

## DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Someone has rightly said that, 'Those who work the Disaster Management way, live to work another day. Safety is a race we can all win. Preparedness is the only key to the success of Disaster Management Plan and without citizens' involvement and participation any effective plan is rendered ineffective.' In order to impart awareness about importance of reining in risks that people may face, October 13 is celebrated as International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction. Disaster means catastrophe, mishap, calamity or grave occurrence in any area, arising from nature or man-made causes, or by accident or negligence which result in substantial loss of life, of human suffering or damage to, and destruction of property, or damage to, or degradation of environment, and is of such nature or magnitude as to be beyond the coping capacity of the community of affected areas. According to the statistics, 68 per cent of India's land is prone to drought, 60 per cent to earthquakes, 12 per cent to floods and 8 per cent to cyclones, making India one of the most disaster prone countries in the world, affecting overall 85 per cent of Indian land and more than 50 million people.

Disaster management is the regulation of dealing with and avoiding risks. It involves preparing for a disaster before it happens. Every year, we experience some natural disaster but we have no strategy to alleviate its effects. Natural disasters are no doubt, beyond human control. It is observed that from the natural calamities happening we haven't learnt lessons from them. Damage to the ecology wreaked by deforestation and construction of dams has been the core cause of such a massive disaster. India is becoming a breeding ground for natural calamities and it is high time that we formulated some plans to go green in the country by reducing mounting pollutants. Business interruptions can occur anywhere & at anytime. It is impossible to predict what may strike when and therefore it has become binding to prepare for such disaster scenarios. Disaster risk management is a critical, if couched, factor in daily decision-making. A variety of risk financing and other financial tools have been developed to facilitate management of risks. A disaster disrupts business activities on which the local population depends, affecting livelihood recovery and means to earn a living. This is particularly true when new skills are needed for new types of jobs. Stout financing tools can help the poor to break the poverty cycle by protecting their development gains, reducing impacts and losses of disaster shocks. It is observed that risks from injury, sickness or disaster are a critical dimension of poverty and can easily threaten the small savings and fragile livelihoods of poor families. There should be systematic resort to "disaster drills" to educate the public on what to do during an earthquake. Preparedness is the key to managing any more such disasters.

Although a 2005 law on disaster management has been put into effect at the national level, it exists only on paper in a few states and districts. A national disaster response force was also formed for rescue and evacuation. It is an unfortunate reality in the age of highly hazardous industry that accidents are bound to happen. It is however the responsibility of all sectors of society to ensure that we are prepared to cope with the aftermath. Disaster management is like breathing; if you don't, you die. Disaster Management starts with 'D' but begins with 'YOU'. If we need to change anything, it has to start from our home. As we know that our family may not be together when all off a sudden a disaster strikes, it is important to create a plan in advance. One must find reliable information sources, warning systems and alert systems in advance. Family communication is one of the most important. We may have to evacuate at a moment's notice and take essentials with us as we will have no time to search for the supplies we need or shop for them. Disaster can take place anywhere and at any time. It is important to know what to do and have a plan before a disaster strikes. Disaster preparedness measures can significantly reduce the shock of disasters on people's lives, livelihoods and assets. It is therefore necessary that to survive the disaster, every family must take responsibility for their own disaster preparedness from home itself. People talk about business continuity plan during a disaster, natural disaster insurance, socio-economic effects of a disaster, the preparedness on the national level, and so on. We all know that it is impossible to avoid disasters, but it isn't impossible to plan ahead of time so that we can minimize the impact that any given disaster might have on us or on our family's health, safety and property. One must remember that the future belongs to those who prepare.

The biggest concern is the attitude of policy makers, implementers and local government towards investing in people-oriented preparedness at different levels. There is a growing need to look at disasters from a development perspective. Disasters can have devastating effect on communities and can significantly set back development efforts to a great extent. Disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and relief are four elements, which contribute to and gain from the implementation of sustainable development. The need of the hour is to chalk out a multi-pronged strategy for total disaster management comprising prevention, preparedness, response and recovery on the one hand and initiate development efforts aimed towards risk reduction and mitigation on the other cities. For India, preparedness will have to begin with the updating of construction norms for quake-proofing. Then, inspection of all construction, old and new, must be made a priority to check for adherence. In old buildings, measures to address vulnerability, such as retro-fitting with steel structures, have to be implemented compulsorily. Lessening the potential damage, as much as responding to a disaster, needs to be part of India's disaster management strategy. We need to accept earthquakes as a reality and do everything in our power to redefine development plans, especially in terms of building quake-resistant buildings. There should be systematic resort to "disaster drills" to educate the public on what to do during an earthquake. Preparedness is the key to managing any more such disasters. There have been many cases where there has been a relief and rescue mobilization but by the time the teams reach the damage would have already been done. Disasters are episodic but are recurrent.

## OFF 'D' CUFF

## The Power Of Acceptance

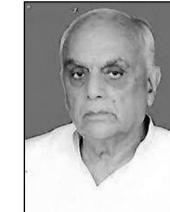
There are many things which are very important in life. Mostly we ignore the things that are very common. Try to see what is the important thing on which life depends. It's the breath, air, the most important factor for our survival, but we never give any importance to it.

The air is our lifeline and is very common but we ignore it the most. There is one more thing which plays an important role in our life and that is blessings. If we get blessings of parents, gurus or God then it is easy to get success in life.

We feel that we get success because of our hard work and it is true, also. But sometimes you would have noticed that we are

## Kashmiri Pandits through tyranny, terror &amp; despair

■ ER P L KHUSHU



**A**nother Kashmiri Pandit was shot dead by terrorists in Choudry Gund area of Shopian district on October 15, 2022. A police spokesman said that he was fired upon by terrorists when he was in the lawn of his house. He said that soon after the attack, injured identified as Pooran Krishan Bhat, son of Tarak Nath Bhat of Choudry Gund, was immediately shifted to a nearby hospital. He, however, succumbed at hospital, the official said. Pooran Bhat has left behind wife and two minors Sharu Bhat, a class 4th student and Shriya Bhat, a class 6th student living in Jammu. The police authorities say that Kashmir Freedom Fighter (KFF) group, proxy name of a terrorist outfit, has claimed the attack operating in Kashmir. Pooran Bhat has joined the long list of Kashmiri Pandit martyrs, who sacrificed their lives at the cruel hands of the terrorists belonging to Islamic fundamentalists, for being Indians and trying to resettle back in Kashmir after the mass genocide and exodus of KPs from Kashmir in 1990. Kashmiri Pandits killings are unabated and continuous in the valley of Kashmir with more ferocity and tyranny. There are many more gruesome examples of such killings of Kashmiri Pandits, in the valley. Where is the civil society of Kashmir? Are they all supporters of such gruesome killings?

It was disgraceful to witness Farooq Abdullah saying openly that such killings of Kashmiri Pandits, will continue unless justice is not done. What does he mean by saying that justice has to be done? Is he showing his sympathy with the separatists, particularly the terrorists with guns? If it is so then law of the land should take due course and proceed against him as per sedition laws if permissible. At least let someone responsible in the present government ask him his intentions behind such an unlawful statement. Is he a party to such killings? It shows the lack of will and the lack of real endeavor of the government about the plight of Kashmiri Pandits. No one in the government is bothered about the Kashmiri Pandits for their unabated sufferings.

It reminds the KPs of their original past periods of tyrannies of Muslim rulers like Moguls', Pathans, Chaks and the like. While mentioning some of such sufferings, it is essential to refer here Professor K L Bhan's Book the Paradise Lost, in which he mentions that in the second exodus (1506-1585) The Kashmiri Pandits suffered vicissitudes and misfortune, when under the zeal of Islamic fundamentalism the Sultans made it a state under policy to effect forcible conversion and implements it by issuing decrees to sever and chop off limbs of the Pandits, kidnap them, loot their possessions and imprison respectable people on various concocted pretenses, so as to pressure them to change their faith and become the followers of Islam, the religion of the rulers.

Professor Bhan further mentions in his book that 'Kashmir universally known as abode of sufis and saints (Rishiwar) presented scenario of religious harmony, peace and absolute tolerance as long as there was preponderance of Hindu population, be it Saivites, Vaishavites or Buddhists. All co-existed amidst amity

and maintained very cordial relations and religious intolerance was unknown. This serene and sublime atmosphere was vivified and poisoned by the emergence of alien Muslim rulers, no matter what class of dynasty they belonged to.

The holy land of Kashmir, the cradle of Trika philosophy, the abode of Rishis and Munis was transformed into an arena of strife and intrigues which very soon saw not only the reversal, but also the annihilation of centuries old and precious socio-cultural attainments. Making a historical evaluation of political and social role of Islam in Kashmir and among various medieval societies, historians have adjudged Muslim ideology as parochial and stereotyped. It is in this ideological framework that, to one's amazement and shock, loot, arson rape, murder and killing have a religious recognition and sanction. Firstly all this appears legalized under the umbrella of 'maliganee'. Secondly, any social strife leading to disorder and anarchy is permissible getting covered under Jihad (holy war). Thirdly any Muslim intoxicated with religious frenzy and going on a spree of killing without rhyme or reason is saluted as 'Mujahid' or 'Ghazi' (conqueror or victor).

Is it happening again? Let the government of the day investigate it and provide proper security to the KPs, who are in Kashmir or are going to Kashmir as per the rhythmic half truths of the power corridors that Kashmiri Pandits will be taken back to the valley with dignity and honor.

In furtherance to the atrocities met by KPs from time to time, the book of Professor Bhan mentions 'Terrorised by Tamur the Lame - Syyid Mir Ali Hamdani along with 700 Sayyids, his followers, landed in Kashmir and drove a wide and deep wedge between the majority Hindus and minority Muslims. He dictated the Sultan Qutub-Din to make the persecution and torture of the KPs a state policy. The code he prescribed for the sultan was model of hatred, distrust, intolerance, bigotry and malignity against the KPs.

He compelled the Sultan to officialize the persecution and massacre of KPs unless they embraced Islam. He is the architect of desecration and demolition of the Kalishree temple near Fatah Kadal in Srinagar and raising on its plinth a mosque known as Khanqah-i-Mulla. With his repressive and precautionary measures backed by state terror

ism he achieved the conversion of 37,000 KPs to Islam during the latter two of his three visits. The Sayyids headed by Mir Ali Hamdani openly preached extermination of Hindu religion and Hindu polities from the soil of the Kashmir in order that Islam might flourish and get unshakably entrenched in their place. Following in his father's footsteps Mir Mohamad Hamdani urged Sultan Sikandar (1389-1413) notoriously known as the iconoclast (Sikandar but-shikan) to wipe out infidelity (Hindus) root and branch, from Kashmir and let not even a weed of it survive.

The two reinforced by the rabid neo-convert Malik Saifudin unleashed a massive war against KPs with the target of genocide of this highly cultured people. Sikandar having pawned his soul to the Sayyids threw all norms of civilized Life and tolerance to winds and issued an atrocious and barbaric Government decree ordering the KPs to opt for conversion or exile, flight or death. They let loose the floodgates of a reign of terror

on the KPs to pressurize them to embrace Islam. Sikandar enjoyed and exulted in breaking down images of Hindu deities. No temple anywhere in the city town or village escaped paying the heavy toll. Numerous Hindus fled, numerous were converted and numerous were brutally killed. Many poisoned themselves.

This marks the first ominous exodus of the Kashmiri Pandits from their native fair homes. It is this mass migration that occasioned the plight of KPs to the neighbouring regions of Kishtwar and Bhadarwah via SMITHAN pass and to various provinces of India via Batote (Bhatta wath, path of the Bhatts or Kashmiri Pandits).

In the wake of this damned decree of Sikandar, seven mounds of the sacred thread of the murdered Brahmins were burnt by Sikandar and all of their sacred books were thrown into the Dal Lake. The KPs numbering over one lakh were drowned in the Lake and were burned at a spot in the vicinity of Rainawari in Srinagar City known as Bhatta Mazar (The graveyard of Bhatts, the KPs) beyond present day Jogilanker. According to the living memory of the KPs, only eleven KP families stayed back in Kashmir, the rest, rather than abandoning the religion of their father's, chose to migrate leaving behind their beloved homes hearths, lands and everything, only to protect their religion and faith).

Jonraj, the contemporary historian draws a graphic picture of the traumatic experiences of the first exodus. Crowds of Hindus ran away in different directions through passes and bypasses. Their social life was totally disrupted; their life became miserable with hunger and fatigue.

Many died in the scorching heat. Some disguised as Muslims roamed about the country searching for their distressed families. Hindus lolled out their tongues like dogs, looking for dog's morsel at every door. (Jonraj: Kings of Kashmir). Then the Sultan exclaimed proudly that he had succeeded in exterminating all traces of Hinduism from the valley by massacring the Hindus, by ravaging, looting and ransacking their properties and more than most by kidnapping and raping there womenfolk.

This all is a tip of an ice berg. For lack of space in this column, much more such awful and wakeful tales cannot be mentioned here.

Making a mention of the recent times pertaining to pre 1947 era, the rigmarole about the duping the KPs of their fundamental right to live in Kashmir with dignity and honor, started in this period only, when the exodus of KPs started from Kashmir. So it was a process which was well defined and thought of by the Islamic fundamentalists now having captured the sentimental aura of Kashmir under the big psyche of making Kashmir a purely dominated place of Kashmiri Muslims.

Sheikh's rule in 1947, embedded the seeds of 'Pseudo Secularism, viz half truths about the real concept of true secularism', in Jammu and Kashmir, for which the main suffering population of Jammu and Kashmir were the Kashmiri Pandits.

It was in this time only when the Land to Tiller laws were enforced which in particular made Kashmiri Pandits the main targets as most of the Kashmiri Pandits were well established 'Zamindars' and their agricultural lands

were snatched from them and given to the tillers who were Muslims, with a biased base of communal tinge.

Apart from this enough of partialities occurred during that time when KPs were refused proper representations in the government jobs, educational trainings, etc.

This is the period when the first mass exodus of Kashmiri Pandits occurred towards the plains, for earning their bread and butter with dignity and honor. Subsequent governments in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir followed suit to destabilize the base of the KPs from the valley, under a well knit plan, when mass exodus of KPs took place from time to time, thus limiting the population of KPs to just to a minuscule one in Kashmir.

With the brute advent of terrorism in the year 1989-90, during the national conference rule, abetted by the sympathetic support of the Congress party from Delhi, the situation for the KPs became a death knell for them. Mass genocide and exodus of the KPs occurred, which is reverberating still on the fascia and the minds of the KPs and will continue to be so as long as humanity exists in this universe.

Prominent leaders, intellectuals, politicians, individuals, government officers and the like amongst the KPs were brutally killed in broad day lights in thousands, along with the mass migration of this minuscule community to their destinations of devastations.

It shows an extreme apathy of the government who cannot do much and proper to save the KPs from such selected killings by the terrorists.

It has put the KPs in extreme despair, to crave for their existence as a community of aboriginal connection with Kashmir valley. Does it mean that Kashmiri Pandits have to forget their birthplace and homeland Kashmir? Why can't the terror of Jihadis and their actions be resisted with an appropriate response by the government.

The only solution under the circumstances to this problem is to create a 'separate homeland' for the KPs, with in Kashmir, having a status of "Union Territory".

This has to be stepped up by creating para military wings within this home land and recruiting mostly the youth of Kashmiri Pandits in such para military wing, by giving them proper military trainings, so that they can guard this home land and the KPs living in such a home land. Such a call is not any political proposition or any such proposal which vitiates the fundamentals of communal harmony, but the only strategic solution to the present scenario of the new terror regime adopted by Pakistan for Kashmir with some local support. Maintaining of communal harmony is not one-way traffic.

It should come from both sides of the coin, which is probably missing in Kashmir now.

Had it been so the entire present civil society of the valley should have come on streets against such heinous killings of Kashmiri Pandits and non-Kashmiris, like laborers and other workers etc, which was not visible anywhere other than expressing of lip sympathies about such disastrous killings in broad day lights. Enough is enough now.

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## Take care of downtrodden, poor

■ SHIV KUMAR PADHA

**E**very currency note issued by Reserve Bank of India is guaranteed by Central Government with words 'I promise to pay the bearer the sum of @ rupees' with signatures of Governor/Secretary of RBI. The currency notes of any denomination have got the same value and power irrespective of the person who possesses it. A man with money in his pocket can purchase quality commodity whichever he likes or intends to purchase from the market, can travel by the kind of transport suiting to his pocket, adopt any permissible and suitable profession in his life, has the right to sue the agencies for getting the justice, right to be served or attended on the public windows and places, he has the right to get the right and accurate quality and quantity of the commodity for which he pays the tagged price and expects treatment equivalent to what is meted out to the rich, influential and powerful persons of the society, in the public and private places. A poor man, though possessing a high moral character, is often jeered at and looked down upon in the society. He falls prey to his economic status, shyness, body language, hesitation which results in feelings of inferiority complex in him. Someone has rightly said 'poor man is always expected to serve his rich relatives both at his own home as well as at theirs. A fluctuation in the value of international currency is the univer-

sal phenomena, but the money in the pocket of the poor man is always prone to devaluation in his own country and the society he lives in. His money has not got the power to purchase the kind and quality he needs. There come enormous occasions in the life of the poor man where:-

I. He is duped at every chemist shops where he is charged the standard price for the fake and the duplicate medicines.

II. He is sold impure and sub standard quality of eatables, vegetables, fruit, edible oils, cereals, food grains, contaminated milk, curd and cheese on the prices the pure one and gets short measure of the commodity he purchases.

III. He is always charged the higher prices on the items he purchases than those charged from the familiar and influential one in the society.

IV. While travelling in the buses he is always allotted the seat which others decline to sit on.

V. Poor man, while travelling in public transport, is asked to vacate his seat for the one up-to-date and influential passenger entering the bus.

VI. He is always the last man in the queue to be served and attended.

A poor man is a creature who is born to bear the wrath of the people for his trivial and minor mistakes. The society always expects from him instead of reciprocating him with love affection, belongingness and attention which he expects for

respectful existence in social life. In the present age of favoritism, opportunism and pervading corruption the poor man is neither listened nor attended in any office unless he is accompanied by some mediator and tout of the concerned department. In the event of infringement and encroachment of his rights he finds him alone and helpless seeking justices for the excesses and atrocities being inflicted upon him by the society he lives in. It has become a common practice in the so-called educated, civilized and elite class living in the small and metro cities to man handle, humiliate and abuse the Rickshaw pullers, taxi and car drivers and the persons serving as the security guards in the posh societies and colonies.

The poor Rickshaw puller laborers, hawkers and the nomads become the victims of wrath of the police and the population even for their mistakes and misunderstandings while the violators of traffic rules, mafia persons and the absconders escape scot-free and honorably. It is rightly said that poverty is a sin and poor is the sinner who is sent in the mortal world to be humiliated and looked down for no fault committed by him. No society can flourish in the universe which does not care for its down-trodden population because sigh of poverty is a curse for the society. There was a song in old Hindi film Patang of 1960, 'Dene Wale Kisi Ko Gareebi Na De Mout De De Magar Badnaseebi Na De'.

The Mumkin' is a livelihood programme designed primarily for unemployed young people in the age bracket of 18 to 35 years. Under 'Mumkin' scheme, small commercial vehicles are being provided to the youth with banking partner extending the loan facility to the extent of 100 percent for on-road price of the vehicle to be purchased. Mission Youth, J&K, provides an amount of Rs 80,000 or 10 percent of the on-road price of the vehicle (whichever is lesser) as upfront subsidy and the vehicle manufacturers (scheme partner of government) provide an upfront special discount, not less than the amount of subsidy. Muzafar Wani of Ramban is thankful to the administration for providing him a vehicle which helped him to secure a respectable livelihood that could fulfil the needs of his family. Wani is satisfied with his earnings after owning a vehicle under Mumkin Scheme. Similarly, economic status of Riyaz Raheeb of Srinagar was elevated after receiving a Mahindra Pickup Vehicle under 'Mumkin' scheme. Hatib Javaid of Shopian was working as daily-wage labourer and could hardly bear the expenses of his family with a meager earning. The awareness programme of Mumkin scheme which he attended gave him a ray of hope for realizing his dream of owning a vehicle.

BEROZGAR SE SWAROZGAR  
J&K youth derive success from Mumkin scheme

**M**umkin scheme of Mission Youth has successfully engaged and channelised energy of youth of Jammu and Kashmir through a systematic livelihood generation programme in transport sector. Union Territory administration in partnership with Ashok Leyland has moved towards achieving the vision of Prime Minister to provide sustainable livelihood to youth under 'Mumkin' scheme for Transport Sector.

With this partnership, Government aims to move towards creation of a better socio-economic ecosystem, self-employment opportunities and elimination of poverty in J&K. As part of 'Mumkin' initiative, Lieutenant Governor distributed highly subsidized small commercial vehicles among first batch of young beneficiaries from across the Union Territory to mark the beginning of government's commitment towards livelihood generation for youth.