

CLIMATE CHANGE

The Earth's climate is an intricate web of atmospheric, oceanic, and geophysical factors that collectively shape the weather conditions experienced by regions over extended periods. This long-term average of weather patterns is what we call climate.

The geographical location of a particular area is a pivotal determinant of its climate, influencing temperature, precipitation, and other meteorological variables. However, in recent times, an alarming trend has emerged - the gradual rise in the planet's temperature, a phenomenon commonly referred to as global warming. The consequences of this warming extend far beyond discomfort; they pose a severe threat to the health of our planet and all its inhabitants. The Earth's temperature has been steadily increasing, a trend that scientists attribute to the intensification of the greenhouse effect caused by human activities. The burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, and industrial processes release vast amounts of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide and methane, into the atmosphere. These gases trap heat, leading to a warming of the Earth's surface. The consequences are evident in the form of rising sea levels, more frequent and severe weather events, and disruptions to ecosystems.

Addressing the challenges posed by climate change requires a concerted effort from governments worldwide. Leaders must recognize the gravity of the situation and implement policies that promote sustainable development. This involves a shift towards renewable energy sources, stringent emissions controls, and the preservation of natural habitats. Investments in green infrastructure, the creation of green jobs, and the establishment of a green economy are crucial steps toward mitigating the impacts of climate change. Governments cannot combat climate change in isolation. Citizen participation is paramount. Awareness campaigns, educational programs, and incentives for sustainable practices are essential to fostering a sense of responsibility among the general populace. Individuals can contribute by adopting eco-friendly lifestyles, reducing carbon footprints, and advocating for environmentally conscious policies. Sustainable habits, when collectively embraced, can have a significant impact on slowing down the pace of global warming. Climate change knows no borders, and its effects are felt globally. Thus, tackling this challenge requires international collaboration. Nations must set aside political differences and work together honestly to develop and implement strategies that transcend geographic boundaries. Governments, communities, and individuals all play crucial roles in addressing this global challenge. Sustainable development, green initiatives, and international cooperation are not mere buzzwords but essential elements of a comprehensive strategy to secure the health of our planet and the well-being of future generations. Through education and awareness, students can become ambassadors for change, driving the momentum needed to create a sustainable and resilient future for all.

Insights from 43rd FDP at IIM Ahmedabad

■ DR. SHAHID AMIN

Becoming the crème de la crème in the realm of higher education for IIM Ahmedabad is an odyssey that defies a singular narrative. My recent experiences at IIM Ahmedabad, amid the grandeur of its 43rd Faculty Development Program, unveiled a tapestry of intricate systems and pedagogical methods that constitute the bedrock of its illustrious reputation. IIM Ahmedabad, a recent luminary atop the NIRF 2023 rankings, is a testament to the unwavering pursuit of excellence, evident when one sets foot on its hallowed grounds.

My journey with one of the dear friend Dr. Shakir Hussain from Kashmir commenced at the stroke of midnight, a serendipitous initiation into the meticulous orchestration of IIM's organizational brilliance. Backpacks, course materials, dormitory allotment (Dorm 32, Room 3239), internet and library access codes, and distribution of personalized email IDs marked the inception of an experience meticulously choreographed. The unveiling of group dynamics hinted at collaborativeendeavours on the horizon.

The inaugural ceremony, graced by IIMA's venerable Director, the esteemed FDP Chairman, and an assembly of distinguished Executive Committee members and faculty, set the stage for an unforgettable commencement. Subsequent days unfolded with sessions on the IIMA Library and the significance of gender sensitization, underlining the imperative for a harmonious world. Academicians' pivotal role in safeguarding truth and advancing knowledge resonated as the foundation of our academic voyage.

Throughout the FDP, we immersed ourselves in diverse courses, enriched by the wisdom of distinguished professors, each day punctuated by official hours from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM followed by non-stop work on projects and assignments. Brief tea breaks and a well-deserved lunch offered moments of reflection and rejuvenation. Yet, the heart of the experience resided in the exceptional professors themselves, bearers of profound subject expertise, distinctive pedagogical styles, punctuality, and a wealth of international exposure, serving as waypoints of inspiration.

Pedagogically, IIM Ahmedabad shines, with educators wielding pedagogical general knowledge and content mastery. Cases have been the favored tools in IIM Ahmedabad as we journeyed through powerful videos, simulation games, experiential learning, role plays, projects, and reflection notes. Peer learning thrived as a cornerstone at IIM Ahmedabad. Success resulted from collective support, fostering deep friendships and invaluable networking connections. The professors at IIM Ahmedabad have displayed their impeccable time management skills, which undoubtedly contributed to the seamless orchestration of the classes. Their ability to commence sessions promptly, fostered engaging discussions. What sets them apart is their artful approach to time management, blending creativity and productivity in perfect harmony. This alchemical blend ensured that every moment spent in the classes was not just instructive but also a testament to the mastery of their craft.

Immediate evaluation and feedback created a dynamic atmosphere, spurring constant improvement. The art of board management, a unique facet of IIM Ahmedabad, kindled a profound appreciation for this essential teaching and learning tool.

The "artificial stress" of life at IIM meant nights in the library, pre-dawn tea point discussions, and ceaseless intellectual exchanges in Student Activity Block (SAB).

Moreover, there was an opportunity to enjoy games and maintain physical fitness for the students. This environment not only fortified us but also kindled a profound passion for learning and exploration. The Vikram Sarabhai Library, a treasure trove of knowledge with ample resources and 24/7 accessibility, modern classrooms, mess facilities and the state-of-the-art infrastructure etc. further enriched our journey.IIM Ahmedabad, despite its laurels, remains perpetually on the hunt for avenues of improvement and innovation.

As I reflect on this extraordinary experience, my gratitude knows no bounds.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to my beloved institution, ITM University Gwalior, for their sponsorship that made this transformative journey possible.

To everyone at IIM Ahmedabad, my worthy class mates in 43rd FDP and all my well-wishers who played a role in shaping this transformative experience, my gratitude is boundless. The 50 days spent within these venerable walls were nothing short of enlightening, a testament to the impeccable standards that IIM Ahmedabad upholds. This FDP journey was genuinely fulfilling, etched as a memorable chapter in the depths of my heart.

(The writer is Associate Professor, School of Management and Commerce, ITM University Gwalior).

PM CARES for Children: A Visionary Approach

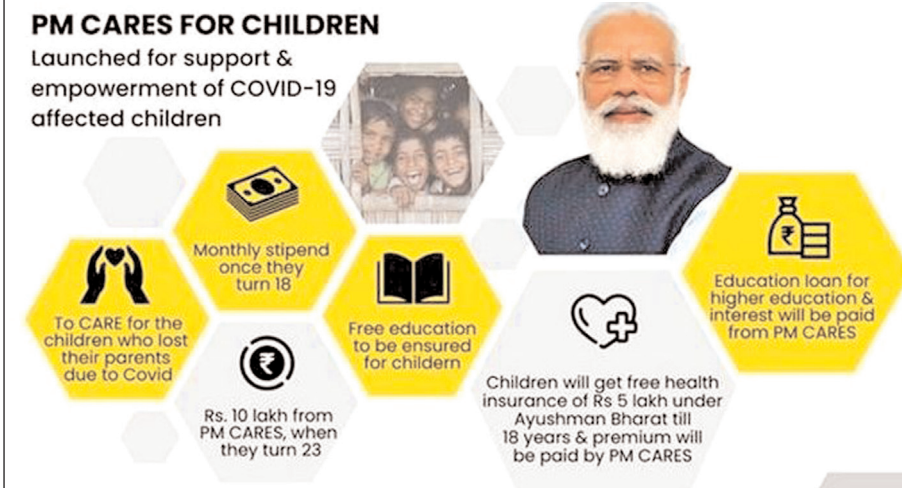
■ ER. PRABHAT KISHORE

A large number of children have lost both parents or surviving parents or legal parents or adoptive parents during the period of theCOVID-19 pandemic starting from 11th March 2020 to 28th February 2022. The whole country stands with such children in difficult time. To support such orphan children, the "PM CARES for Children" schemehas been launched across the country on 29th May 2021. The scheme is a determined step taken by the country for a golden future of such children.

The scheme aims to ensure comprehensive care and protection of children who have lost their parents to the COVID pandemic, in a sustained manner; enable their well being through health insurance, empower them through education and equip them for self-sufficient existence with financial support of Rs 10 Lakh on reaching 23 years of age. The child should not have completed 18years of age on the death of the parents.

The PM CARES for children scheme shall provide educational assistance entitlements - (i) Support for Boarding and Lodging to the extent feasible in the government residential schools, (ii) Uniforms, Textbooks, Tuition Fees, Notebooks, Stationery, Transport facilities to the beneficiaries. Children above 10 years of agecan be enrolled in Kasturba Gandhi BalikaVidyalaya, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose AwasiyaVidyalaya, Eklayaya Model Schools, Sainik School, NavodayaVidyalaya as per the guideline of the concerned institution.

All identified and verified children will be enrolled as beneficiaries under the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri-Jan ArogyaYojana (PM-JAY)Scheme with a health insurance cover of Rs 5 Lakh. The cover under the scheme includes all expenses incurred on Medical examinations, treatment & consultations, Pre-hospitalisation, Medicine & medical consumables, Non-intensive & intensive care services, Diagnostic and laboratory investigations, Medical implanta-



tion services, Accommodation benefits, Food services, Complications arising during treatment and Post-hospitalisation follow-up aere upto 15 days.

A lump-sum amount will be directly transferred to the post office account of thebeneficiaries. A pro-rata amount will be credited upfront in the account of the beneficiary such that the corpus becomes Rs 10 Lakh at the time of attaining the age of 18 years. On attaining the age of 18 years, the beneficiary will receive a stipendtill the age of 23 years by investing the corpus of Rs 10 Lakh. They will receive an amount Rs 10 Lakh on attaining the age of 23 years.The central government has promised Rs 4000/- for daily basic needs of children through other schemes.

For the execution of the scheme, Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) is the nodal Ministry at the central level; Department of Social Justice or Department of Women& child Development is the nodal agency at the State level and District Magistrate is the nodal authority at the district level.

Various Ministries and Departments have a crucial role to play in providing facilities and services to the children as per their

needs.The Department of School and Literacy will ensure that the beneficiary children receive educational assistance; Department of Higher Education will facilitate loans and scholarships; The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare will ensure insurance cover under PM-JAY scheme. The Ministry of Social Justice and Employment, Ministry of Tribal Affairs and Ministry of Minority Affairs will accommodate the children identified under their scholarship programme. The Department of Economic Affairs will facilitate investment of the fixed deposit in an instrument to ensure stipend after 18 years of age and lump-sum payment of Rs 10 Lakh at 23 years of age.

Identification of beneficiaries will be done by the District Magistrate with the assistance of police, District Child Protection Unit (DCPU), Child Line & Civil Society organizations. Gram Panchayat, Anganwadi& ASHA network will be sensitized to report such children to CWC. The identified child will be registered within a week time on the online portal developed for the purpose. The detailed verificationof the beneficiary will be done by the CWC and will be uploaded on the portal within 15 days.

After the recommendation of CWC and confirmation of the DM, the account of eligible beneficiaries will be opened in the Post Office. Children below 18 years of agewill have a joint account with DM; whereas in case of children of 18 years or above a single account will be opened.

Upon receiving approved list of beneficiaries on the portal, MoWCDwill transfer the lump sum amount to the account of DM. Subsequently, the DM will provide funds to the children's account and to the institutions responsible for their education, health or other activities. According to MoWCD, uptill now more than 4000 children from all corners of the country have been approved and the process is on.

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has claimed that 147492 children have lost either both their parents or one of their parents due to the Covid-19 pandemic and other reasons between March 2020 and 29th May 2021, but data of only due to Covid is not available. According to MoWCD, 9042 applications from 33 States/UTs have been received on the "PM CARES for children"portal, out which 4345beneficiaries from 31 States/UTs have been approved. In reality, neither the government nor any NGO has complete data of children orphaned during the Covid.The Government should ensure proper survey of such children. Only then,the developed policies and programmes can benefit them. Also the society should come forward to adopt such children for their welfare.

PM CARES for children is a holistic approach to cover children, who lost their parents during the worldwide pandemic Covid-19. It is hoped that through this ambitious scheme, the lives of such unfortunate children will be settled to some extent and they will move ahead on the path of a bright future.

(The author is a technocrat & academician).

The festival of Dhanteras symbolizes health, wealth & prosperity

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

India is a land of rich traditions and diverse cultures,is known for its numerous festivals that hold immense significance. One such festival celebrated with great enthusiasm and devotion is Dhanteras. Dhanteras marks the beginning of the illustrious festival of lights-Diwali. Dhanteras also known as Dhanatryodashi is the first day that marks the festival of Diwali in most of India.It is celebrated on the thirteenth lunar day (Trayodashi) of Krishna Paksha (dark fortnight) in the Hindu calendar month of Ashvin(according to the amanta tradition) or Kartika (according to Purnimanta tradition). Dhanvantari, who is also worshipped on the occasion of Dhanteras ,is considered the god of Ayurveda who imparted the wisdom of Ayurveda for the benefit and betterment of humanity and to help rid it of the suffering of disease. The Indian ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy ,Unani ,Siddhi and Homeopathy, announced its decision to observe Dhanteras ,as the National Ayurveda Day ,which was first observed on 28th October 2016.Dhanteras is the worship of Dhanvantri. Dhanvantri , according to Hindu traditions ,emerged during Samudra Manthana ,holding a pot full of amrita (a nectar bestowing immortality) in one hand and the sacred text about Ayurveda in the other .He is

considered to be the physician of the gods .The festival is celebrated as Lakshmi Puja ,which is performed in the evenings when lamps of clay (diyas) are lit .Bhajans or devotional songs are sung in praise of goddess Lakshmi and traditional sweets are offered to the goddess .It is believed that new Dhan -wealth or some item made of precious metal is a sign of good luck .In modern times ,Dhanteras has come to be known as the most auspicious occasion for buying gold ,silver ,and other metals ,especially kitchenware .The day also sees heavy purchases of appliances and automobiles .It is also celebration of health and is constituent part of Diwali .In the year 2023,it falls on 10th of November. Dhanteras is a festival celebrated by Hindus .On this day ,people purchase utensils and jewellery to bring good luck .The word Dhanteras is derived from Dhan meaning wealth and Teras which means thirteen .The festival of Dhanteras has mythological and religious roots .So like other festivals ,Dhanteras ,festival is linked with famous Hindu mythological stories .There is an interesting story behind Dhanteras ,for which people worship Lord Yamaraja on this day .As per one of the popular stories ,it is believed that the horoscope of a kings son predicted that he will die on the fourth day of marriage after getting bitten by snake .On the fourth day his wife decided to

turn the fate around .She made sure her husband did not sleep ,as she narrated stories to keep him awake .To lure snake away ,she laid out all the ornaments and coins at the entrance in a heap .It is believed when the God of Death came in the disguise of a snake ,he was blinded by all the dazzling jewellery and coins .This way the snake could not enter the King's chamber and also got hooked to the wife's stories and songs .It is believed that he silently left the place in morning and bared the life of the prince .Another interesting story which is very popular is the one featuring Lord Dhanvantari ,who is the physician of the Gods and an incarnation of Lord Vishnu ,who came out of an ocean that is believed to be churned by the Gods and demons on the day of Dhanteras , and so people worship Lord Dhanvantri on this day .Since then Dhanteras is known as one of the most auspicious days and one of the biggest festivals of Hindus.Dhanteras is the birth anniversary of God of Ayurveda .On this day ,a lamp for God of Death is lit outside the home so that any untimely death of family members can be avoided .People also worship Lord of Death Yamaraj and Goddess Lakshmi .On Dhanteras devotees pray to Lord Dhanvantri for curing chronic ailments by Ayurveda. Dhanteras is also celebrated to honor and worship Lord Kubera ,the god of wealth ,and Goddess Lakshmi ,the goddess

of prosperity .It is believed that on this auspicious day ,buying new items especially ones made of gold ,silver ,utensils ,kitchenware's ,automobiles and other appliances is believed to brings good luck and prosperity .On the occasion of Dhanteras ,there is big hustle and bustle in markets and people usually go for shopping on this day .This day is a celebration aimed at increasing wealth and prosperity .Dhanteras engages themes of cleansing ,renewal and the securing of auspiciousness as embodied by Lakshmi .In villages cattle are adorned and worshipped by farmers as their main source of income .People also purchase brooms on this day .Purchasing a broom is considered to keep Goddess Lakshmi from leaving one's home .Buying a broom on Dhanteras is also said to assist one get rid of all debts and bring happiness and prosperity .To keep house clean brooms are regularly used in every family. Cleanliness is said to attract goddess Lakshmi. One of the stories say that on this day Goddess Parvati played dice with her husband Lord Shiva and won. On this auspicious occasion of Dhanteras, may there be abundant shower of wealth in our life and may the light of success cover our life beautifully. Happy Dhanterras to all.

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

In the Spotlight: Omar Abdullah's Take on Religion and the Environment

■ ABHIJEET JASROTIA

In the world of politics, where the lines between religion, governance, and environmental stewardship often blur, leaders must tread carefully. A recent statement by Omar Abdullah, expressing concerns about the road to Amarnath, has sparked controversy and raised fundamental questions about the role of politicians in commenting on religious matters.

Omar Abdullah's comments, which some have described as absurd and bizarre, have raised eyebrows due to their perceived insensitivity towards the concerns of a particular religious community. What is particularly striking is that these comments did not receive significant opposition from the minority community of Jammu and Kashmir, despite the potentially contentious nature of the topic. This disparity in reactions prompts us to reflect on the complex dynamics of religious discourse in the region.

Conversely, the author of the text argues that had such comments been made about religious subsidies or privileges enjoyed by other communities, particularly the Haj subsidy, they would have likely met with staunch opposition from fanatic

preachers of religion. This discrepancy highlights the need for consistency in addressing sensitive religious matters and the potential double standards applied when discussing different faiths.

The text also touches on the perceived tolerance of Hindus in response to such comments. It points out that, to date, the tolerant Hindu community has not reacted strongly, but it warns against interpreting this as an endorsement for politicians to make derogatory remarks about religious places of worship or beliefs. In a rapidly changing world, the author emphasizes that political leaders should exercise caution and sensitivity when discussing religious subjects.

Amid the debate, Omar Abdullah's concern for the environment comes into focus. The author questions what Omar Abdullah's government has done for the environment, particularly during his time in power. They mention the deterioration of the iconic Dal Lake's four chinars, which were neglected as funds meant for their care were allegedly misappropriated. Additionally, the misuse of crores of aid received for Dal and Wullar lakes raises questions about government accountability.

In contrast, the present regime is credited with restoring those chinars and enhancing the environmental dignity of Kashmir in the last four years. The author further queries the environmental initiatives undertaken by Omar Abdullah or his National Conference (NC) workers, particularly in Dal cleaning or other environmental campaigns. The text also highlights the environmental impact of constructing golf courses during the NC's regime, suggesting that many trees were cut down without corresponding reforestation efforts. The author challenges readers to compare the afforestation data from Omar Abdullah's tenure as Chief Minister with the data from the last four years, revealing a significant increase in forest cover. This contrast calls into question the authenticity of politicians' environmental concerns when they appear to use them as a tool to criticize specific communities.

The conversation takes an historical turn as the author recalls the 2008 high court orders. During that time, Mehbooba Mufti refused to accept the construction of a small place at Baltal for Hindu pilgrims visiting the Holy Cave, which eventually led to the Amarnath land row. The author argues

that if the minority community has no issue with Haj subsidies and other privileges enjoyed by other communities, a road to the Amarnath cave should not be a concern either.

The text concludes by reminding readers of the critical role played by the government in managing environmental hazards. It mentions how illegal constructions in flood channels during Omar Abdullah's regime obstructed flood control measures, ultimately leading to the catastrophic floods of 2014. This serves as a stark reminder that political leaders should prioritize genuine environmental responsibility rather than merely using it as a political talking point.

In a world where the public is increasingly aware and demands accountability from their leaders, the message is clear: politicians must approach sensitive matters with sensitivity, consistency, and genuine concern, whether it relates to religion or the environment. The controversy surrounding Omar Abdullah's statement underscores the need for a more nuanced and balanced approach to governance in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

(The writer is Spokesperson for BJP).

YOUR COLUMN

UCC has remained unfulfilled promise

Dear Editor,

Uniform Civil Code (UCC) is one of the three core issues. The repeal of Article 370 has been successfully achieved. Ayodhya Ram Mandir issue has been resolved. But UCC is in waiting. Speculation is rife and opinion has been gaining ground that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has lost interest in bringing UCC. If this issue has been put on hold, it may be probably due to the 5 state Assembly elections having already been announced and the fast approaching Lok Sabha election. People are aware that this cannot be brought into force in haste. Consensus among political leaders is conspicuously absent. The only one issue on which the politicians close their rank is about their pay and perks. On all other issues, what is desirable for ruling parties is anathema for opposition parties. Opposition stems more from political animosity than on ideological differences. UCC represents one nation, one law. In matters of common interest, there is need for UCC. Personal laws can co-exist with UCC provided the provisions of personal laws are not in conflict with the UCC if it comes to force. The prospects of UCC coming into statue book are bright if the

NDA stages come back to power in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. What happens in the 2024 elections cannot be predicted. The protagonists of the UCC are of the view that it is "now or never". People have started airing their opinion that if Yogi Adityanath comes to power, the UCC will come into force. No doubt, Yogi Adityanath is dynamic leader and capable of doing what he wants to do. It is wrong to think that complacency has set in, in Modi to bring UCC. The very purpose of UCC is to make the laws applicable to all irrespective of one's religion, region, caste or creed. The only state to have UCC in India at present is Goa. BJP governments are disposed more towards UCC. Vote bank politics nurtured by the opposition parties are deterrent for UCC to come into existence. Main opponent of the UCC is the Muslims community based on its interpretation of the Quran and/or belief in Sharia. Congress is very well known to the policy of appeasement. "Appeasement of none and justice for all" should be the doctrine of law. Appeasement of any section of people is bad. The Muslims should introspect on the UCC. UCC is being opposed by others with the belief that it leads to removal of caste-based reservation. Reservation policy has nothing to do with the UCC. Even Dr. Ambedkar had believed that UCC is necessary to promote gender equality, secularism and national integration. The concept of UCC has long history. India's colonial era saw discussions of a uniform civil

code. British government had submitted a report in 1835 calling for the codification of Indian laws in a standard manner to facilitate the administration of justice. If the Britishers had introduced UCC, perhaps it would have met with more resistance than now for the reason that it is a law created by the Britishers. Now there is no such excuse to oppose UCC. If Modi raises pitch for UCC once again, the opposition parties start crying foul alleging that the Modi government has been raising the issue with an eye on Lok Sabha election. Modi is more a statesman than a politician. Politicians think of next election. Statesmen think of next generation. There is enough to say that Modi is a statesman. He is thinking of 2047 to 2050. It does not require a pundit to say that Modi will not be in power at that point of time. He has been chalking out plan for about next 25 years. Modi or Yogi, UCC will definitely come into force if BJP once again comes to power at centre. People interested in the UCC are worried about the low key Modi has been maintaining in bringing the one nation, one law. He should raise the pitch for UCC. He must be insensitive to the criticism that UCC issue is raised with an eye on Lok Sabha election. Elections come and elections go and parties come and parties go. What good thing is done when any party is in power will be remembered by the posterity.

K.V. Seetharamaiah