

Navratri is the celebration of feminine power

OMKAR DATTATRAY

Navratri festival is celebrated twice in a year, once as Chhathi Navratri and then as Sharad Navratri. Both Navratris are celebrated with great devotion and traditional gaiety. The underlying essence and spirit is the celebration, respect and reverence to feminine power which is the cause and action of the universe. Thus Navratri is dedicated to the importance of feminine power without which we cannot think of the universe. Therefore by celebrating the Navratri's, we actually celebrate feminine power as its significance is very great in the world and for all humanity. As the name implies, Navratri consists of nine days and nights which are dedicated to the nine forms of the Shakti. During Navratri people especially the women keep fast and worship the small girls being the form of Shakti that is being the feminine power. Navratri shows and teaches us to revere and respect women and therefore we should learn to respect the women folk in the day to day life and only then we are successful in celebrating Navratris. We should appreciate that before manifestation of the universe, when nothing else existed, what existed was the omnipresent formless Divine Consciousness. This is also called the static consciousness or Shiva in Hindu scriptures. When universe came into being, first of all from static consciousness manifested Dynamic Consciousness Shakti.

Shakti is the feminine power of Shiva and is the creative force behind the world. Shiva as masculine power is not

capable of creating anything without feminine power and hence first to manifest is His own creative feminine power as Shakti, who was then allowed to create the universe. This Shakti is also known as the Divine Mother, as everything in the universe has taken birth from its womb. This Divine Mother, which has given birth to the universe, also nurtures and sustains it, and has the power to destroy it. There are primarily and actually nine aspects of the Divine Mother which helps it to create, sustain and destroy or dissolve back the universe. There are nine aspects of the Divine Mother are worshipped in the Hindu religion as nine shaktis during the nine day Navratri festival. These nine forms of the Divine Mother (Goddess Durga) are named as Shalputri, Brahmacharni, Chandraganta, Kushmandi, Skindamata, Kyantyne, Kalratri, Mahagauri and Seditratri.

Durga is the inaccessible, invincible one and omnipotent, the main source of energy for creation.

Shalputri is the mother of gross universe. All the gross objects and beings have manifested from this Shalputri aspect of the Divine Mother. Brahmacharni is the form of celibacy. As per Sanatan Dhrama, Durga in her Kali Roopa fought demons for nine days and eventually freed mother earth from their atrocities. Thus the tenth day is celebrated as Vijaydashami meaning the day of victory, triumph over bad elements. The Navratri festival basically denotes the tremendous potential power, the feminine aspect of

creation has within herself, which also draws down to the power of an ordinary/common woman. In fact women are the epitome of the feminine aspect of creation and till she is respected, loved and treated as auspicious for the entire human race, she can give joy, peace and help in the growth of every aspect of creation. Shailputri is the daughter of the Mountain king Himavat, and is manifestation and form of the Hindu mother goddess Mahadevi, representing herself as the pure form of goddess Parvati. She is the first Navadurga venerated during the first day of Navratri, and is incarnation of Goddess Sati. Thus Maa Shailputri is one of the Navadurgas and is the provider of fortune and prosperity. Devotees hail her as mother nature and pray for their spiritual awakening. The second form of Navadurga is called Brahmacharni which means a devoted female student who lives in an Ashrama with her Guru along with other students. She is the second form of Mahadevi and is worshipped on the second day of Navratri. The goddess Brahmacharni is an aspect of Parvati and wears white clothes, holding a japamala in her right hand and a kamandalu in her right. She is the form of Navadurga who did severe penance and is the goddess of devotion and penance. The third form of Maa Durga is known as Chandraganta.

On the third day of Navratri, this form of Durga is worshipped. She is called Chandraganta because on her forehead is half moon in the shape of Ganta.

By her worship, the devotees are freed

from all the troubles of this body and with ease reach to supreme bliss. It is the Chandarganta who had killed the demon Maheshasura and freed the world from this cruel demon. The fourth form of Maa Durga is called Kushmanda. She has created the universe with her small smile and thus the name Kushmanda.

She is worshipped on the fourth day of Navratri. Skandamata is the fifth among the Navadurga forms of Mahadevi. Her name comes from Skanda, an alternate name for the war god. She is the powerful goddess whose love and care helped lord Kartikeya to defeat the demon Tarkasura. Lord Shiva and Maa Parvati's first son, Lord Kartikeya, was also known as Skanda. Hence Maa Parvati is often referred to as Skandamata. She is believed to protect her devotees just like a mother protects her child from harm. The sixth form of Maa Durga is known as Katyani and she is an aspect of Mahadevi and the slayer of the tyrannical demon Mahishasura. In Shaktism, she is associated with the fierce forms of Shakti or Durga, a warrior goddess, which also includes Bhadrakali and Chandika. With the difficult penance of saint Kantiyan she took birth from the couple of Katayana as she was happy with his penance and hence the sixth form of Maa Durga is called Katyani. She is believed to bliss her devotees and benefits them. The seventh form of Maa Durga is known as Kalratri and she is worshipped on the sixth day of Navratri. She seems very dangerous and fearful, but she always

gives good results and blessings. She is first referenced in Devi Mahatmya.

Kalaratri is one of the fearsome forms of the goddess. She is the goddess of auspiciousness and courage. Kalaratri is traditionally worshipped during the nine nights of the Navratri celebrations. The seventh day of Navratri Pooja in particular is dedicated to her and she is considered the fiercest form of mother goddess, her appearance itself invoking fear. This form of goddess is believed to be the destroyer of all demon entities, ghosts, evil spirits and negative energies, which flee upon knowing of her arrival. Kalaratri is also known as Shubankari meaning auspicious/doing good in Sanskrit, due to the belief that she always provides auspicious results to her devotees. Hence, it is believed that she makes her devotees fearless. Mahagauri is the eighth form among the Navdurga aspects of the Hindu mother goddess Mahadevi. She is worshipped on the eighth day of Navratri. According to Hinduism, Mahagauri has the power to fulfill all desires of her devotees. The one who worships this goddess, gets relief from all the sufferings in life. She is the goddess of beauty and women, she is very powerful and is the bestower of all good fruits and results. Siddhidhatri is the ninth and final among the Navadurga aspects of the Hindu mother goddess Mahadevi. As the name Siddhi implies the supernatural power or meditative ability and Dhatri means giver or awardee. She is worshipped on the ninth day of Navratri. She fulfills all the divine aspirations. It is believed that one side

of Lord Shiva's body is that of Goddess of Siddhidhatri. Therefore Shiva is also known as Ardhanarishwara. According to Vedic scriptures, Lord Shiva attained all the siddhis by worshipping this form of Maa Durga. She is in fact the goddess of supernatural powers or Siddha's. On the ninth day of the Navratri, nine small girls are worshipped as being the nine forms of Maa Durga and their feet are washed and they are offered fruits, money, utensils etc. We Indians worship the feminine power during Navratri's but alas! in actual practice the women are heaped atrocities and they are harassed and even some are subjected to sexual assaults. There is talk of the empowerment of women but in actual world, the women folk is harassed and even molested. It is a big contradiction that on one side we worship the women and on other side there are the increasing cases of molestation and sexual assaults on the women which is very unfortunate and this way we nullify the essence and spirit of Navratri Pooja. The best performance of the Navratri celebrations is only when we learn to revere, respect and honor the women in the day to day life and in homes, places of worship, at workplaces, in educational institutions and at all the places because where women are respected, gods travel there. Thus the best way to celebrate the feminine power is that we should respect the women in the actual world.

(The author is a columnist, social and KP activist).

Int'l HR Conference, Conclave 6.0 begins at IIM-J

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The first day of HR Conclave 6.0, the signature event of the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu, was a resounding success, with industry experts sharing their insights on a plethora of topics related to the theme of the Conclave, "HR in a Dynamic Business Environment."

The Chief Guest of the event was Prof. Pragati Kumar, Vice-Chancellor of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University. The day began with an inaugural ceremony presided over by Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu; Prof. Jabir Ali, Dean, Academics and Chairperson, Placements at IIM Jammu; and Dr. Baljeet Singh Sani, Co-Chairperson, Placements at IIM Jammu, Dr. Guangpuanang Kahmei, Conference Chair, IIM Jammu, Mr. Deepak Taduru, Northern Trust VP Talent Acquisition and Dr. Roy Kshemendra Sharma, Head of Communications & Customer Centricity, Tata AIA Life Insurance.



Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu and other dignitaries at International HR Conference.

Dr. Baljeet Singh Sani, Co-Chairperson (Placements), IIM Jammu, welcomed the audience to the HR Conclave 6.0 and introduced the theme of the Conclave, "HR in a Dynamic Business Environment." He highlighted the importance of HR in helping organizations navigate the ever-changing business landscape and achieve their business goals.

He affirmed that HR Conclave 6.0 is an exceptional forum where human resources professionals from the industry convene to share insights, teach students how to navigate the challenges they will inevitably encounter on their path through the

dynamic corporate world, and exchange ideas.

In his welcoming remarks, IIM Jammu Conference Chair Dr. Guangpuanang Kahmei provided an overview of the proceedings that were scheduled for the following two days. The special issue of journals was announced by him during this HR conclave. He emphasized that the HR conclave's connections and experiences will prove to be beneficial and enjoyable.

In his address, Prof. Jabir Ali, Dean, Academics, IIM Jammu, provided the audience with an insightful overview of multiple programs in accordance with its mandate to cultivate trans-

formational leaders. He also mentioned that this collaboration between academia and industry will provide students with knowledge and value, thanks to the exemplary leadership of the Director and the excellent faculty at IIM Jammu, which is a testament to cultivating leaders who are pioneers in happiness and mental health.

Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu, addressed and welcomed the audience to the HR Conclave 6.0. He mentioned that IIM Jammu has been a pioneer in introducing International HR Conference and Conclave to unite the academia and industry leaders on a com-

mon platform for exchange of ideas, knowledge sharing on HR and its adaptation to the ever-changing business environment. He mentioned that IIM Jammu, has a motto to cultivate leaders and entrepreneurs who serve both, within their local communities and on a global scale. He gave an overview into the fast-paced growth and journey of the Institution and reiterated that IIM Jammu has ascended to the fifteenth position among all IIMs.

Prof. Pragati Kumar, Vice-Chancellor SMVDU conveyed his concerns and questions, which he hopes will be addressed at this conclave. He emphasized the advantages of technology and how it must be implemented to enhance an organization's operational capabilities.

Mr. Deepak Taduru, Northern Trust VP Talent Acquisition, the keynote speaker of the day, encouraged students to study throughout their lives. He asserted, with the aid of a video describing the Heineken recruitment

process, that IIR is all about the experience you provide to individuals. According to him, a well-defined strategy with all objectives, networking, and adding skills and experience to resumes are three things that students should take with them after graduation.

Dr. Roy Kshemendra Sharma, Head of Communications & Customer Centricity, Tata AIA Life Insurance, the keynote speaker, outlined the 'TATAness' key characteristics as follows: one must be attuned to the ground, transparent, adept at handling grievances, employee-centric, proactive in their approach to HR reforms, opportunistic in their approach to reforms across all levels, and committed to maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

The International Conference on HR aims to be a comprehensive platform for researchers, academicians, and practitioners to engage in meaningful discussions, share their research, and collectively advance the field of human resources.

Implement immovable Migrant Property Act 1997 in Toto: Yogi

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Kashmiri Pandits living temporarily in exile for last more than three decades in several migrant camps and non camps in Jammu and other parts of the country face many tough challenges and problems on day to day basis in their lives and one such serious challenge among them is removal of illegal encroachments/unlawful possession on their lands, shrines, temples etc in the Valley by some anti social elements at a number of places still and utter failure of the custodians to restore, preserve and protect their lands under immovable migrant property act 1997, thus throwing all winds to this law by violating the earlier clear cut directives.

In a statement issued today, senior most Kashmiri Pandit leader M.K Yogi expressed grave concern over the issue of restoration, preservation and protection of migrant

lands in valley at a number of places from the illegal occupants and failure of concerned authorities in discharging their assigned role as custodians of the migrant property under immovable migrant property act, 1997.

Yogi said the concerned custodians made under immovable migrant property have miserably failed at many places in valley in restoring and preserving the migrant lands from illegal occupants due to the non seriousness attitude at the lower level despite clear cut directions from highest office in the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir about the same.

Yogi appealed Lt. Governor union Territory J&K to issue clear cut directions again to the custodians to implement the migrant immovable property Act 1997 in true letter and spirit as well fix the accountability of any lapse in such issues with severe punishments.

Dr. Stanzin Dawa proposes formation of committee on 'Implementation Plan for the NEP 2020' for Ladakh

STATE TIMES NEWS

LEH: Dr. Stanzin Dawa, Principal, Lamdon Model Sr. Secondary School Leh, urged the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh Dr. B. D. Mishra, to form a Comprehensive and Balanced Committee to develop a well-structured Implementation Plan for the NEP 2020 of Ladakh (UT).

Noting that the NEP 2020 represents a significant and forward-looking transformation of the Indian education system as it sets ambitious goals and aspirations for the development of education in our country, Dr Stanzin pointed out that a policy without a well-structured implementation plan is akin to a lion without teeth.

"To bring the envisioned changes into reality, we must have a concrete and responsive plan that provides the necessary support for its effective execution," proposed said, adding that States and UTs worth being named have their state-specific Implementation Plan of the NEP. Dr Stanzin Dawa wrote to LG Ladakh requesting for the formation of Implementation Plan for the NEP 2020 for Ladakh.

"Education being a Concurrent List subject, it is imperative that UT Ladakh has a well-defined NEP 2020 Implementation Plan with clearly articulated indicators to monitor and evaluate progress and its impacts. This implementation plan should serve as the guiding strategy or mechanism to strengthen the part-



nership between government and private schools in Ladakh. The education landscape in UT Ladakh is diverse, with a substantial number of students enrolled in both government and private schools. As of now, government schools have an enrollment of over 26,000 students (47%), while private schools cater to more than 29,000 students (53%) (source from the Director of Education, UT Ladakh)," the proposal read. He emphasized that to ensure the NEP's goals are met comprehensively, it is essential to

have a plan that accommodates the unique needs and requirements of both government and private educational institutions. Dr Stanzin proposed a committee comprising experts, educators, and stakeholders from both government and private sectors to ensure that the plan addresses the diverse educational landscape of our region. "The successful implementation of the NEP 2020 in Ladakh will not only transform the educational ecosystem but will also shape the future of our youth," Dr Stanzin concluded.

Corporator Ward 21 initiates borewell digging at Gurudwara Baba Fateh Singh Gandhi Nagar

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Banu Mahajan, the Corporator of Ward No. 21, commenced the borewell digging work within the premises of Gurudwara Baba Fateh Singh in Gandhi Nagar, here on Saturday.

The initiative was undertaken in collaboration with Balvinder Singh, Vice President, and Surjit Singh, Secretary of DGPC (District Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee), along with members of the local committee and the devoted Sangat (congregation) of the Gurudwara Sahib. Banu Mahajan was honoured by the Gurudwara Committee and the Sangat for her dedicated efforts in securing the sanction for the borewell, an important development for Gurudwara Baba Fateh Singh.

Balvinder Singh commended Banu Mahajan's continuous commitment to developmental work at the Gurudwara located within her ward.

He emphasized her active role in approaching them to offer assistance and services for the



Corporator, Banu Mahajan and others at inauguration of borewell digging at Jammu.

Gurudwara and the well-being of the Sikh community residing in her ward.

Banu Mahajan expressed her gratitude for the honour bestowed upon her by the congregation and the committee. She humbly credited the blessings of the Great Gurus for making the borewell project possible, emphasizing that she is merely a medium for serving the Gurudwaras.

Surjit Singh, Secretary of DGPC, also lauded Banu for her significant contributions to the religious institutions of Sikhs in her ward and her ongoing commitment to various developmental initiatives.

The event witnessed the presence of several distinguished individuals from the Sangat, including Sukhwinder Singh, Dilbag Singh, Jasvinder Singh, Ravinder Singh, Davinder Singh, J P Singh, Gurvinder Singh, Tej Kour, Surjit Kour, Gurdev Kour, and many others.

The initiative symbolizes the communal spirit and collaborative efforts aimed at enhancing the facilities and services at Gurudwara Baba Fateh Singh in Gandhi Nagar, Jammu.

Controversy surrounds proposed OBC reservation in J&K

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The government's recent proposal for Other Backward Classes (OBC) reservations in Panchayats (PRIs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) has sparked controversy and debate in Jammu and Kashmir.

The proposed reservation has drawn attention from various political and social groups, with concerns being raised about the timing and nomenclature of the reservation.

The BJP OBC Moreha has called for a 27% quota for OBCs in these institu-

tions, emphasizing the need for increased OBC representation. However, the All India Backward Classes Union (AIBCU) has voiced skepticism about the government's intentions, labeling the proposal as a political move ahead of upcoming elections.

The central point of contention in the debate is the nomenclature issue. In Jammu and Kashmir, people are categorized as "Other Social Caste" (OSC) rather than "OBC." A change in nomenclature is seen as essential for the

effective implementation of the proposed reservation. The AIBCU draws a parallel to the challenge faced by women's reservation due to the absence of a caste census and delimitation.

The lack of a caste census in the region is attributed to legal disputes at the national level, which are obstructing the process. This issue has created hurdles in the path of implementing reservations for OBCs. The AIBCU has appealed for the necessary nomenclature change from "OSC" to "OBC," along

with the implementation of the Mandal Commission's recommendations, which include a 27% quota in job reservations and positions in PRIs and ULBs.

As the debate intensifies, the fate of OBC reservations in Jammu and Kashmir remains uncertain, with political and legal obstacles standing in the way of effective implementation. The issue is expected to remain a topic of discussion in the region's political landscape as the government's proposal undergoes scrutiny and deliberation.

Sarvapitri Amavasya Shraadh Karma organized in Sant Shri Asharamji Babu Ashram

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Sarvapitri Amavasya Shraadh Karma organized in Sant Shri Asharamji Babu Ashram and Gaushala Bhagwati Nagar Jammu on Saturday.

Shraadh Karma is a significant ritual in Hindu tradition, where people pay homage to their ancestors by performing various ceremonies and offering prayers and food.

The Ashram has been organizing such activities throughout the year and has been hosting the Shraadh Karma program since 2005.

After the Shraadh Karma, Langar Prasad was also distributed among thousands of people.

