

Aspirations of Jammu region

Col B S Nagial (Retd)

5G in Jammu and Kashmir

The Gol has a distinct vision of the future of India, which it has outlined in India's National Digital Communications Policy 2018. Come October 2022, 5G was launched in select cities in India, and at the same time, the LG Administration of Jammu and Kashmir formed a high-level task force to coordinate the 5G rollout in our UT at short notice. This futuristic vision got a further impetus as India got the Presidency of the G20, and Jammu and Kashmir will also hold a series of meetings of global representatives. A proactive approach has paid off, as 5G has now been rolled out in J&K as well. It is a significant achievement keeping in mind the fact that Jammu and Kashmir was one of the last states to launch a mobile network in 2003 due to prevailing security concerns at that time. 5G is the fourth industrial revolution's enabler; it combines the power of cloud computing, big data, artificial intelligence, edge computing, automation, and the Internet of Things, and as such provides a huge opportunity for young entrepreneurs to venture out and create new setups, making Jammu and Kashmir a dream destination for investment. With a footfall of 1.5 crore tourists to Jammu and Kashmir, the 5G network will usher in a different experience if our tourism department can capitalise on this huge technological leap. Virtual tours on tourism websites, apps for onsite experiences, and the creation of HD content for tourist sites will give tourists a peek when making decisions for future tours. The local administration has been focusing on the development of infrastructure at various tourist places, especially in Kashmir, and this high-speed network with the least amount of latency and buffering will be a real game changer. The establishment of international call centres should be explored, as services are a big industry with great scope. Mission critical communications, including video calling, which requires high-speed internet, will get a major boost with 5G. With a latency rate of less than 1 millisecond and a speed of 20 Gbps, it will enhance download speed. It will be really helpful for students, and data can be parsed in no time now, giving a major boost to the health sector also in the shape of telemedicine, which in turn will be a boon for far-flung areas. It has opened a huge scope of employment in the field of IT. With 400+ government services in online mode, this 5G launch will be a game changer for providing services to far-flung areas. With so much scope for everyone due to 5G, it is time for all departments to chalk out a strategy to make maximum use of technology on every front. The LG administration has given us a dream, and the onus is on the departments to make it a reality. It is a competitive world, and the administration has to ensure departments take initiatives right now to outsmart others and give a major boost to Jammu and Kashmir's economy. One major stumbling block and most irritating factor for tourists is the non-functional prepaid SIMs of other states in Jammu and Kashmir. The time has come to say goodbye to this as well. It is a major shock for tourists who are unaware of this fact and feel helpless upon entering Lakhanpur with their phones having become defunct. Many online services, such as digital payments, are mobile number-specific, causing tourists unexpected problems. Gol must remove this roadblock now. It's time to enjoy the latest technology with no ifs or buts and showcase Jammu and Kashmir to the world.

When the Instrument of Accession was signed between the Maharaja Hari Singh of the erstwhile princely state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and the Union of India on 26 Oct 1947, then the state became an integral part of India. Sheikh Abdullah, who had launched a political movement in Kashmir Valley against the Maharaja of J&K, was bestowed with political powers to run the state. Sheikh Abdullah, the front runner of Jawahar Lal Nehru, was against Maharaja, but his political outfit-Muslim Conference was pro-Maharaja. The old bitterness between the Dogras and Kashmiris resurfaced after the dramatic reversal of their roles when the Dogras rule ended after ruling for almost one century in 1947.

The reluctance of Maharaja Hari Singh to accede to either India or Pakistan before 14 Aug 1947 and acceptance by Jawahar Lal Nehru to hold a plebiscite due to personal affection for Sheikh Abdullah made the problems of J&K more complicated. Why such decisions were taken is a matter of further inquiry.

Thus the word plebiscite became a catchphrase and landed as a trump card in the hands of Sheikh Abdullah. At the same time, the person responsible for winning the plebiscite for India sadly used it for his selfish motives. He even accused Maharaja Hari Singh of the massacre of Muslims in the Jammu region in the wake of partition. He even told Jawaharlal Nehru that it was difficult to win the plebiscite due to the presence of Maharaja Hari Singh.

Sheikh Abdullah rode the crest of a widespread wave with the full backing of Jawahar Lal Nehru and worked against the interests of the people of the Jammu region and the Dogras. Jawahar Lal Nehru once remarked that no satisfactory way could be found in Jammu and Kashmir except through Sheikh Abdullah.

The transformation of Kashmir-centric poli-

tics into crookedness and swindling was played against the interests of Jammu. In every basic principle, insecurity and inconsistency were interwoven. Most Kashmiri politicians were adept at speaking with two voices: one for Kashmir and the other for Jammu.

The first and foremost action against the people of the Jammu region was the expulsion of Maharaja Hari Singh from the erstwhile state of J&K even after signing the instrument of accession. This sharply contrasted with Nizam of Hyderabad, who continued to stay in his state even after defying the new Indian republic. People of the Jammu region felt very bad about this decision. Sheikh Abdullah made much drama of abolishing the monarchy from J&K. He launched a crusade against the Dogras of Jammu, which is continued even today.

The Congress and other Central Governments colluded with regional Kashmiri political leadership to safeguard the so-called national interests. However, they neglected the people of Jammu. Instead of challenging the negative influence of Kashmiri leaders' separatist and communal ideology on the state polity, especially in Jammu, they dangerously respected it. This resulted in widespread inequalities between Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh regions. National interests also suffered in the bargain.

Jammu region was allocated 37 assembly seats, whereas Kashmir got 46 out of a total of 87 contestable seats. After the delimitation report 2022, the total number of seats has been increased to 114, including 24 under Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (POJK); now, Jammu has 43 seats, and Kashmir has 47. Through Roshni Act 2001, it was proposed to take possession of land 4.44 lakh kanals in Kashmir and 16.02 lakh kanals in Jammu. The demographic and security threat of illegal Rohingyas and Bangladeshis in Jammu has reached a boiling point. Locals allege a well-funded and politically-backed conspiracy to se-

tle them across the province and trigger Hindu migration, as already reported from some villages. This is another serious issue engineered to change the demographic pattern of the Jammu region.

It was a historical accident that different ethnic groups were brought under the Dogra rule in 1846. There are geographical, language, ethnic, religious, and cultural differences among Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. The common dominion to control them was the autocratic authority of Maharaja. At the time of independence, a wise and farsighted political leadership could have blunted the rough edges of ethnic differences and laid a road map for the inclusive growth of all state regions. But sadly, this didn't happen. Conversely, under the peculiar brand of democracy dominated by the majority in J&K resulted in religious and regional tensions. After 1947, the people of Jammu felt aggrieved, and their legitimate rights and interests were sacrificed for the sake of the Kashmir region.

Since there were frequent agitations in the Jammu region, in 1967, the Government of J&K appointed the Gajenderagadkar commission to look into the matter and suggest remedial measures. The Commission examined the regional disparities in detail and recommended various measures to solve the problems. It advised to set up Satutory State Development Board and Satutory Regional Boards for Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. The Commission also observed that Jammu and Ladakh were the victims of political neglect. Most of these recommendations were either not implemented or half-heartedly implemented by the Kashmiri political leadership dominated by the majority of the state. In 1978, regional resentments erupted in Jammu, Poonch and Rajouri. On 26 Dec 1978, an All-Party Jammu Action Committee was formed, which launched the agitation for over three months. Again the govt of J&K set up a commission under the Chairmanship of Justice S. M. Sikri in

1978 and gave its report in 1980, but it met a similar fate-no action was taken.

After 27 Oct 1947, a strong feeling grew over the Jammu region that political domination of J&K by Kashmir Valley-based political leadership instituted grave injustices to the people of the Jammu region. It is believed that Central political leadership have taken decisions to appease Kashmiri leaders at the cost of the people of Jammu.

On 05 Aug 2019, the Govt of India repealed Articles 370 and 35-A of the Indian Constitution. Allegedly, they were the root causes of separatism, alienation and regional disparities. The people of Jammu rejoiced. But Kashmiri political leadership felt the heat of it. They got together and signed the 'Gupkar Declaration', a political movement by parties like the National Conference, Indian National Congress, Peoples Democratic Party, Communist Party of India (M), Jammu and Kashmir People's Conference and Awami National Conference. They all resolved to reinstate the draconian Articles 370 and 35-A.

The ideology of Kashmiri political leadership, dominated by the majority of the J&K, created a mess and worked wholeheartedly against the interests of the people of Jammu. Various initiatives taken by the Government of J&K and the Central Government, including the bulldozer on the illegal holding of land, have irked the self-centric politicians. They have all spoken in one language that if they come to power, they will redo all the actions of the BJP, including reinstating Articles 370 & 35-A.

Indeed, meaningful actions have been taken by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to improve the current situation in Jammu and Kashmir, including ameliorating disparities faced by the people of Jammu. However, there is a need to undertake more drastic steps to bring visible change. The aspirations of the people of Jammu can't be ignored anymore.

Dr Navneet Gupta

World Hearing Day is a campaign held each year by Office of Prevention of Blindness and Deafness of the WHO. Activities take place across the globe and an event is hosted at the World Health Organization on March 3. The campaign's objectives are to share information and promote actions towards the prevention of hearing loss and improved hearing care. The first event was held in 2007. Before 2016 it was known as International Ear Care Day. Each year, the WHO selects a theme, develops educational materials, and makes these freely available in several languages. It also coordinates and reports on events around the globe. Individuals and communities involved in hearing care are encouraged to organize activities to raise awareness about the importance of ear and hearing care and encourage them to seek services.

Aim is to highlight the importance of safe listening and maintaining good hearing. The main motive is to integrate ear and hearing care within primary care, as an essential component of universal health coverage.

Hearing loss is the most common sensory deficit in humans today. As per WHO estimates, there are approximately 63 million people in India suffering from significant

Auditory Impairment (6.3% of the Indian population. It's estimated that, by 2050, approximate-

Ear and hearing care for all!

ly 900 million people worldwide (or, one in every 10) will have disabling hearing loss. The number continues to grow annually.

is how we can recognize and understand many sounds like speech, music and noise.

It is hereby suggested that New born Hearing



Hearing is an important human sense for communicating and connecting with others. Our ears pick up the sounds around us, translate them into nerve signals and transmit them to the brain. This

of ear and hearing care into PHC.

Encourage governments to integrate primary ear and hearing care into training programmes for health care providers at primary level.

Dr. D K Giri

In the current series of articles on India's G-20 presidency, in the run up to the summit later in September this year, we talk today about building partnership between the institutions of state, market and civil society in any country. This is strategically essential for two reasons. One, all the institutions, formal and informal, are encompassed by these three sectors in countries across the world. Second, development, which is a top priority for any country, has always involved the interaction of state, market and society, often in antagonistic terms. Since any of this triad cannot be marginalised, what is instead needed is a synergistic partnership between these three actors. India should initiate this partnership during her presidency of the most powerful bloc of G-20.

Before we emphasise on the roles played by state, market and civil society in the growth and development of a country, and advocate a partnership among them, let us understand their respective relevance and significance. Also, it is in order that we trace the history of their involvement in the development of a country in relation to the very concept and its actualisation. Various scholars have interpreted the roles of these three agencies in different contexts. The legendary development economist EF Schumacher, way back in 1970s, named ABC of development which meant A- Administrators, B-Business, C-Communicators. In today's parlance,

India's G-20 Presidency

Promoting tresector partnership

ABC corresponds to state, market and civil society.

The partnership experts draw on the respective strengths of these sectors. The state has the power and authority to, mediate, monitor, and manage the other two sectors. It provides the legislative mandate for their work. Market produces goods and services as well as domain expertise. The civil society manifests in various organisational forms like NGOs, campaign organisations, community conclaves, social movements and broadly speaking, represents any space left out by both business and the state. It is supposed to be the watchdog of constitutional, social and political values. The symbiotic relationship between the three sectors is established as the state empowers the civil society, facilitates business, while business produces goods, services, expertise and wealth, the civil society becomes the consumer for the business and citizen for the state. At the same time, civil society provides the checks on 'autocracy of the state' and 'rapacity of businesses'.

On the historical growth and influence of the triad on the development of a country, the last 50 years has witnessed several eras of development in which state, market and civil society actors have been attrib-

uted different roles. Very broadly, the period of 1960s and 1970s was one of state-led development, which, in other words, called a 'state developmentalism'. The development ideas and practices focused on supporting post-independence governance through planning, modernisation and technology transfer towards achieving economic growth and a good society based on a stable and modern state. This was also called the Mainstream Perspective on Development (MPD), used to measure development in terms of growth in per capita income or GNP. However, MPD gradually saw development in terms of quality of life designated as Human Development Index (HDI) which takes into account basic needs of entire population particularly the poor.

The 1981-2000 period saw a relative retreat of the state in dominant development discourse and practice. The publication of the World Bank report on accelerating development in Sub-Saharan Africa and the so-called Washington consensus brought an era of market liberalism, economic reform and structural adjustment which was called LPG in globalised economy. LPG stood for Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation. India also followed that

model since 1990s. Although country contexts defer, the process of restructuring spread across the world in which states were rolled back and repositioned in favour of market mechanism in the delivery of goods and services.

However, the distortions in this framework soon emerged undermining the non-marketable dimensions of human worth, activities and progress and the restriction of service access to those who could pay. Consequently, human and social development, schemes for reduction of poverty and rising inequalities were undermined. In order to correct the distortions, various non-state actors from civil society emerged in the development scene. The rise of civil society engagement in the development process brought an Alternative Perspective on Development (ADP) which advocated participatory, people-centred and environmentally-sustainable development. There was an added priority by the donors of good governance. Donor engagement with civil society continued into the 1990s.

Thus, in the three overlapping eras and perspectives, development discourses and practices have respectively emphasised state-led, market-

led and civil society-engaged

processes and drivers of development. While both MPD and APD pursued development, although of different quality, another perspective which is not articulated enough has emerged that may be called Post-Development Perspective (PDP). This perspective advocates the 'very death' of development.

Despite the rhetoric on development by several countries and the MDGs, now SDGs, development has become a contested notion. In the perspective of PDP, poverty is first invented and development is then prescribed to eradicate it. Admittedly, it is extremely difficult to arrive at a consensus on the concept development; it is possible to have an agreement on what development should not lead to. If development increases income disparity, leads to reckless displacement, environmental degradation, climate insecurity and socio-cultural discrimination, and thus adds to human distress, should not be designated as development. Attending to these issues can cope with many of the contemporary contentions about development. It is high time that G-20 is engaged in a serious discourse on the unintended consequences of the ongoing process of development.

We should recognise that new global and development challenges are emerging as priorities around economic growth and poverty reduction are joined by pressing concerns with tackling disparities, addressing climate change, mitigating conflict and violence and more. At the same time, global inter-connectedness is also intensifying. Consequences of climate change to epidemics, finance to food, war to terrorism are spreading across the world. The response to such hazards and challenges is also changing. While many of these hazards cannot be precluded, the capacity of countries for resilience has to be built to cope with them.

At any rate, a partnership between state, market and civil society is critical and even indispensable to tackle the aforesaid challenges which can be grouped under three rubrics - inequality, sustainability and inclusivity. These challenges necessitate forging new alliances including a partnership between the triad. Some scholars would add 'professionals' to this alliance. So P3 - private, public and people (state, market and civil society) partnership becomes P4 with professionals brought in. The partnership also is necessary as the last 50 years have produced a development paradox in which massive increases in global economic growth and technological innovation have coincided with rising inequality and disparity in development outcomes. (INPA)

Power infra projects

Jammu and Kashmir has a typical set of problems: peak power loads in the winters in the Kashmir Valley and peak summer loads in the Jammu region, with no window of an escape route. Things are further complicated by the absence of 100 percent metering and the highest AT&C losses in the country in Jammu and Kashmir. For the last few years, local administration, with complete funding from the Gol, has been trying to streamline the system by removing operational glitches. Various projects under PMDP have been undertaken to augment the transmission and distribution network, and the result is a significant improvement in the power scenario. Smart metering, regularisation of illegal connections, plugging power theft at various levels, and an increase in the power tariff to reduce power revenue losses are a few of the initiatives with positive results. The ability to provide a 10 percent increase in power supply to the Kashmir Division this winter is a significant achievement. Through rural electrification schemes, certain areas like Saddal village have received electricity for the first time after seventy-five years of independence, and similar is the story of Ganouri-Tanta village in the mountainous Doda district, which saw the light of an electric bulb for the first time, ending decades of darkness in the lives of the villagers. Further augmentation works are underway to increase transmission and distribution. MoUs are being signed with PGCIL, RECPDCL, and NTPC for the implementation of the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme to further improve the electricity situation in rural as well as urban areas.

Sir,

For a very long time, the Forest Department has been striving to preserve forests and keep them from being destroyed. People who require wood from the forest are granted permission, and they are instructed not to destroy the living, green trees in order to obtain wood and timber. There were many pines and other trees on the forest property in front of the village of Ind tehsil Gool. However, the inhabitants would cut the trees down to build houses and produce furniture for their homes. Since the locals had no other source but the wood from that forest, the forest authorities granted them permission. The trees and pines were still strewn about, even after they had been used to make furniture and for lumber.

One can rarely locate trees and pines there now since the railway project has begun in Ind, where four tunnel phases have been built in T14 and T15. The land has turned arid. The road that was built as part of the railway project to connect the T14 and T15 with the new audit severely damaged the grass and trees, and the business operating there. In addition to building the road, they also dumped waste in the forest, harming the grasslands and trees.

Treeless forest in Gool

The village's maximum temperature has gone up three degrees since the initiative began in Ind. Historically, the maximum temperature in Ind during the summer was around 34 degrees, but this year, the maximum temperature was recorded at approximately 36 or 37 degrees, which is highly dangerous for the health of the people and can contribute to climate change.

Only a few trees that are dispersed throughout the entire forest are cared for by the forest worker assigned to those locations. Only when a forest is densely populated with trees, pines, wild animals, and birds can it appear to be attractive. The presence of forests produces a significant amount of oxygen while purifying the air. Since it encourages sustainability, it is advantageous for both humans and animals. The Forest Department should be assigned the responsibility of planting additional trees because it is urgently needed.

If the department is unwilling to take on this duty, the village residents or NGOs should be given permission and support so they can continue to plant trees in order to preserve the forest.

Shmoon Arfan
Gool

Readers Write

Huge Expenditure

Sir,

The 2023-24 Union Budget has allocated Rs 10 lakh crore (121.0 billion US dollar) as capital expenditure for 2023-24. Nearly one-fourth of the capital outlay will be spent on constructing new roads and highways and another quarter on railways for running new high-speed trains (like Vande Bharat) and laying new tracks and 10 percent to State Governments as loans for spending on infrastructure projects. Total budget allocations amount to nearly three percent of GDP for infrastructure building. <

The huge public expenditure may not kick start the economy, generate new jobs, and promote demand as promised by the Finance Minister but becomes another neoliberal economic bonanza to benefit the super-rich.

Dr Soma Marla
On e-mail