two years of Indian experience with IWT is bitter with no locus stand of Pakistan, Islamabad is "intransigence" to comply with the dispute redressal mechanism of the pact. Experts and international panellists had pointed out many times the one-sidedness of IWT with no rationale. Instead of focusing on the internal problems of Pakistan its rulers find the best way to divert the attention of the masses is to be contemptuous towards India. Siloed on the international forum on the terrorism front, begging for aid, no foreign reserves to import even oil, no money to pay interests on international debt, on the verge of collapse, yet grumbling over nonexistent issues.

IWT is the most liberal water-sharing pact between the two countries in the world, instead of 50:50 Pakistan is getting 80% of the water of Indus, Jehlum, Chenab, Ravi Beas and Sutlej, giving lower riparian Pakistan four times the water available to India. From Jammu's point of view despite Chenab flowing through the entire Jammu Division yet water cannot be used for drinking or irrigation. Tawi has been overexploited and is now unable to meet the water-stressed needs of Jammu, plans to extract more groundwater and no plans to recharge are just backfiring, water table getting lower with every passing year. Jammu requires about 300 million litres of water but only 190 million are available, around 90 million lifted from the Tawi and the rest from underground via 300 tube wells. Asian Development Bank backed out of the one thousand crore Chenab Water Lift Project earlier citing IWT. The whole Kandi belt of Jammu is facing acute scarcity of water, land is there but no source of irrigation except rainwater. The time has come to rectify past misdeeds, Jammu and Kashmir has already suffered a lot. India has every right to utilise the water and hopefully, this notice to Pakistan will resolve the IWT issue in our favour this time.

KU Staff Quarters

Thirty-two years and still waiting for the completion of a dozen staff quarters, another rigmarole story of complacency and sheer neglect. Expansion and development with time are always the need of the hour but for Kashmir University staff it has been nightmarish for over three decades. Construction of a dozen flats started, till the brickwork of the first story it was smooth going but after that, it is the never-ending saga of official neglect, inter dispute between the university and contractor, has reached court and is pending since then. No VC or Registrar in all these years had tried to resolve the dispute and no other alternative plans to construct staff quarters have been put forth. Over a hundred teachers have been waiting for official accommodation and around two hundred more are likely to join as posts have been advertised. Where will all these staff members reside? Given the prevailing conditions and climatic considerations, residing on the campus is the safest way out but it seems, for university authorities, it doesn't matter. Can any outside Jammu and Kashmir UT faculty join KU as such? This is a serious enough matter for immediate concern and requires intervention from the highest authorities. More departments of the latest upcoming streams are being introduced from time to time and more faculty are going to be recruited, will one status quo order of court be a hindrance to KU expansion plans? LG Administration had already ordered all departments to take court matters seriously and resolve the issues at the earliest and in this case, also immediate legal remedial measures have to be taken. If these measures are not viable then alternative plans be put immediately. When Gol, UGC and LG Administration have provided ample grants to KU why no alternative has been chalked out? All this requires a thorough investigation to put the onus and accountability. Any staff member, if involved, in this episode must be exposed and punished as per the law.

Need for Transition from Agri-Culture to Agri-Business

Rakesh Magotra

India has traditionally been a predominantly agrarian economy. But today, it is a contradiction in itself. On one hand, it employs nearly half of the workforce in the country. On the other, it contributes only around 17-18 per cent of the GDP. Over the past few decades, the manufacturing and services sectors have increasingly contributed to the growth of the economy, while the agriculture sector's contribution has decreased from more than 50 per cent of GDP in the 1950s to just over 17 per cent in recent years. To put this into perspective, around half the workforce of the country toil every day in their fields, and at the end of the year have little to show for it - precisely around five times less value compared to the other half of the workforce.

This data clearly indicates that India needs a tectonic shift in the way it looks at its agriculture sector. If India has to graduate as an Economic Superpower, it cannot afford half its workforce generating value several times lower than its true potential. The question is how can productivity in the agriculture sector be improved? To put it simply, it needs to make a transition from traditional agricultural practices, that focuses solely on the crop cycles, to agribusiness, which includes not only production, but also other activities like food processing, packaging, market linkages, and even directly delivering food products to consumers. The major bottleneck to the transition used to be the distance and remoteness of the rural areas making it difficult for farmers to connect to the market but the situation has changed substantially in the recent years with the advent and diffusion of information and communication technology (ICT).

Indian Agriculture Facing a Crisis

The Indian farming sector is facing a number of

challenges, some of which have led to a crisis in recent years. Not only Indian farmers have traditionally had low productivity levels compared to their counterparts in other countries, they also have lower profit margins, often selling their produce at prices lower than the production cost. This is due to a combination of factors such as lack of access to modern technology, poor infrastructure, high input costs, and lack of access to markets.

The severity of the crisis in the agriculture sector could be understood from the fact that many farmers are pushed to the wall and commit suicide due to financial burden they face resulting from a play of above-mentioned factors.

Agribusiness -Need of the Hour

Agribusiness, involves the integration of agriculture with industry and commerce, to enable farmers to increase their productivity, profits, and competitiveness. By adopting modern technology and practices, farmers can increase crop yields and reduce costs. Diversifying income streams by growing high-value crops such as fruits and vegetables, which can fetch better prices on the market, is also an important aspect of agribusiness.

One major reason why farmers in India need to move to agribusiness is to improve their access to markets. Traditional agriculture in India is often characterized by poor marketing and distribution systems, which makes it difficult for farmers to sell their produce at a fair price. Agribusiness, on the other hand, is characterized by better marketing and distribution systems, which allows farmers to sell their produce at a fair price and get a better return on their investment.

Investment in infrastructure is also crucial for the success of agribusiness. Cold storage facilities, processing units, and packaging facilities can help farmers to preserve their produce and

add value to it, making it more attractive to buyers. Developing value chains and working with intermediaries such as traders and processors can also help farmers to ensure that they are getting fair prices for their produce.

Agribusiness can also help create employment opportunities in rural areas. Rural India is plagued with a lack of employment opportunities, which leads to migration to urban areas in search of work. Agribusiness can help bridge the gap by creating employment opportunities through the creation of processing, packaging, and distribution facilities. This can help to stem the tide of migration from rural to urban areas as well and promote rural development.

Challenges

There are also some challenges that must be addressed in order to make the transition from traditional agriculture to agribusiness. One of the main challenges is the lack of access to credit and other financial services, which makes it difficult for farmers to invest in agribusiness activities. Another challenge is the lack of access to information and training. Government and Financial institutions need to work together not only to provide farmers with access to credit and other financial services, but also impart practical training to ensure they can successfully implement profitable models and turn their livelihood to successful businesses. Promoting Microfinance institutions can also provide access to small loans to farmers at a lower interest rate than traditional usuries channels. This can help farmers to access the capital they need for agribusiness ventures, even if they do not have traditional collateral.

Farmer cooperatives can also help farmers to access credit by pooling resources and using the collective bargaining power to negotiate better loan terms. In some cases, the Government can

provide subsidies to farmers to help them access credit. This can include direct subsidies for interest payments or indirect subsidies such as tax breaks.

In conclusion, the transition from traditional agriculture to agribusiness is inevitable and necessary for the survival of India's farming sector. The Indian agriculture sector is at a crossroads. Despite being a vital part of the country's economy, providing livelihoods for millions of farmers and feeding the nation's rapidly growing population, the sector is facing a number of challenges. As India's population continues to grow and the country's economy continues to develop, the demand for food will only increase. It's time for India's farmers to take the necessary steps to meet this demand by transitioning to agribusiness.

I am tempted to quote Henry David Thoreau who once remarked "I have great faith in a seed. Convince me that you have a seed there, and I am prepared to expect wonders" The current government has initiated the right steps and made the right kind of noises which seem to be lost in the cacophony of current dichotomous discourse and lack of understanding on a broader scale. However seeds are being sown silently by a bevy of startups in the Agribusiness/ AgriTech space who are leveraging the ICT to bridge the gap between agriculture and business by showing the way forward. I reiterate, the shift to agribusiness from agriculture is inevitable, but with the right diffusion of policy on the ground and promoting startups in agriculture domain by liberal incentives in the ensuing budget, government can help the sector to exponentially improve productivity, profits, and competitiveness, even in the face of challenges such as the credit gap.

(The author is a Deputy General Manager in JK Bank)

BJP in election mode

Dr Satya Dev Gupta

In the recent past BJP (Bhartiya Janata Party) organized a mini-conference, (executive body meeting) on 16th and 17th January 2023 just before the declaration of election in 3 North East states Tripura, Meghalaya and Nagaland. In 2023 Assembly elections of 9 states are in store which is destined to a great extent to carve out the shape of future Lok Sabha formation and further to brace up for winning all the state assembly elections in 2023 and then carry on the same torch (Mashal) to reckon in parliamentary elections in 2024 with flying colour. The difference between BJP and other political parties can be compared with the preparation of examination, where BJP always remains in election mode and other political parties are tuned in a fashion to perform their election activities in the last few months and preparatory holidays.

Context of Meeting

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has directed the executive body for working hard and approach all the people irrespective to a fact, whether some groups of society vote for BJP or not. He advised the workers to contact all those sections of the Indian public who even hate the party ideology. It doesn't mean only to meet Muslims or "Pasmunda Muslims", Christians, and other minorities but to make in-roads and links with Yadavas and Jatavas, who form a majority of OBC and SC, in the plains of Ganges and Yamuna. The regional parties have their traditional voter chunk in the society of Jatavas and Yadavas, on whom BJP is eyeing for transformation by a two-pronged policy (1) by discrediting the political image of leaders who traditionally

exploit these communities as their vote bank, (2) influencing the voters by projecting and highlighting the achievements of BJP rule. The incremental advantage of such voters could compensate for the deficit caused by Muslims, who rarely fall in line with BJP. Prime Minister Modi wants to influence these groups by sending a message through the beneficial schemes which

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are being enjoyed by them and telling them that this political party doesn't differentiate between the people of different strata with a catchphrase, "Sab Ka Sath, Sab Ka Vikas, Sab Ka Vishwas". Further, it wants to impress that their alignment with opponent regional parties wouldn't be profitable for them in reality.

Gujrat Election Model

Landslide, ever best and record-breaking victory of the BJP in Gujarat was analyzed critically. The reforms and strategy to neutralize the anti-incumbency factor of the period of more than 27 years are to be adapted in future prospects. Before the election in Gujarat, Chief Minister and many other old cabinet members were replaced. A large number of new and young candidates were enlisted to fetch a mandate from the public in the coming election. This strategy of "Continuing Positive Change" brought fruit.

Many assembly segments which were traditionally forts of opponents fell into the BJP lap. Henceforth it was decided that continuing positive change policy shall be adopted in 9 state assemblies and later carried to the 2024 Parliamentary elections.

The 2-day executive meeting was opened to media notice, although not highlighted in main

Manipur in 2013 and attained power in 2018, which reflects the efficiency of well-oiled machinery with an optimized horsepower of this political party although Himachal Pradesh results had a dent on overall countrywide glorious performance.

Encouragement of Workers

In the concluding speech prime Minister, Narendra Modi appreciated the quality of leadership, courage, organizing capability and dedication of Bandi Sanjay Kumar, president of the Telangana unit of BJP which he displayed in a campaign against Telangana Chief Minister.

Prime Minister also glorified the courageous efforts of West Bengal state president Sukanta Majumdar. After the Assembly elections in West Bengal Chief Minister Mamta Banerjee terrorised political opponents and where BJP top leadership was ineffective in countering the series of atrocities laid by Mamta. Many state leaders of Bengal left the party for their personal and family safety. Now for the coming Parliamentary elections in 2024 the native party leaders under the command of honest, brave fearless, valiant and dedicated to party ideology Sukanta Majumdar, started to fight against Mamta's onslaught.

All the essence that came out after massive churning of two days of executive meetings principally based on (1) Continuing Positive Change with the induction of energetic workers from the younger generation (2) No compromise on good governance (3) Approach all the strata and sects of public irrespective of the fact whether they are inclined to BJP or not.

(The author is Ex HOD, ICU & Anesthesia GMC Jammu)

Why to boycott Bollywood

Dr. Pradeep Kumar Singh

Indians have a great attachment to the filmdom. A few decades ago, villagers used to go to city for family outings with watching movies as the main attraction. Farmers would go to market to sell fruits and vegetables, and many of them would come back after watching the cinema. Many students in educational institutions used to skip their studies to watch movies. Such unlimited attraction towards cinema in the name of entertainment cannot be considered fair.

The education level in the country has improved a lot in past few decades. With the electrification of villages, television and other means of entertainment have also become available. In cities also, the reach of television and other means of entertainment have got expanded. Electrification, television, internet, computers and smart-mobile phones etc. have eliminated the difference between the city and the village. These modern resources are also playing an important role in disseminating information and increasing awareness. In addition, the social media platforms have also given an opportunity to express the views.

Hindi-cinema audience has been giving a lot of respect to the Bollywood celebrities considering them as the ideals. Attracted by their idealistic acting, the youth have been seen practicing to be and behave like them. For a few

decades, many films and episodic shows are observed to have been stuffed with the cruelty, obscenity, indecent dialogues and indecent body exposure by actresses, etc. to take maximum advantage of this attraction in the society. The same has happened in advertisements too. Also, the society is being imparted (direct-to-home) training to humiliate the family members and the respected near and dear ones by making fun of them, in the name of comedy. Protests by a section of society fall on deaf ears saying it is the demand of the story, or it is the choice of the audience. A few arrogant stars even challenge the society that watching the show is their choice, they are not forced. Sometimes those who protest or criticize the shows are insulted by calling them contractors of the society and culture.

As the information about Bollywood celebrities is disseminating through the media, the attraction towards them in the society is diminishing. After the death of the actor Sushant Singh Rajput in June-2020, the statements made by film stars, and revelations from media-trials and police-investigation made the society understand that all that glitters in Bollywood is not gold. A large section of these celebrities suffer from all those evils which are generally detested by the society. Favoritism, unethical conduct, corruption, drug abuse etc. evils have become the identity of many of them.

A large section of the Bollywood

has been observed against the nationalism and the Hindu culture in real life as well. Several stars have often been observed to remain silent on topics like love jihad, dog slaughter, forced conversion and brutal killing of Hindus, etc. But they become secular and make statements in favour of other community, even on rumors without authentic information. Some make derogatory remarks on the Indian Army from time to time, while a few challenge the nation's identity by naming their children after the brutal invaders and cruel rulers. Some openly support the anti-national activities. Their behaviour and rhetoric at the time of anti-CAA (Citizenship Amendment Act) movement cannot be forgotten.

Over the past few decades, a new promotional model has evolved in the Bollywood. Under this model, controversies are provoked at a wide scale in the society by putting controversial content in films, dramas and advertisements so as to ignite eagerness to watch the show, and that the advertisement occupies the mind for a long time. This promotional model has often been successful too. The glorification of criminals, humiliation of Hindu faith, distortion of history, etc. have been a part of this tool-kit. Till now dozens of films have been reported to be controversial. A few episodic shows and advertisements can also be considered in this category. The censor board seems to be helpless in this

regard.

Not only Bollywood, some other film-celebrities also keep on hurting the country's cultural heritage and Indian identity in the name of creative freedom or freedom of expression. In July-2022, film-maker Leena-Manimekalai released the poster of a documentary film Kali, in which Maa Kali was shown smoking a cigarette and holding the 7-colour flag of the LGBT community. Not only this, she also tweeted a picture of the artists playing Lord Shankar and Maa Parvati, in which they are seen smoking. However, the legal action against the film-maker is still awaited despite of the multiple FIRs filed in different states.

The controversial issues generally lead to free publicity, but even after deliberately hurting the sentiments of the society, often the hands of the law seem to be falling short for a strict action against the filmmakers, actors and comedians. It seems that the constitutional limitations on Freedom of Expression have become ineffective, and that these have been divided on communal basis. Now social awareness is emerging, the tool-kit of controversial content based propaganda model is also being understood. Now the only option left with the society to curb the tyranny of the Bollywood, is to boycott it on social media. After all, it is the responsibility of the society to bring the derailed film-industry back

to track. The youth community participating in the Boycott Bollywood campaign is fulfilling its responsibility.

Here it is important to understand that in a democratic election, both the manifesto of the political parties and the character of the candidate are important for the voter. Similarly, in the field of acting, both the content of the story and the character of the actors are important for the audience. The content should be of national interest and the conduct of the actors should be exemplary. Although there are gentle and patriot cine-stars too in the film-industry, yet they have to come out to take lead from the front and dissociate from others.

Now-a-days many cine-stars are trying to join the ruling party BJP for success of their films, and some are openly seeking the support. However, it is better to take the boycott campaign positively as an opportunity to make correction, introspect and make reforms to honour the sentiments of the society with a focus on national welfare. They should make efforts towards making the nation a super power by evolving the film-industry as the soft power of the country. This is the principle of survival of the fittest.

(The author is Professor & former Dean (Research & Consultancy) Sant Longowal Institute of Engineering & Technology, Longowal)

Child Labour

Sir,
Nearly 30 percent of population in poor countries are not even able to earn enough for one day food. Parents of these children are mainly illiterate or semi literate and are unable to find jobs, which can provide their two square meal.

Simply by opening schools and providing books are not sufficient measures. We need to understand the reason behind child labour that is poverty and unemployment. Minimizing poverty and creation of more and more suitable jobs to parent are the only solution of eradication of child labour problem. No parent wants his children work at the age when children are to study and play.

Sanjay Dhar,
Laxmi Nagar, Sarwal, Jammu

System of child labour prevails in the countries, which are poor or under developed. Nearly 70 percent of world's poor live in Asia alone and major contribution is made by countries like China, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Afghanistan and Bangladesh.

In India alone around 45 percent of total population of one billion is illiterate/semi literate who is not able to find jobs in modern industries. 36 percent of total population of India is illiterate. Main traditional crafts manufacturing has almost collapsed due to lack of demand in international market. It has also aggravated unemployment crisis.

BJY may benefit Rahul

Sir,
As far as the benefits that may come to Rahul Gandhi and Congress party of out Bharat Jodo Yatra are concerned it may be said that Rahul Gandhi has emerged as a leader who is prepared to do hard work for the people, as a very sensitive person, very open - minded, moderate, submissive and down-to-earth as against his previous image of an arrogant, cynical, dominant and brigid person. This move has changed his image altogether and now he is being widely accepted and welcomed as a competent, dedicated and seasoned leader of national stature and this indeed is an achievement for Rahul Gandhi and the Congress party too. This movement has been able to prove that

Rahul Gandhi has come out of his comfort zone, he has accepted his weaknesses and shortcomings of the party itself. He has understood that a lot of efforts are required to be done for the party to again come into the front line as before and this realization would certainly help the party in future. It must be agreed that the claims of all other persons to occupy the position of national leader of opposition has almost collapsed and Rahul Gandhi is now undoubtedly a nation-wide accepted leader of opposition of our country.

This is, in fact, a great achievement of Rahul Gandhi and Congress party too.

Khuswant Malveeya
on e-mail

(The views expressed by the authors are their personal)

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