

UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH

In today's fast-paced and competitive world, mental health has emerged as one of the most pressing yet least understood aspects of human well-being.

Unfortunately, stigma and misinformation still cloud public perception of mental health. People often hesitate to discuss anxiety, depression, or stress for fear of being judged or misunderstood.

The roots of mental distress are complex - ranging from genetic predispositions and traumatic experiences to societal pressures, unemployment, and loneliness.

It is crucial that mental health education becomes a part of our school curriculum, helping young minds understand emotions, resilience, and empathy.

As we move forward, understanding mental health must not remain an afterthought - it should be an essential part of public health policy and everyday discourse.

Bihar Election 2025 : Social Imbalance in Ticket Distribution by National Political Parties

ER. PRABHAT KISHORE

The Indian constitution provides its citizens the fundamental rights to equality in all respect. Equality before the law prohibits discrimination. But in terms of leadership & candidature, this does not apply to the so-called national political parties.

After 1931, caste wise survey has been conducted in Bihar in 2022-23. Although many families have been left out, but the report presents a nearby current figure. As per report, the caste composition in Bihar is as - Upper Castes - 15.52%, Backward Castes-27.12%, Extremely Backward Castes-36.01%, SC-19.65% and ST- 1.68%.

The battle for Bihar Vidhan Sabha election 2025 is in its final stage. The social background of the candidates reveals a grim scenario in terms of proportionate social representation.

udice in providing tickets to various depressed communities as per their share. In ticket allotment, JDU has tried its best in providing proper representation to various social groups. Out of its share of 101, JDU has allotted 41 seats to Backward Castes (Yadav-8, Kurmi-12, Koeri-13, Vaisya-8), 17 seats to Extremely Backward Castes (including 8 to Dhanuk, a sub-caste of Kurmi), 22 seats to upper castes (Bhumihar-9, Brahmin-2, Rajput-10, Kayasth-1), its share of 17 reserved seats to SC/ST, and 4 seats to Muslims.

Denial of tickets to Muslims in BJP is not surprising, as they are believed not to vote for the party en-masse; but apathy towards Kurmi-Koeri, who aggressively vote for BJOP due to Nitish Kumar's face, shows their biasness to Nitish's Core voters.

Rajputs. Moreover, in seat sharing, JDU always lags behind its ally and has to contest seats in the stronghold of opposition party, whereas BJP fights on seats where either its own or ally's core voters dominate.

In the 2010 Vidhan Sabha election, when JDU-BJP were allies, JDU's strike rate (115 won/141 contested, i.e. 81.56%) was below BJP (91/102 i.e. 89.21%), clearly revealing that BJP's core votes did not transferred to JDU in some areas, especially to its backward candidates; whereas JDU's core voters aggressively rallied behind BJP.

In 2010, RJD's strike rate was only 22/168, i.e. 13.09% and in 2015 that of BJP was 53/157 i.e. 33.75%, when JDU was in rival camp. In alliance with JDU-RJD, the faltering Congress also gets lifeline when its strike rate jumped from 4/243 i.e. 1.64% in 2010 to 27/41, i.e. 65.85% in 2015.

In the 2010 election, the vote percentage of major parties was as - JDU (contested seat -141)- 22.58%, BJP (102)- 16.49%, RJD

(168)- 18.84%, LJP (75)- 6.74%, and Congress (243)- 8.37%; in the 2015 election it was as - JDU (contested seat-101)- 16.83%, RJD (101)- 18.35%, Congress (41)- 6.68%, BJP (157)- 24.24%, LJP (42)- 4.83%, RLSP (23)- 2.56%. and in the 2020 election it was as - JDU (contested seat-115)- 15.39%, RJD (144)- 23.11%, Congress (41)- 9.48%, BJP (110)- 19.46%, LJP (148)- 5.66%, BSP - 1.49% MIM-1.24%. Although, the poll percentage also depends on number of seats contested.

The pattern of previous election results reveals that whenever socialist groups unitedly fight against the BJP or the Congress, backward classes get relatively higher representation in the House and when they split, upper caste lobby of Congress-BJP-Communists dominates. The result of 1990Lok Sabha election shows that when socialist's groups were united as Janata Dal, 53 of the 54 seats in united Bihar were won by Backward-Dalit candidates.

In Vidhan Sabha election 2025, the two regional parties JDU and RJD are again in rival camps and their allies national Parties, BJP and Congress respectively, have not only grabbed much more seats than in previous elections; but has allotted nearly half of their quota to upper caste candidates. There is no doubt that the representation of Backward classes, especially small artisan & landless castes, in Vidhan Sabha will once again lower down, which will be an alarming situation for the socially deprived masses, who even after 78 years of independence have not reached the proportionate figure in Vidhan Sabha as per their population share.

(The author is an Educationist and Engineer)

Indus Valley Drainage System: A Timeless Model to Tackle Urban Flooding'

BHARTI SHARMA



Major causes of the urban flooding are: Poor drainage infrastructure which is outdated, clogged and undersized, rapid urbanization and climate change are the other two causes. Urbanization can't be stopped because as the population increase people move from rural to urban to earn for their survival.

The Indus Valley Civilization (IVC) had one of the world's most advanced drainage and sanitation systems, far ahead of its time. It has propose urban planning which is evident by cities like Mohenjodaro, Dolavira, Lothal which were build on grid patterns.Each street had a covered drainage channel

made of bricks and these drainages were made parallel to the roads so that water goes within them and not enter the main city. Almost every household had its drain connected to street drainage system also soak pits and cesspools were used for solid waste and this minimizes the cost too.

Urban flooding is not just an environmental concern but also a social and economic challenge. The Indus Valley model teaches us the importance of decentralized planning, sustainability, and resilience-qualities that are essential for tackling climate-related challenges today.

(The writer is a student of Mass Communication & New Media at Central University of Jammu)

Time to begin social boycott of drug peddlers to save our youth

ER. SAJAD RESHI

The time has come to take a strong, united stand against one of the gravest threats facing our society today-the drug menace. The growing network of drug peddlers, their families, and those who silently support or shelter them has begun to corrode the moral, social, and economic fabric of our communities.

Every day, countless young lives are being destroyed by drugs. Families are being torn apart, and communities are losing their vitality to addiction. While law enforcement agencies like JK Police are working tirelessly to curb this evil, their efforts need the active support and moral strength of society itself.

It is time to begin a social boycott of drug peddlers and their immediate

networks. Such individuals thrive not only because of their illegal activities but also because the public often chooses silence. Social tolerance toward drug traders indirectly strengthens their operations. When communities begin to socially and morally reject such people, the message becomes clear: there is no place for drug peddlers among us.

We must also recognize that the fight against drugs is not limited to punishing the guilty-it is equally about saving those who are vulnerable. Our youth need guidance, support, and strong role models. Society leaders, religious heads, teachers, and parents must join hands to raise awareness, organize anti-drug campaigns, and create safe spaces for open dialogue about addiction and rehabilitation.

I appeal to all heads of societies, colonies, and mohallas to take the lead in launching sustained awareness drives in their respective areas. These campaigns should not only expose the drug networks but also educate young people about the devastating effects of substance abuse. Regular community

meetings, street plays, counseling sessions, and collaborations with local police and health departments can bring tangible results.

This movement must be driven by compassion for the victims and determination against the culprits. We should encourage rehabilitation for addicts but stand firm against those who profit from their destruction. The message should be loud and clear - society will support the victim, but it will never forgive the peddler.

Let us come together as responsible citizens to root out this evil from our midst. Each of us has a role to play - by remaining vigilant, by reporting suspicious activities, by educating our youth, and by refusing to normalize or tolerate those who endanger our children's future.

Together, we can create a society where our youth are free from drugs, where families live with dignity, and where crime finds no place to hide. Say No to Drugs. Boycott the Peddlers. Save Our Youth.

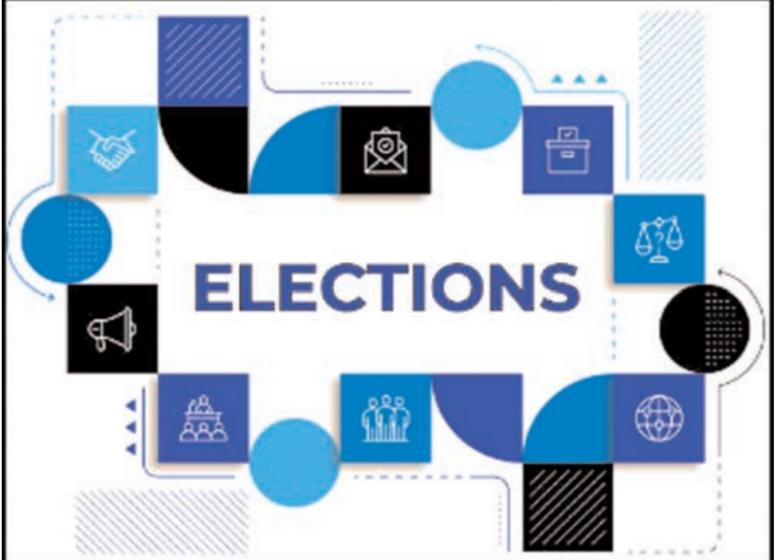
(The writer is a political leader)

Election Manifestoes-A Masterclass in Deception

BAIRAJ CHAWLGAMI

In an election big or small, all political parties prepare election manifestoes in which they delineate promises and commitments to woo or lure voters to their side so that at the polling day, they will vote their favour.

But in reality, majority of electoral promises contained in election manifestoes remain merely promises pure and total and they are not fulfilled even during the stay in power of a particular party or in today's world of the coalition government. It has been seen that by and large majority and at times all electoral promises remain promises and never see the light of the day. Thus election manifestoes are hollow and shallow documents meant to deceive the gullible electorate as these promises are not translated into practice and do not see their fulfillment even during the tenure of the party or parties in power.



woo voters but it also amounts to the deception of the gullible voters. Thus, the voters should be cautious and vigilant and should weigh the pros and cons of the election manifestoes before casting their precious vote. So, the voters should go deep into election manifestoes and see that these contain facts and truth only and not hollow promises and shallow slogans. So, the voters should not vote blindly but should see and evaluate if the promises and commitments made in the election manifestoes are real or are they the means of deception of the voters. Thus, the voters should think twice before going to vote in favour of candidates. In our electoral democracy the elections are very indispensable

and a democracy becomes a meaningless proposition without the elections. Agreed, but the election manifestoes should not become the instruments, tools, techniques and documents of deceit and falsity but should be capable of being translated into practice and these should not be far from truth but be the documents which further trust and confidence of gullible voters in our election system but practically the situation is otherwise as election manifestoes are in actuality lies and lies only and so these have become the documents of deception. Something substantial needs to be done so that our election manifestoes do not become the objects of falsity and fake promises which are hollow and

superficial and cosmetic only and have no connection with the real politico-social life of the electorate. There is urgent and utmost need to frame election manifestoes so that they are real true promises which are capable of translating into action. In theory public /voters are supreme in a democracy and they should be aware of their responsibilities but in practical world, it is the governments which determine voters and not vice-versa. It is a shame that our elections have stooped too low and parties are only giving false and superficial promises which have no connection with the actual and practical world. Political parties in our electoral democracy should frame and prepare election manifestoes in such a manner that they offer truth and truth only but no shallow and hollow promises which in fact can be said to be the instruments and documents of deception. Some opine that the election manifestoes should be made enforceable in a court of law that means that political parties should be made accountable and answerable and non-fulfillment of the promises contained in election manifestoes should be made a cognizable offence and the political parties and in fact their leaders should be made to fulfill the promises contained in the manifestoes. But it is easier said than done as making election manifestoes /promises which are generally promises which remain unfulfilled cannot be made cognizable offences is based on merit as in our democracy the election manifestoes cannot be enforced in court of law. Political scientists, experts, intellectuals, academicians and politicians should see to it that how can be election promises delineated in election manifestoes be made enforceable in court of law. The political parties and politicians should frame /prepare their election manifestoes reasonably and logically so that those promises should be included in the election manifestoes which can be realised and trans-

lated into reality. The election promises contained in party manifestoes should be worthy of realisation and should not be false. Election manifestoes should be prepared after well thought and only such promises should be kept in election manifestoes that will translate into action and should not be hollow slogans but practical and realisable. An election manifesto is type of document which is published by political party /contested candidates during their election campaign to approach voters about when they will be elected and come into power they will fulfil or work on policy, programme's, schemes and plans. An election manifesto contains various sets of promises and commitments towards voters like social welfare, external and internal security of the nation, economy, political and administrative reforms etc. The legal enforceability of the election manifesto means that commitments and promises made in the election manifesto will be legally binding and should be fulfilled after coming to power. If they fail to honour the commitments, then legal recourse will be available. Even the ECI has framed rules and regulations concerning the preparing of the election manifestoes and the political parties and the independent contestants should frame their election manifestoes keeping these guidelines into account. Any way it is safe to conclude that election manifestoes have degenerated into the documents of deception of voters and they cannot be called the important tools of democracy. However, the question of making election manifestoes enforceable in a court of law should be looked into by the ECI, judiciary and the political parties in the ultimate analysis.

Is ECI, judiciary and the political parties listening is moot question? If honest churning on this important issues will be done, something positive will necessarily come out which will be good for the democracy.