

CHALLENGING WOMEN

With the change of time, there has been a lot of change in the condition of women. In fact, women have been treated as wives since ancient times. For this, she was forced to do the main household tasks, like cooking, taking care of children, serving her husband.

As a result of the spread of education, the plight of women is no longer the same as it was due to some superstitions, conservative ideology or ignorance. To bring women parallel to men, social thinkers have started thinking and working in this direction. Today women are becoming respectable and respected in the society. She is challenging the man by attaining a position and authority equal to that of the man.

There is only delay in getting the opportunity. Thus, the place of women in our society today is more respectable and prestigious.

Greening Highways

G.L. KHAJURIA

Roads are the lifeline arteries which carry the life blood of economy relating to trade and commerce to every nook and the corner of the country. These also play a pivotal role in national integration by way of communication amongst the various religions and shades.

According to the ministry of surface transport and highways, we are having a long stretch of around 4.50 million kms of roads length. And the overall benefits accruing therefrom ripple out vast, varied ramifications for the progress and prosperity of the country as a whole.

Now, with the ever exploding population which we all know has crossed 1.25 billion next to china and the trafficways have correspondingly increased manifold face to face with urbanisation and industrialisation. And these in togetherness are Tanta mounting to ever-escalating pollution, temperature, dust and a combination of noxious gases namely carbon monoxide (CO) carbon dioxide (CO2), Methane (CH4), Nitrous Oxide (N2O) and emission of chloro-fluro-carbons (CFC'S) apart from the most hazardous halocarbons. These halocarbons originate from refrigeration and other cooling compound pollutants and are long persisting over hundreds and thousands of years when once get released into the atmosphere.

The expansion of roads width on either side of highways has ruthlessly massacred over lacks of erstwhile plantations which way these have diminished the pristine well-established glory and grandeur of the highways which now are devoid of lush green vibrant tree cover across the country. Now, while travelling on these highways, we often feel as something of our very vital missing so much so that no shade insight where once a while we can aspire to have a short stop over. Doesn't it jitter us when we are in travel-spre with family or friends?

It is, therefore, most pertinent to realise the changed scenario over a couple of years. And this is evidently very well before our eyes. And imagine the scenario elsewhere away from our sight, the overall forest cover (green gold) which is frizzling by the turn of the day. This is fundamentally tanta mounting to environmental degradation resultantly giving birth to multihued off shoots of problem of problems.

Under this pernicious scenario, our highways demand top most attention for rejuvenation so that these become lively for beautification and glorification. It is as such becomes our moral and bounden duty to carry out mass campaign for gigantic plantation operation alongside highways so as to restore back erstwhile lost glory and beauty.

In forestry parlance, such plantations alongside highways are nomenclaturised as arboriculture or avenue plantation and the people so participating or engaged are called arboriculturist. These plantations are also carried out alongside railway tracks, canals apart from urban metropolises where this has an independent department. The predominant objective being to cloth such areas with green cover ensuring greenery, beautification and slowing down the temperature and averting pollution in its multitudinal manifestation.

The concept of such plantations is no new as over the years the earlier rulers were very much enthusiastic and compassionate with this concept of plantations when we unfold the history.

During Ashoka's regime, this concept was very much in vogue, as he carried out extensive/intensive afforestation's alongside all avenue, other denuded areas. Similarly, Sher Shah Suri in 16th century carried out abundant plantation of ornamental, horticultural and shade bearing trees inter-mixed with flowering climbers, creepers and shrubs right from Mureshidabad (the then Bengal) to Peshawar via Delhi and Lahore.

Similarly, the Mughals were very much enthusiastic and compassionate about the construction of new roads and supplementing these by carrying out plantation. Shah Jahan brought Chinar from Iran and introduced in Kashmir and its Vicinity. They carried forward this campaign on all available barren areas, preferably, the road-sides and other road-linkages.

When we achieved independence, the spirit and sanctity of tree culture, plantation, promotion and propagation was still more invigorated. Our late Prime Ministers shri J.L. Nehru, shri L.B. Shastri apart from other prominent leaders, naturalist, environmentalists namely GB Pant, Dr. Rajinder Prasad, K.M. Munshi a footed large scale planting campaign.

It was too recently on the first day of July this year, when Sh. Nitin Gadkari, the union Minister for transport and highways convened a two-day meeting at Vishakhapatnam and consequently, a mega mission for greening highways was promulgated and this mission was nomenclaturised as "National Green highways Mission (NGHM). Under the mission the Minister Kick started first ever massive National highways plantation campaign with a targeted budget of 300 cores to cover around 1500 kms of the first leg of 100000 kms of highways.

Sh. Nitin Gadkari further emphasised that the Ministry of Road and highways (MORTH), government of India endeavour the need and importance of developing green corridors along National highways, promulgating massive plantation, transportation, their progressive promotion and maintenance all through for the glorification-cum-beautification of highways apart from generating jobs and employment on larger scale.

According to Sh. Raghav Chandra, chairman NH AI, the government contemplates to earmark an estimated amount arounding 5000 cores which works out around 1% of roads construction amounting to 5 trillion ending year 2019 of this mission. This is synonymous with Mahatma Gandhi National Rural employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in boosting rural economy. The funds as such are earmarked provide promotion and impulsive targeted greening highways mission, apart from opening up job-cum-employment avenues for around a million youth in broader spectrum.

(The writer is Former Deputy Conservator of forests, J&K).

Promoting Innovative Agri-entrepreneurship for Rural Upliftment

DR. BANARSI LAL

Farmers are said to be prosperous only when they have enough amount of money in their accounts and this is possible only when their main occupation i.e. agriculture becomes more profitable. It has been observed at various fora that occupation of traditional agriculture is not so profitable without any charm. Thus, many farmers especially the rural youths are not being attracted to undertake agriculture as an occupation rather they are disenchanted with this occupation. Agricultural profitability can be enhanced by the adoption of modern agricultural technologies which are directly or indirectly supported by the Government, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and other concerned agencies in various ways with the objective to improve the socio-economic conditions of the farmers. There are various types of constraints including those of labour, capital, risks, uncertainties confronted by farmers in food production and sale processes etc. compelling them to leave this occupation and migrate to some other places in search of economically attractive avenues yielding greater returns needed to satisfy their increasingly growing needs. This raises a very pertinent question how working in agriculture sector can be made more attractive, profitable and employment augmenting so as to mitigate the rising aspirations of the farmers and sustain them in agricultural occupation of food production for their families and also for the increasing population of the country. The answer lies in the adoption of multipronged approaches to deal with this problem of low agricultural profitability. These approaches can be adopted by the farmers and government and both the sides should consider it equally important. It is not a unilateral process rather it is always a bilateral phenomenon, developer (government) and developpee (farmer) being two parties, working together in symbiosis. Indifference from either side is detrimental to solution of the problems of low agricultural productivity/profitability. Farmers should not think that it is only the government's responsibility to make agriculture more profitable, but it is also their responsibility to make it more

profitable.

Adoption of agri-entrepreneurship in agriculture by farmers can be effective in development of agricultural economy and farmers' prosperity. The farmers, especially the rural youths, must imbibe the basics of agri-entrepreneurship and factors affecting its development. After that they must think of acquisition of gainful skill according to their resources, needs and interest in agriculture. For this, they should gear up themselves to attend some focused need-based agricultural and allied sectors trainings programmes. Agri-entrepreneurship refers to an individual's characteristic by virtue of which he/she has an intense desire and will power to achieve the goal of earning most of the benefits by undertaking innovative activities of agricultural and allied sectors enterprises such as dairy, poultry, fishery, bee-keeping, horticulture, floriculture etc. together in symbiosis including the work of agri-value addition in order to improve one's livelihood by dint of actively engaging oneself in profitable and innovative agricultural enterprises by consistent hard work and adequate risk bearing ability. There are various ways to bring agri-entrepreneurship in agriculture such as:

(a) **By changing the method (how to do) of agriculture:** The method of agriculture can be changed by having strong will/commitment, learning of modern agricultural technologies by attending the farmers fairs, awareness/training camps, Kisan Ghosties, agricultural extension literature of State Agricultural Universities (SAUs), Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), Indian Council of Agricultural (ICAR) institutions, radio, TV talks, consulting progressive farmers, input dealers, line department officials etc., by growing High Yielding Varieties (HYVs) of crops, crop and soil management, input management, plant protection technologies, modern agronomic practices, farm mechanization, by undertaking market led agriculture such as growing such types of crops which can be sold easily at remunerative prices, i.e., the crops which have adequate demand in the market, entirely different crop suitable to the agro-climatic conditions of the farm may be taken, provided it is remunerative, borrowing from institu-

tional sources for necessary capital requirement to take up and continue the enterprise in a scientific way, followed by timely repayment, learning to maintain farm records and calculating economics of various enterprises for self-appraisal and introspection so as to chalk out ameliorative strategies in future.

(b) **By changing the dimension of agriculture:** Crop diversification: Crop diversification refers to the addition of new crops or cropping systems to agricultural production on a particular farm taking into account the different returns from value added crops with complementary marketing opportunities. This gives individuals and households more security to improve livelihood and to raise living standards.

Farm diversification: It consists of taking up of multiple agricultural production enterprises together, such as agricultural, horticulture, livestock, poultry, floriculture, fishery, bee keeping etc., on a piece of land, allocating suitable separate area for each enterprise, so that the output of one enterprise acts as input for the other one. Such type of symbiotic combination of agricultural production enterprises is not a new practice, but the same has already been practiced by our farming community since time immemorial depending upon their need, interest, culture, sources and capability. The farmer thinks about the enterprises combination to be taken according to the natural resources such as types of soil, topography, rainfall, source of irrigation, climate etc. he is blessed with. He also introspects his strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT), which vary from farmer to farmer. There are many researches advocating Integrated Farming System (IFS) as an agricultural technology capable to significantly enhancing farm income in general.

Occupational diversification: Presently, most of farmers in India are normally confined to one role, i.e., producer only. They sell their produce to middlemen reportedly at remunerative prices resulting in low or no profit. Undertaking different diversified roles by farmers, such as producer, processor, value adder and marketer may be referred to as occupational diversification.

Farmers are the real producers of the farm produce, it is the middlemen who take away the maximum benefit in the process of movement of farm produce from point of production to that of consumption, and they are left with only little benefit. By involving themselves in various roles of value addition and marketing of the farm produce or value added products to the nearest point of final consumers as far as possible, employment opportunities can be created for the farmers and increase their and others income. For this purpose, farmers should learn skill sets of farm production, processing, marketing and practice them gainfully, either locally or outside. They should sell farm produce not at harvest time when there is glut in the market, but at times of relative scarcity to obtain a maximum price. The farm produce should be sold at a place where a premium price can be obtained. They should process the farm produce into different products of consumer preference to obtain maximum price. They should advertise their processed product to gain the product popularity and trustworthiness to obtain maximum price.

(c) **By changing the attitude of farmers:** It is a very difficult task to change the attitude of the farmers. Farmers generally resist to change. Attitude of farmers can be changed by creating an intense urge to earn more and more money by dint of consistent hard work. Very minute observations should be made of successful activities in their lives and learn and emulate them and also learn factors of failures despite their endeavors. Attitude can also be changed by breaking one's socio-psychological and personal barrier to undertake any profitable enterprise, by learning and inculcating the characteristics of entrepreneurship in oneself, by formation of Self Help Groups (SHGs) for a common cause and by inculcating belief in participatory development rather than individual development.

However, there are certain barriers in agri-entrepreneurship development, such as physical, personal, family, social, economic, religious, cultural, educational, etc., which can be overcome to bring prosperity among the farmers.

(The writer is Sr. Scientist & Head, KVK, Reasi).

Famous cave Shrine of Peer Kho

OMKAR DATTATRAY

Jammu city has rightly the distinction of being called the city of temples as the temples, shrines and other religious places are situated in every nook and corner of Jammu. These religious places are the symbols of mutual brotherhood and communal harmony and are visited by the people of various faiths. One of the oldest and famous temples is the cave shrine of Peerkho situated in the city of Jammu near Panjthriti and visited by a large number of the devotees speciously on Purnimashi, Amavaysa, Eakadashi, Snoonwars (Mondays) to pay obeisance to Lord Shiva and seek his blessings. This cave temple is the pilgrim spot of great attraction and thus frequented by a large number of people. It is believed that the wishes of the devotees are fulfilled by paying visit to this cave and by propitiating Lord Shiva whose natural Idol is housed in this temple. It is one of the oldest temples in the city and witnesses a huge rush on the auspicious days. In addition, the temple shrine is thronged by a numerous devotees during the time of some of the prime festivals of Jammu, namely, Shivratri, Raksha Bandhan, Shraven Purnimashi. This cave temple is mainly a Shiva temple, and the Shiva lingam is placed inside a moderately seized cave, and is a very peaceful place. It is etched in white marble on a rectangular platform. The black stone lingam is ornamented with copper snake or Naga, as termed in Hindi, and a sheet of silver covers the Jallari or Yoni, with an overtop cropper vessel, placed in a hanging position to be able to continuously pour water on the lingam. There is some evidence that this temple was built during the dominion of the Dogra rulers as the lower portion of the lingam and some of the other characteristics bear a close resemblance to the ones of Purmandal temple, which was also built during Dogra rule. The Peer Mitha and the peer kho temple are the medieval period jewels of the city of Jammu. As per some of the historical records, the temple was built in the 15th



century AD, during the ruling regime of Raja Ajhaib Dev, for the then peer, Saint Siddha Ghareeb Nath. These caves are built underground and at an heart wrenching depth of twenty to thirty feet. The peer Kho cave is positioned on the banks of Suriputri river Tawi and it is widely believed that a character named Janvant, who was famously worshipped as the bear god had meditated in this cave. This temple is based in the vicinity of the Panchbaskhtar temple and the Ranbireswar temple which are also temples dedicated to Lord Shiva and all placed along the river Tawi. Also known as the Jawant cave, these caves are located on an altar of igneous rocks, laced with sedimentary deposits from the river and are placed on the edges of a circular road in the Northeast of Jammu city and are surrounded by the acacia jungle. The peer Kho temple has a large sized courtyard with an ensemble of three Shikharas, with two placed on the left hand side and a single on the right. The Shikharas

have a mix of modern and ancient design. The stairs that lead to the temple have an arched gateway which is tall in height and pink in color. The stairs have marble flooring and beautiful railings on its periphery. The temple has a long verandah with marble and mosaic flooring and another entrance which has an entry from pacca Danga via the Jullaka Mohalla. The dome of the temple is an inverted louts and is a modern structure made of stone. This dome serves as an entrance to the cave and is ornamented with beautiful paintings on the ceilings which resemble a strong and stark Mughal and Dogra influence with floral motifs at the entrance of the dome. The paintings bear a close resemblance to the designs of paintings of the Ram Nagar palace complex, which is situated in the Udhampur district of the Jammu province. There is also a temple dedicated to Devi built on one of the corners of the courtyard within the premises of the temple. It has a white marble miniature temple shrine decorated with good looking

and beautiful images of a goddess placed in a glass casing. The temple's courtyard has a Tusli Plant on a pedestal in its premises, which also brings in reminiscences of the architectural style of the Dogras spotted in the zorawar Singh residence cum palace complex and the Ram Nagar palace. There is a continuous smoke emitting shrine at the centre of the temple, which is very unique feature of this temple. The entire temple is built on an artificial and elevated platform to safeguard it from the disaster of floods from river Tawi. There is a small opening to a low level passage from the round dome entrance which leads to the Amarnath cave or Guffa. There is also a temple of Lord Shiva in this cave. Another opening leads to the Nav Durga shrine, which has a temple that is populated with life size idols of Lord Vishnu, Lord Rama, Sita and other gods and goddesses. There is also a Peer Kho Mohalla or locality which has a memorial of ancient Peer Shiv Nath located opposite to it. There is also a small temple of Shani Devta located on the right side of the peer kho temple. It is believed that during the reign of Raja Biram Dev of Jammu (1454-95) a famous mendicant Jogi Guru Garib Nath belonging to the Guru Gorakh Nath order came to Jammu and resided at Peer Kho. Kho means cave in the local dialect. He came to be known as peer Kho and thus with the passage of time the cave got the name Peer Kho. According to the some historical records, the Peer Mitha and peer Kho temples were built for the Peer Saint Siddha Ghareeb Nath in 18th century AD during the ruling reign of Raja Ajhaib Dev. There is a culture of huge celebration during festivals amidst togetherness and reverence for each other and the feeling of brotherhood and love is eminent across the devotees of the temple in their conduct and their mannerisms. In short the people should visit this cave temple, pay obeisance and seek blessings from lord Shiva.

(The author is a columnist and KP activist).

YOUR COLUMN

The pesticide must be used in a safe manner

Dear Editor,

The pesticides not only affect the health of those who consume these farm produce, but also the farmers who use them. Success in agriculture is closely linked to increased use of pesticides. Even though humans have been using chemicals for controlling pests since time immemorial, the rampant use of toxic chemicals like arsenic, mercury, lead etc started during the early 20th century. The green revolution that focussed on increasing the productivity of crops expedited its usage. Pesticides are chemical compounds specifically formulated to combat and eliminate pests.

This category includes a wide range of substances used to control and eliminate many types of organisms, such as plants, insects, nematodes, molluscs, fish, birds, rodents, bacteria, fungi, and lampreys. Herbicides are the most widespread type of pesticide, accounting for nearly 50% of pesticide consumption worldwide.

Predominantly, pesticides are designed to serve as botanical defence agents, shielding plants from the threats of weeds, fungi, or insects. A pesticide is a

chemical molecule, like carbamate, or a biological agent, such as a virus, bacterium, or fungus, that prevents, incapacitates, eliminates, or otherwise discourages pests.

Various scientific studies have shown that pesticide exposure is linked with health issues like cancer, neurodegenerative diseases, birth diseases, reproduction disorders etc. They even harm the ecosystem balance. Presently every vegetable, fruit or spice that is produced in our country has the residues of pesticides. The pesticides not only affect the health of the consumers, but they also badly affect the farmers who use them. The farmers are exposed through skin, inhalation and ingestion during the application of these pesticides.

The common adage 'An apple a day keeps the doctor away' is no longer relevant today. Millions of tonnes of chemicals like chlorpyrifos, mancozeb, captan, dimethoate, phosalone etc are used by the orchard farmers in the once pristine Kashmir valley itself.

The unscrupulous use of these chemicals has resulted in the increased incidence of brain tumours among the orchard farmers. In spices like cardamom that everyone chews raw as a mouth freshener, the presence of highly toxic 'cypermethrin' has been reported. Sometimes the adverse effects of these pesticides are so severe that it is affecting many generations.

For example, the notorious case of aerial spraying of

endosulfan in Kerala for over 20 years, caused congenital anomalies associated with the brain, like mental retardation and cerebral palsy.

Even though the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has outlined instructions for the safe use of pesticides, which include the use of protective clothing to cover the whole body while handling, these are not effective and mostly not followed in principle. Even in farms managed by the government, no one is concerned about the lives of farmers or workers. A few years back researchers at the Institute for Stem Cell Science and Regenerative Medicine (InStem), Bangalore led by Praveen K. Vemula developed a gel, poly-Oxim, to give protection to farmers.

The gel functions as a catalyst to render organophosphate inactive. Unfortunately, these technologies have not reached the grassroots level.

Unlike medicines prescribed for human consumption that need the prescription of a qualified medical practitioner, pesticides can be easily bought directly from the stockist.

The government needs to restrict the sale of pesticides. The pesticides should be sold only with a prescription from a local agriculture officer or recognised agricultural graduate. This will reduce the unscrupulous use of these toxic chemicals. The Govt should promote organic farming by providing incentives to farmers.

Vijay Garg