

MINERAL WEALTH

Jammu and Kashmir possesses extraordinary mineral wealth, yet its true economic potential remains largely underutilized. Blessed with vast deposits of limestone, gypsum, sapphire, borax, marble, quartz, coal, granite, slate, bauxite and precious gemstones, the region has long been recognised as a geological treasure. However, despite this abundance, the mining sector contributes only modestly to the Union Territory's economy. With strategic planning, scientific exploration, and sustainable extraction, J&K's mineral resources can become a major driver of employment, revenue, and industrial development.

One of the most remarkable resources is the world-famous blue sapphire of Padder (Kishtwar)-considered among the finest globally due to its exceptional clarity and deep cornflower hue. For decades, the sapphire mines have remained underexploited due to administrative hurdles, outdated mining policies, and lack of modern technology. Responsible commercial mining, supported by transparent global auctions, could transform Padder into a gemstone hub, generating significant foreign exchange and creating local jobs.

Similarly, J&K holds massive reserves of gypsum, particularly in the Kashmir Valley and the Chenab region. Gypsum is vital for cement, fertilizer, and construction industries, sectors in which India's demand continues to surge. Efficient extraction and processing units within J&K could reduce the dependence on imported raw material, lower transportation costs, and encourage setting up of local manufacturing units-stimulating broader industrial growth. Limestone, another abundant resource, offers similar opportunities. With the right policies, J&K could emerge as a centre for cement manufacturing, especially given its proximity to major northern markets. Slate, marble, and granite deposits present further potential for a thriving building-materials industry, capable of both domestic supply and export. Despite this wealth, several challenges persist. Illegal mining remains a pressing concern, causing environmental degradation and substantial revenue loss. Traditional, unscientific extraction methods have damaged riverbeds-particularly the Tawi, Jhelum, and Chenab-and affected local ecosystems. To truly benefit from its mineral riches, J&K must adopt a sustainable mining framework rooted in environmental safeguards, transparent auctions, modern machinery, and strict enforcement of mining regulations.

Raising Brave and Kind Children: Lessons from Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji

■ RUCHI CHABRA

As Guruparv approaches, it is a good time to remind ourselves that values are not just words we speak during festivals. They are important life tools. They protect our children when the world becomes confusing, fast, and noisy.

Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji did not just talk about values-he lived them every day. His courage never shook, even in front of powerful rulers. His compassion never weakened, even in times of great suffering. He grew into such a strong human being because of the guidance and example he received as a child. This is true even today: children learn less from what we say and more from what we do.

Two qualities that Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji showed all his life-fearlessness and compassion-are exactly what today's children need.

Fearlessness does not mean shouting or being stubborn. It means having the confidence to say "no" when something feels wrong, to walk away from bad influences, and to ask for help without shame. A fearless child feels secure from within.

Compassion is not weakness. It is understanding. It stops a child from bullying others, from becoming selfish, and from losing the warmth of human connection in a digital world. A compassionate child becomes someone others trust-and someone who stays emotionally healthy.

But children cannot develop these qualities if they do not see them in the adults around them.

A parent who shouts teaches fear.A parent who speaks badly about others teaches unkindness. A parent who never admits mis-

takes teaches arrogance.But a parent who handles difficulties with calmness and dignity teaches the most powerful lesson of all.

Today, however, we see a worrying trend. Parents who are mistrustful and constantly critical of the very schools and teachers to whom they send their children every morning. They question every rule, doubt every decision, and complain about every inconvenience, often loudly, sometimes unfairly. They forget that schools are partners, not adversaries, in raising a child.

The effect on children is immediate and damaging. When a child hears a parent dismiss or insult a teacher, the child learns disrespect. When parents treat educators as service providers rather than guides, children learn entitlement. And when parents show suspicion instead of cooperation, children learn that authority is something to resist, not understand. In the end, the school may suffer a little, but the child suffers much more.

Then there are emotionally immature parents. Adults in age but adolescents in behaviour. Quick to anger, slow to listen, determined to always be right. Their children grow up confused, anxious, unsure of how to handle conflict. They learn that emotions must be suppressed or exploded, never understood. They carry this fragility into friendships, relationships, and decision-making.

There are also emotionally immature parents - quick to anger, slow to listen, and certain they are always right. Their children grow up anxious and confused because they never learn how to manage emotions in a healthy way. This affects their friendships, their confi-

dence, and their ability to deal with challenges.

And perhaps the saddest reality of all: many parents are simply not available. Physically present but emotionally absent. Busy, distracted, scrolling, arguing, rushingeverywhere except in their child's inner world. Such children do not grow up lacking gadgets or opportunities; they grow up lacking belonging. And a child who does not feel anchored at home is far more likely to drift in the outside world.

This is why the example of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji is so important today. His calmness, courage, and kindness were shaped early in life by the behaviour of the adults around him. When children grow up seeing such qualities, they naturally absorb them.

This is why the example of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji is so important today. His calmness, courage, and kindness were not accidents-they were shaped from childhood by the behaviour of the adults around him.

As a young boy, Guru Sahib was known for his quiet strength. While other children played loudly, he often sat in deep thought, listening more than he spoke. His parents and teachers did not force him to be someone else. Instead, they respected his nature, encouraged reflection, and guided him with patience. From them he learned that true strength does not come from shouting or controlling others-it comes from inner peace.

There is a well-known incident from his early life: when he was still very young, he calmly watched a fierce battle alongside Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji. Instead of fear, the child showed surprising steadiness. This fearlessness did not come from aggression; it came from the deep trust and emotional security he

felt at home. He had grown up seeing dignity, discipline, and compassion in the adults around him.

Later in life, Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji became a symbol of fearlessness with compassion-the courage to stand up for what is right, and the kindness to protect even those who were not his own. These qualities were sown in his childhood.

Today, if we want our children to grow into calm, brave, and good human beings, we must remember this lesson.Children do not learn courage from lectures; they learn it from how calmly we handle problems.

They do not learn compassion from stories alone; they learn it from seeing how respectfully we treat others.

They do not learn dignity from rules; they learn it from the dignity they see in us.

Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji's life reminds us that the behaviour of adults becomes the foundation of a child's character. If we want strong, balanced, and fearless children, we must first be strong, balanced, and fearless ourselves.

So the responsibility begins with us.If we want our children to stand tall, we must stand taller.If we want them to be brave, we must be brave ourselves.If we want them to be kind, we must show kindness first-even when it is difficult.

The world will not become easier for the next generation. But if we give them fearlessness and compassion, the values Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji lived, they will not need the world to be easy.They will be strong enough to face it with dignity and grace.

(The writer is Principal, DPS Jammu)

Abhi Na Jao Chhod Ke...: 'He Man' dedicated to Dharmendra

■ DR. SATYAVAN SAURABH

Hindi cinema has given birth to many stars in its long journey, but there are some whose brilliance never dims with time, but lives on, bringing a new sparkle to the eyes of every generation. Dharmendra was one of those rare stars who was not just an actor but also became a part of the emotional fabric of Indian society. His passing has left a void that is difficult to express in words. He was not just a screen image; he was a human being whose warmth and humility connected audiences to him like a member of their own families.

Dharmendra's story is no less than a film script. This journey, which began in Nasrali, a small village in Punjab, is a living example of struggle, hard work, and the power of dreams. When a boy born into a humble farming family reaches the glitz and glamour of the film world, one often loses his true identity, but Dharmendra wasn't like that. He never abandoned his roots. That same simplicity, that same Indianness, that same sense of belonging was evident in his every smile. That's why he became not just a 'star,' but a 'hero of hearts.'

When he burst onto the silver screen in the 1960s, audiences could not have imagined that this young man would become one of the most beloved faces in Hindi cinema for decades to come. While his beginnings were slow, the innocence in his eyes and the deep confidence hidden in his personality quickly struck a chord with the masses. His early films demonstrated his distinctive qualities: simplicity of dialogue, spontaneous expression of emotions, and a sincere approach to his characters.

Over time, Dharmendra demonstrated that he wasn't just a romantic hero, but an actor who could fit into every genre. He lived every



shade of acting-the tenderness of romance, the ease of comedy, the intensity of action, and the depth of emotional scenes. His romantic portrayal in "Anupama" and "Anpadh" captivated audiences, while his action-packed performances in "Mera Gaon Mera Desh" and "Sholay" earned him the title of "He-Man." This title wasn't a fashion statement, but a testament to his inherently strong personality.

Veeru from "Sholay" is a character in Indian cinema history that needs no introduction. Veeru's fun, friendship, carefree attitude, and depth of heart made this character immortal. Dharmendra didn't just play a role, he lived it. That's why Veeru still brings smiles to audiences' faces. But Dharmendra's magic wasn't limited to Veeru. His serious-minded comedy in "Chupke Chupke" proves that comedy doesn't always come from over-the-top action or exaggera-

tion; it can also be born from grace and timely dialogue. Dharmendra was a living example of this.

The foundation of his acting was always truth. He didn't act; he expressed truth. This truth sometimes manifested as the tenderness of love, sometimes as the bitterness of conflict. In today's age, when acting is increasingly dependent on technique and superficial embellishment, Dharmendra reminds us that the heart is at the heart. It is this quality that liberated his films from the constraints of time.

Dharmendra had another great quality-his down-to-earth nature. He never tried to prove himself great or big. Even after hundreds of successful films, millions of fans, and decades of popularity, he spoke like a simple villager. His humility wasn't the result of any artificial modesty; it was part of his nature. This is why he remained an object of equal respect both within and outside the industry.

Dharmendra never abandoned his values, both in his personal and political life. He was elected to the Lok Sabha in 2004 and served the public in his own way. Although he was not deeply involved in politics, it was clear that he understood his role as a responsible citizen of society. His character was as straightforward and direct as his acting.

The simplicity of his lifestyle also always impressed people. His farmhouse, far from the hustle and bustle of Mumbai, working the land, watering the fields, spending time with animals-all these brought peace to his soul. This portrays an actor who, beyond the glittering screen, felt completely at home in the lap of nature. This is a quality rarely seen in any actor.

His contributions are not limited to his time. Today's generation finds the same

freshness, the same human sensitivity, and the same communicative power in Dharmendra's films that audiences felt 40-50 years ago. It is the lot of very few artists to have the power of their films transcend generations. Dharmendra didn't take this legacy with him; he left it to society.

When we think of him today, that easy smile on his face immediately comes to mind. It's as if he were still preparing for a scene, or saying in an interview with his famous humility, "Hey, I'm not a great actor, I just try my best." This very attitude made him great.

Dharmendra's passing is not just the departure of an artist for Indian cinema; it marks the end of an era. An era when simplicity, emotion, and humanity were the backbone of acting. An era when cinema wasn't just entertainment, but a mirror of society, family, and relationships. Dharmendra was the brightest ray of light in that mirror.

But like every great artist, Dharmendra has proven that even if the body is gone, the art never is. His voice, his laughter, the sparkle in his eyes, the scenes from his films-all of these will live on somewhere within us. That's not just because he acted in over 300 films, but because he made a place in people's hearts. This is the true power of cinema-when the audience begins to see the actor not just as an actor, but as part of the family.

Today, when we remember this line in tribute-"Abhi na jao chhod ke..."-it's not just a line from a song. It feels like the call of an era. But great artists never truly go away. Dharmendra is gone, too. He's in our songs, in our dialogues, in our films, and above all, in our hearts.

A hundred salutes to that 'He-Man' of Indian cinema, whose simplicity taught us to be human and whose smile made generations realize the beauty of life.

Aayaas are playing pivotal role in schools

■ SHYAM SUDAN

Recently government of J&K UT and education department of the erstwhile state has decided to engage helpers ( Aayas) for children in schools. No doubt it is very praiseworthy initiative from the department of education. As it was the long cherished demand of parents and teachers of different institutions of J&K.

As we know NEP 2020 has already been launched in different states of our country and at present it is in its initial stage of working. Under this new education policy which is purely indigenous in nature, it is stated that plus three years of children be enrolled in education institutions for his/ her formal education. The old pattern of 10+2+3 has been replaced by new bifurcation of 5+3+3+2 .Now under this new system early years of children are very important and deciding for their future education. As the abbreviation ECCE clearly explains the vision and meaning of it i.e early childhood care and education. Along with education the word care has got its recognition under this scheme. As we know care and nurturing of children is very mandatory during their beginning of education.

However there is also a crystal clear fact that in our education institutions especially in government schools of our U T earlier there was no such provision of education and for caring of children of this age group. We have already enrolled the children of this age group in our education institutions but sidewise everyone was feeling discontented and unhappy. Because, there was no trained and professionally built man power to us for the caring of such children. It doesn't means that our teachers are not capable and incompetent to do this job .But we know that mostly teachers are engaged in different tasks and other co-curricular activities within an institution. Moreover, there is an allotted time table for them of different classes. For children of this age group (above 3 years) there is need of a full time professional with a caring attitude. Engagement of Aayas can really benefit the children of this age group. At this stage of life besides study and formal education there are some other needs of the children. They needed emotional support and an affectionate touch of their mothers as well. Only Aayas can replace and fill the vacuum of their motherly affection and care.

For children of this age group it is very difficult to make a homeostasis with new environment. Because a homely atmosphere is needed to adjust them in their new place of learning. Even the parents will also feel satisfied with this new design in our education system. As we know there is already a trend of privatisation in our region due to such facilities and comfort. The strength of government schools are already reducing at an alarming rate. Role of such factors were also the main reasons behind this degradation. If we give all the facilities and comfort to every group of children then why did they send their children in private academies and other expensive institutions. Here we are not opposing the culture of privatisation. They are also providing better education and exposure to our children. But ,we are talking about the fake trend of poor section of our society. There is wrong notion and feeling in the mind of we people that government institutions are meant only for down-trodden section of our society. However reality is totally different, because now we can see and take the example of lot of government schools where children of all sections of our society are getting better education. In Delhi we can see that there is totally transformation of government schools. The main motive of education department is to give every facility and comfort to every child in this new education policy.

In this direction Engagement of helpers ( aayas) can play a very deciding and pivotal role .provided that this Engagement should be on merit base .There is an urgent need to engage or hire only those candidates who have personnel interest and affectionate attitude towards this job .If we select a wrong and uncaring professional merely to fill the vacancy, it will cause more harm to us in near future. As we know this is not a job ,it is a missionary work.

Engagement of Aayas for this purpose sidewise reduce the burden of those schools who have only one teacher. There are several schools in our region who are still run by single teachers. However rationalization process has been also started to streamline this deficiency. But for the care of children there is need of proper professional. Angangwadis centers are also available in our region. But they have their own demands and shortcomings. We can also club the Anganwadis centers with nearby education institutions to give more facilities and strength to our schools. However in every region it is not possible because there are distantly located institutions in our UT .for children of small age it is very difficult to visit daily in these institutions. But ,where it is possible we can merge Angangwadis with education institutions. We can take the services of Aayas for the caring of Angangwadis kids ,with the amalgamation of all we can give better facilities and congenial atmosphere to our new generation.

Educational system prevailing in schools till mid eighties

■ SHIV KUMAR PADHA

According to Ravinder Nath Tagore, Education is a process of finding ultimate truth and enabling the mind to achieve, inner rather than material wealth. He viewed education as a holistic development that helps individuals live in harmony with nature, culture and the world. A.P.J. Kalam defined education as a powerful tool for positive change, an endless journey through knowledge and enlightenment. For Gandhiji education is the ' All round drawing out of the best in child and man mind, body and spirit'. It goes beyond mere literacy and aims for the holistic development of an individual in terms of character building moral and spiritual growth and physical fitness. Key to his philosophy was "Learning by doing" It can be inferred from the definitions given by the educationists and scholars that education is not confined to merely 3Rs or literacy, numeracy and technocracy but it advocates for judicious amalgamation of cognitive (thinking), affective (feeling) and psychomotor (doing) domains of learning these domains categorize learning objectives into mental skills, emotional/attitudinal development and physical/manual skills respectively.

Without commenting on the system and approach of education in vogue at present, I feel it my moral duty to apprise the contemporary generation and the posterity about the system and kind of education prevalent till late seventies in Jammu and Kashmir: Being a septuagenarian, having lived in the era, have much relevant and meaningful information to share with the youth, though they are the part of present system of education in the schools, equipped with good infrastructures and sophisticated electronic gadgets making the education more simple, precise and easy. Instead of going astray from the topic, I feel it worthwhile to highlight the salient features of both the scholastic as well non scholastic aspects of education which fulfilled the aims of objectives of education with the little resources they had in the era.

Non scholastic aspect-After the morning



prayers the classes were sent to their, like the present schedule the school day started with the morning prayer comprising of devotional/ patriotic songs and national Anthem followed by hygienic inspection including size of the nails, teeth cleanliness and the condition of the dress worn by the students. dress the moral and religious discourses by the teacher and clerics from different religions.

Maintenance, decoration and cleanliness of the class rooms and school complex-The first assignment of the students of the school was to clean their school play ground collectively and dispose the garbage, waste littered in the ground during the school working. The classes and the jute mats were swept by the students themselves and not by any one like the scavengers. To clean the walls of the class rooms, white wash them and decorate them with the charts and the designs on the walls was the concern of the students of every class, To carry and provide drinking water for the students was the moral duty of the students turn by turn. At the weekends or a fortnight the best class award was given the best adjudged class which could be retained till the next class takes it away.

Physical Education, games, PT and march pasts-Under National Discipline scheme NDS every High School was provided with the services of one ex. Army/BSF/ CRPF Jawan with an exclusive purpose of inculcating sense of discipline, patriotism and manners among the stu-

dents so that they become assets not liability for the country. This kind of system remained in vogue till late eighties in the state. The PET was so rigorous which could be equated with the newly recruits.

Games and excursions-There was provision of fortnightly picnics, morning and evening games for the students under the supervision of the teachers assigned the duty. Mural and intramural games and sports completions were held frequently in order to infuse team spirit and co operation among the students.

In short the system of education being discussed for the era was sufficient to translate all the aims and objectives of education in totality.

Scholastic aspect-Un like the present system of education, being imparted with the help of computers, smart boards, virtual classes and computer assisted instructions, the system and approach in practice up to mid eighties on the scholastic side was purely manual lengthy but comprehensive utilizing the co ordination between head, Hand and heart i.e combination of knowledge, understanding, interpolating, application and psychomotor activities.

Languages-Due to the financial constraints the parents could not afford the copy, pencil holders pens and the stationery to their wards. Up to the primary classes the languages and the mathematics was taught with the use of wooden patti and iron slate with clay pen. These devices could be brought in use after erasing and wash-

ing time and again according to the need. The Pattis painted with the lime were written over by the red pen and ink. These devices were not only cheap and indigenous but helped in improving the hand writings of the students and solving the long and tedious sums like BADMAS, algebraic equations and sums on profit and loss and simple and compound interest. This helped in fixing the concepts in the minds of small children once for all. The students were trained in writing on spot essays on any topic. In order to correct their languages they were given dictations and practice in calligraphy.

Mathematics and the Geometry-The students could recognize and draw differentiate between different diagrams and shapes.. They could construct all kinds of triangles, circles, draw tangents, squares, rectangles trapeziums, rhombuses, draw perpendiculars etc. with the help of Geometry boxes used and must for every student to keep. The student could erase any sum they felt wrong with the eraser and reuse the page many times..

Sciences-The students could frame chemical formulas, physics formulas, fit the apparatuses, bend the delivery tubes themselves and carry on their science practical's with a limited apparatus available in schools.

In short we cannot say that the system of education in vogue till late eighties was inferior or less affective in comparison to the modern one. It will not be an exaggeration if I call the previous system of education an ideal one and not second to any rather it has always an edge over the so called modern system where there is no scope of using one's faculties. It is said the education received through five gate of senses i.e. Touch, hearing , speech, sight and sense of smell remains permanently in the minds throughout their lives. The main hurdle in inculcating a sense of dignity of labour among the students is the fear of the fake social media which blackmail the school authorities on the matter of the labour of the children which they do in their class rooms and within school complexes.

(The writer is Retd. Lect. at Basohli)