

SWACHHTA KE DO RANG

This Diwali was different for many cities in India. The usual noise of crackers heard around Diwali was replaced by 'Humein Garv Hai' song and chants of Hara Geela Sookha Neela on roads and in community lanes as mobile vans and carts with two bins went door-to door collecting segregated waste. Over 75 lakh students from nearly 45,000 schools from across India took part in the in what may be termed a massive awareness campaign on segregating wet and dry waste at source initiated by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) towards achieving the goal of garbage-free cities. In addition, citizens, community groups, and organizations participated enthusiastically in this campaign led by their city's urban local bodies, the municipal corporations.

The campaign titled 'Swachhata Ke Do Rang' (two colours of cleanliness), with 'Hara Geela Sookha Neela' (green bin for wet waste and blue bin for dry waste) as the campaign's call to action, stressed on minimum two-bin segregation at source. Driven by Swachh Bharat Mission, over 3500 urban local bodies (ULBs) across 32 states and Union Territories, reached out to schools, communities, going door to door and mobilizing households with on-ground awareness programmes on source segregation. Students of different age groups enthusiastically participated in special activities like painting, art & craft creating green labels (for wet waste) and blue labels (for dry waste), building waste bins and toys out of waste, street plays, and took home the message of Swachhata Ka Uphaar. While school students from Assam's Khowai, performed a dance drama based on Mahatma Gandhi's vision of clean India, Patna Nagar Nigam schools made models out of waste under the theme of 'waste to wonder' . Kid's favourite characters like Chhota Bheem were a part of these models to spread awareness. Some schools under the MCD even created jigsaw puzzles unique games to demonstrate the importance of segregating wet and dry waste to the students.

The six-time winner of India's cleanest city in the Swachh Survekshan Awards and a 7-STAR Garbage-free city, Indore showcased a remarkable effort of conducting a cleanliness drive across the city post Diwali. As a part of the awareness campaign, the New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC) took to the streets with a swachhata mascot. With the moto self- Sustainable locality at Forest Ghat, trainings were conducted among SHGs members and residents on vermi-composting and pit-composting with demo by the Tezpur Municipal Board, Assam. Malappuram municipality in Kerala held training sessions for interstate labourers under the segregation campaign. Even CRPF troops joined the campaign from Kashmir's OPS sector. They picked up brooms to clean the roads, gardens and premises of the CRPF camp. The nationwide campaign of waste segregation at source triggered focused participation through ground action for sanitation, waste management and reduction of waste that goes to legacy dumpsites. The massive Jan Andolan witness citizens from all walks of life spread awareness on segregating waste at source in their own special way and make the campaign a huge success. The impact is already visible on the ground as the states have begun channelizing their energies towards making cities garbage-free.

OFF 'D' CUFF

Sharad Poornima Significance

Krishna performs the Maha Raas on Sharad Poornima, full moon night in the month of Sharad, according to the Hindu lunar calendar. On this day Krishna is said to make gopis – souls of beings - experience the ecstasy of merging of the Param tattva with the atma, soul.

On Sharad Poornima, the moon at its brightest, its whitest and the moonbeams are at their curative best. While the sun gives growth and colour to the plants, the moon showers them with the medicinal qualities. And it also imparts 'Ras', juice, nectar to vegetation. In beings, moon imparts spiritual 'ras' that induces true joy of life. On Sharad Poornima it is at its maximum. Romanticism and creativity are at their best on this day.

All evolved souls mystics, Sufis, poets all have spoken about the meeting of atma and Prabhu. Krishna made humans on this dharti feel the climax of sublimation, experience that orgasm, that anand which is beyond human capacity to think of -- that sublime state which occurs when soul merges with the highest entity.

One can experience that divine feeling by being in His dhyan constantly, seeing Him everywhere, knowing that whatever is happening – it is His will. When you meet someone you never intended to, who made that happen? Hari. It is Hari's wish that you meet this person, so accept and honour the situation as Hari iccha – Hari's wish. And when you let go of your wishes and let Hari's will prevail, gradually your desires and wishes drop and you become Hari ki iccha wali – that which Hari wishes.

Maha Raas has another meaning too. The sharir, physical being, has many senses and desires arising there from. When you merge with the feel of Hari, all the senses -- sense of touch, seeing, tasting, smelling, and sense of hearing, all the desire arising there from, and needs of the sharir are fulfilled. This is because Hari or

the Supreme, according to the Vedas, is sarva-kamah, sarva-gandah, sarva-rasah – Raso Vai Sah -- the source of all kinds of rasas, flavours of life. When we are connected with Him, all our sensual desires are satisfied.

Hari is a vibration which helps blissfully release all accumulations in the body by itself, if you are in constant dhyan of Hari, just like Goddess Saraswati, who does not need any male for bodily gratification, because she is able to release herself through creativity and get anand or bliss through it.

Hari is a sound which takes you upward from the root chakra and this ends the need for gratification of sensual pleasures. You will no longer depend on outwardly things to tend to the sensual pleasures, and will address them only to fulfil the dharma of the body, so that you stay healthy; after being in constant thought of Hari, you will not feel like indulging in these pleasures. The urge to have different types of attractions will end, because now you are contracting your senses and rising above the basic instincts. If you get to eat these, it is fine, you enjoy them, after all Krishna too enjoyed chhappan bhog, 56 foods, and other pleasures of life but never indulged in them, or got perturbed if they were not there.

Hari is the sound mantra given to that highest entity which is above us all, which is unseen; we cannot see but we can experience it and see its attributes in an evolved human. Krishna says, 'I am THAT and you have the potential to be THAT.'

And who will recognise Hari? Only the one who knows that highest entity by its essence, its tattva – its gunas, its nature of being ever growing, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient – can see Him. Wherever such a person goes, he hears Him, sees Him, feels Him.

That is why it is stated in the shastras that be a tattva gyani to know Supreme through tattva.

-Meena Om

Back to Village: A Democratic Innovation

■ DR PARVEEN KUMAR

The weekly edition of 'Young India' in its April 1931 issue carried the message of Father of Nation Mohan Dass Karam Chand Gandhi. The message read as, 'the cities are capable of taking care of themselves. It is the villages we have to turn to. We have to disabuse them of their prejudices, their superstitions, their narrow outlook, and we can do so in no other manner than that of staying amongst them and sharing their joys and sorrows and spreading education and intelligent information among them. It is here pertinent to mention that the Young India weekly journal was published by Mahatma Gandhi from 1919 to 1931 and used by him to spread his ideology of non-violence and resistance against the British Empire. Late Lala Lajpat Rai, another most prominent leader during India's struggle for freedom wrote Young India during his stay in the US and it was published there for the first time in 1916.

'Back to the Village' was also a National Campaign of Nepal's Panchayat regime from 1967 to 1975. It aimed to direct development efforts to rural areas where a majority of the Nepali people live. As part of the program which was originally known as 'Go to Village' National Campaign, civil servants and students from the cities were sent to live in rural communities and participate in development work and serve as teachers in village schools. It was one of the major initiatives of Nepal's King Mahendra who ruled the country from 1955 to 1972. The nation-building process can be completed only when we begin from the bottom of the pyramid. Mahatma Gandhi had said that India lives in its villages and if we have to transform rural India, the peoples at the grassroots must be empowered. The institutions of local self governance in the form of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) have been entrusted with the development of the villages. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment (1992) aims at creation of a three-tier Panchayati raj structure at district, block and village levels. Unfortunately the provisions of 73rd amendment have not been implemented in letter and spirit by most of the states. Still most of the states and UTs have not devolved all the 29 subjects listed in the 11th schedule of the Constitution along with adequate devolution of funds and functionaries to Panchayats at district, block and village levels as mandated in the 73rd Amendment. The third tier government must be enabled to function focusing on good governance, equality, socio-economic justice and all-round welfare of the villagers. People must be empowered to participate in decision making processes, enjoying equality, liberty, fraternity, fundamental rights and basic human needs. Constitutional provisions must be supplemented by adequate checks and balances, led by vigilant, responsible and dedicated political leadership. Based on the philosophy of our Father of Nation of taking care of villages and to empower the grassroots institutions, the administration of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir came up with a 'Back to Village (B2V)' programme. The programme is aimed at increasing outreach, transparency and delivery by involving the peoples of the state and government officials in a joint effort to deliver the mission of equitable development.

The programme focuses on energising Panchayats and directing development efforts in rural areas through community participation. Till date three phases of B2V have been completed and by the time the article is being written, the preparations for fourth phase of B2V are in full swing. The Phase-I was an introductory and interactive programme to understand the people's grievances and demands. The Phase-II focused on the devolution of powers to Panchayats and tried to understand how these Panchayats are functioning and what are the grievances and demands. Phase-III was designed on the format for grievance redressal. All the twenty Deputy Commissioners have been given direction by the UT administration to ensure effective coordination at all the levels so as to make the 4th Phase a grand success on the lines of earlier three phases. As much as 70 minister of the Union of India are visiting different and distant remote locations of the UT to instill a sense of inclusiveness and confidence among masses. Apart from the Union Ministers, officers of Central Government are also likely to participate in the activities to be conducted as part of the programme. The Administrative Secretaries, who are also the Mentors of different districts of the Union Territory, have also been told to visit their respective districts during the Phase-4 of the B2V programme. Such is the name and fame of this public outreach programme that it has even got a mention by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his monthly grassroots connect series 'Mann-Ki-Baat'. PM has mentioned it as a festival of development, public participation and awareness.

October 15 to 26 has been designated as the preparatory phase of the fourth phase of the government's Back to Village (B2V)

programme under 'Jan Abhiyan' that is to commence from October 27. Every department has been asked to decide on at least one tangible deliverable to be achieved during the Jan Abhiyan. This tangible deliverable includes ensuring that any scheme or activity is completed or complete implementation of a project or debottlenecking of a major initiative or kick starting a new initiative or major project or activity. The 11 days long action packed preparatory phase in the form of Jan Abhiyan, at present in full swing across the Union Territory had a target to deliver 85 people centric schemes by 35 departments that included issue of eight lakh Ayushman cards, 2.5 lakh UDID cards, two lakh e-Shram cards and 30,000 land passbooks to the applicants. The campaign also focused on youths, their skills and entrepreneurship development, self-employment, good governance, and Panchayati Raj along with 'Nasha Mukht' and 'Rozgar Yukt' Jammu and Kashmir. During the campaign, people also obtained domicile certificates, self-employment loans, Health Golden Cards, pension payments, and digital certificates through an online mode besides verification of their land records. Digital camps were also held in every Panchayat and at J&K Banks counters in every block. Several important actions were also completed during the Jan Abhiyan campaign. For the fourth phase of B2V, the Chief Secretary of UT Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta has also suggested 12 points for planning activities. These points include Nasha Mukht Abhiyan, functioning of Patwaris and Village Level Workers (VLWs), availability of officers in Panchayats, functioning of school complex system, Amrit Sarovars, Swachh Gram, convergence meetings (once in a month in villages where all departments are present). The institute with which the author is affiliated also left no stone unturned in ensuring that the vision and mission of B2V is accomplished through its various frontline extension institutes, the Krishi Vigyan Kendra's (KVKs). SKUAST-Kashmir under the dynamic leadership of Vice Chancellor Prof Nazir Ahmed Ganai and supervision of Worthy Director Extension Prof. Dil Mohammad Makhdoomi ensured organization of Kisan Mela, Fruit shows, awareness and sensitization programmes on promotion of Integrated Farming Systems, Natural Farming, Organic farming and climate resilient technologies, skill development drives, promotion of various collective organizations like FPOs, various programmes for farm women and youths of

the region and many other activities related to agriculture and allied sectors through various KVKs located in different districts of the valley. Gone are the days when people had to wait for hours in queues in government offices. Campaigns like 'Jan Abhiyan' and programmes like 'Back to Village' are next generation service delivery mechanism which has empower people in the true sense by eliminating all the hurdles in the delivery of effective services to them. Successful democracies depend upon how the masses are involved in the developmental process, how they are accessed and assessed, how their grievances are redressed and to the extent their voice finds place in the higher levels of hierarchy. Unfortunately, democracies often suffer from a big gap between the administration and the masses. Outreach, Inclusion and Popular Participation are still an issue with many of democracies. Democracy means listening to the people at their doorsteps, understanding the circumstances in which they are living, feeling a pinch of the difficulties that impact their lives, and finding a way out of it. This is the essence of 'Back to Village'; initiative of the UT of Jammu and Kashmir. The feedback from such initiatives if properly addressed to have the potential to change the whole dynamics of this Union Territory. At the same time, it is for the administration of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir to ensure that the official commitments made in the previous three rounds of B2V regarding the earlier phases must be honoured otherwise the trust deficit between people and the officials will be widened. The programme which started with focus on four main goals of energizing Panchayats, undertaking assessment of needs of the villages, collecting feedback on delivery of Government schemes/programmes, capturing specific economic potential besides affording an opportunity to gazetted officers to visit the villages has turned out to be a unique mission, a catalyst for development and a revolutionary step for public centric governance. As Mahatma has already turned 150, his mission and vision of development of villages and mentioned in 'Young India (1931)' is being manifested through this prestigious 'Back to Village (B2V)' programme of Union Territory administration. In a true sense, it has laid down a strong foundation for the system wherein those at the top of administration and those at the grass roots work in a close cooperation ultimately to empower the people.

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Cow deserves to be declared as National Animal

■ ER PRABHAT KISHORE

A bench of Allahabad High Court has passed an order on 1st September 2021, in which it has said that the cow is an integral part of Indian culture and the Central Government should bring a bill in the Parliament to declare the cow as the national animal of India. Earlier on 31st May 2017, Rajasthan High Court has also recommended the Centre to declare the cow as national animal. Strict law should be enforced against those who harm the cow. The right to life is above the right to kill and the right to eat beef can never be considered a fundamental right. The judgement narrates that according to Rigveda, 'Panchgavya' prepared using cow's milk, curd, ghee, urine, and dung helps in treating several incurable diseases and building immunity. As per Ayurveda, "Gavyam Pavitram Cha Rasayanam Cha, Pathyam Cha Hridayam Balbuddhim. Aayuh Pradam Raktvikarhari, Tridosh Hridrogvishapaham Syat" (i.e. Panchgavya is a pure chemical. It is beneficial as diet and for heart. It increases lifespan, strength and intellectual capacity and destroys all the impurities of the blood. It is the destroyer of three Doshas, namely Vata, Pitta and Kapha. It can cure cardiovascular disorders).

From a religious & cultural point of view, the cow has been the centre of attention and worthy of worship in Indian society since time immemorial. People of Sanatan Dharma have been worshipping the cow for centuries. According to Sanatan Vedic culture belief, 33 Koti (categories) of Gods & Goddesses reside in a cow. Lord Krishna got all his knowledge under the cow's feet. He preached in Bhagwad Gita (10:28) 'Dhanuansmama Kamdhuk' (i.e. I am whatever Kamdenu is). All four Vedas have highlighted the significance of the cow and termed her as the symbol of

creation. The Rigveda states that the cow, who is the mother of Rudra, the daughter of Vasus, the sister of Adityas (Agni), the store house of nectar (milk) is Aghanya and should never be killed. One can attain Moksha (salvation) by worshiping and serving her. According to Yajurveda, 'Go Samana Na Vidyate', i.e. the cow is the only one among the living creatures in the world to be useful from beginning to end. As per Samveda, all thing obtained from the cow are sacred. As per Atharvaveda, "Dhenussadanam Rayaanam", i.e. the cow is the adobe of prosperity. The Cow was originally born during the Samudra Mantan (churning of the ocean) and is one of the Navaratnas. She is the repository of eight kinds of wealth. The peasants become wealthy with Golakshmi.

Cow is the national animal of the nearby country Nepal. In Indonesia, Muslims still maintain not slaughtering cows in respect of their ancestors, who were Hindus. Jesus Christ had said that killing a cow is tantamount to killing a man. Lord Buddha described the cow as the friend of man. The Jains have called the cow as heaven. Bal GangadharTilak said that you can kill me but do not hurt the cow. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya had advocated for total prohibition of cow slaughter. Gandhiji called the cow "a poem of pity" and regarded her as a symbol of Indian culture. He said that he does not want Swarajya in Bharat where the cows are being killed.

Although slaughter of cattle and consumption of beef plays a role in several Muslim festivals and culture, majority of Muslim leadership of the country have always been in favour of a nationwide ban on cow slaughter. Khwaja Hasan Nizami in his book 'Tark-e-Gao Kushi' has written about not killing the cow. Even Akbar, Humayun, and Babar had appealed not to kill

the cow in their Raj. Hyder Ali, the ruler of Mysore, had made cow slaughter a punishable offence. During framing of the Constitution of India, several members of the Constitution Assembly had spoken about the inclusion of cow protection as a fundamental right. Scientists believe that cow is the only living being who inhales and exhales oxygen. It absorbs cosmic energy through its horns. Cow's urine has the miraculous property of destroying any kind of germs. It provides strength to the heart & mind and stops ageing. Russian scientist said that house plastered with cow dung is safe for radio waves. Oxygen is generated by using ghee in the Yagya. Spraying cow's dung on urban waste removes all the foul smell and converts the waste into fertilizer.

Several studies have claimed that in addition to increasing the production of crops, eating crops grown using cow dung can get rid of various diseases. In countries having dry climate and water scarcity, the occupation of agriculture is very tedious. Such countries like Kuwait are importing cow-dung from India for organic farming using cow-dung fertilisers. Cow has been treated as auspicious and also a symbol of compassion & piusness. It is also the backbone of our socio-economic life. Cow protection and promotion are not concerned with any particular religion or faith. Cow is an integral part of Indian culture and the task of saving the culture rests with every citizen living in the country, irrespective of religion or worship. Uttarakhand High Court has passed an order for the legal status of the person to the Holy Ganga and Yamuna rivers; similarly, the cow should also be granted the status of a legal entity. Considering the enormous benefits it provides to mankind and nature, the cow deserves to be a national animal.

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BEROZGAR SE SWAROZGAR

AVSAR scheme provides national platform for marketing to J&K artisans

Strengthens economic conditions of local artisan community

UMEED Market Place setup under AVSAR (Airport as Venue for Skilled Artisans of Region) Scheme of Airport Authority of India at Srinagar and Jammu airports is helping artisans to get exposed to the national market and strengthen the economic conditions of local artisan community. These outlets at airports exhibit products of all 20 districts and the initiative is supporting local art and artisans of Self Help Groups of J&K Rural Livelihood Mission. These outlets form a platform for marketing local products directly to the customers. An area of 100-200 square feet has been earmarked at each AAI operated airport. The products of Self Help Groups get exposed to the national market, strengthen the local artisan community and provide sufficient promotional avenues to their products.

The marketplace, at both Airports, is giving huge visibility to the members of SHGs and promoting their products to a wider spectrum, reaching out to the larger population and make rural handicraft products available at reasonable prices to the passengers. More than five lakh women benefit every year from stalls and counters offered to them for 15 days on rotational basis. It also serves as a point for passengers to place bulk orders and request for customized demands for corporate gifting as well. The initiative strengthens SHGs by allotting space at AAI Airports to provide huge visibility to these small groups and prepare them to promote/market their products to the wider spectrum, reaching out to the larger population.

The 'AVSAR' scheme has also been launched with an aim to encourage the talent of women, artisans and craftsmen

and provide them with the right opportunities. Under AVSAR, an opportunity to help the indigent to mobilize their households into functionally effective self-earned groups for self-reliance and self-dependence, has been provided.

Syed Darakhsha of Budgam is the founder of the 10-member successful women self-help artisans' group sponsored by JKRLM for its start-up and deals with handicrafts. Darakhsha says they had also been provided an opportunity to sell their hand made products at Srinagar Airport under AVSAR scheme for 15 days generating a revenue worth Rs 9 lakh. She says that it was only possible with the help of financial aid of JKRLM Department Budgam that her group was able to sell their products at various sales outlets.

Nayeema Bano is another example of successful SHG group under UMEED

with a name of AALISHAN in Chadoora Budgam. Her Self help group deals with packaging of dry fruits and papier-mâché work on plates, cups, vases, and decoration pieces such as miniature Samovar, Shikara and similar items. Naveema says that a platform was provided to their SHG for 15 days at Srinagar Airport under AVSAR scheme wherein they even managed to earn a profit of Rs 2 lakh in a single day. "This was only possible due to JKRLM who trained her SHG in packaging of dry fruits, papier-mâché work and marketing skills", she said. In her message to the youth she said that having originality, creativity and focus without obsessing over what others are doing, are the keys to success. JKRLM is reaching out to the rural poor families and links them to sustainable livelihood opportunities till they come out of the poverty and start enjoying a decent quality life.