

MAKE-IN-INDIA IN DEFENCE SECTOR

The Government has taken several policy initiatives in the past few years and brought in reforms to encourage indigenous design, development and manufacture of defence equipment, there by promoting self-reliance in defence manufacturing & technology in the country. While giving a written reply to to Dr Anil Agrawal in Rajya Sabha, Raksha Rajya Mantri Ajay Bhatt said that these initiatives, inter-alia, include according priority to procurement of capital items from domestic sources under Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020; Announcement of 18 major defence platforms for industry led design & development in March 2022; Notification of 'four 'Positive Indigenisation Lists' of total 411 items of Services and three 'Positive Indigenisation Lists' of total 3738 items of Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs), for which there would be an embargo on the import beyond the timelines indicated against them; Simplification of Industrial licensing process with longer validity period; Liberalisation of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) policy allowing 74 per cent FDI under automatic route; Simplification of Make Procedure; Launch of Mission DeSpace; Launch of Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) scheme involving start-ups & Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs); Implementation of 'Public Procurement (Preference to Make in India) Order 2017; Launch of an indigenisation portal namely SRIRAN to facilitate indigenisation by Indian Industry including MSMEs; Reforms in Offset policy with thrust on attracting investment and 'Transfer of Technology for Defence manufacturing by assigning higher multipliers; and Establishment of two Defence Industrial Corridors, one each in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu; Opening up of Defence Research & Development (R&D) for industry, start-ups and academia with 25 percent of defence R&D budget; Progressive increase in allocation of Defence Budget of military modernisation for procurement from domestic sources, etc. With focus on indigenisation and procurement from domestic industries, all the major areas of domestic defence production ecosystem such as weapons, ammunition, fighter aircrafts, helicopters, missile systems, warships, submarines, armoured vehicles, radars, communication systems, surveillance systems, etc. have benefited from the aforesaid initiatives and also given boost to the growth of domestic industries including MSMEs & start-ups.

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Right to Play: Not game yet

Talk to any millennial kid and they will tell you how much of eaning they had to undergo if they played for the duration more than what their parents had permitted. Many millennials kids had to completely give up on playing when their exams were round the corner or if it were board exams, then forget even having a life outside school. Even the schools would take those “free periods” or “sports periods” to conduct extra classes to cover the syllabus and prepare the students for exams. Sounds nostalgic? A sad one, though.

But what if I tell you that more than being a sad childhood nostalgia, it has even graver repercussions? Such triviality ascribed to playing makes children lose out on an important aspect of development. Given the kind of education system we have had and still do, which depends on rote-learning, memorizing, and cramming up the syllabus like a robot with little development in the analytical bend of mind, playing must be complemented with studies. While I am essentially talking about all children, the positive effects of sports is an indisputable fact for adults as well.

With growing urbanization and concretization, the fields are disappearing and all we are left with is a certain number of parks in our localities which are known to be unfriendly for children. Talking about Delhi itself, despite the High Court's directive in 2015 for upholding children's right to play in parks, nothing has changed on the ground. The agencies responsible for maintaining the parks designated for children and those parks which were not- to make it children-friendly, fared poorly in a review meeting held by the Delhi government on the implementation of the directive. They showed sheer reluctance on implementing it.

All the metropolises of India like Delhi have a similar story to tell. We see children forced to play football in dump yards or open lands mounded with garbage, cricket on the streets, flying kites on dangerous roofs or at the side of the railway tracks.

Even children from middle-income families living in gated societies are forced to play in the spaces in between parked cars until

they are stopped by a grumpy ‘Uncleji’ who doesn't want them to dent the cars or in the parks because the grasses will be ruined. Many reports have found a large number of schools not having playgrounds or having an open space in the form of lawns just for the sake of it. Many public lands are either given to the private sector or are turned to parking lots. The children are left with no room to play.

For the girl children, playing rights is another crucial issue. They have always been marginalized in the playing field and not having enough safe and child-friendly playing spaces add to their woes. However, some non-government actors are working towards gender equity in the playing fields by training them in sports and encouraging them to agitate to have their own playing fields.

As a welcome move, the draft national education policy of 2019 has proposed a reform whose implementation will have a positive impact on children's learning which will ensure a play-based pedagogy to children up to 8 years to give them a strong foundation. Such an approach will help children acquire skills like critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, and team spirit. It will enable children to develop self-confidence and a tendency to have an interest in perpetual learning.

It is a well-established fact that playing has an all-round impact on a child's development. Not only it makes them healthy and strong physically but for cognitive development as well. This is especially important for our country which has more than half of its population under 25 and one-third of it under 35. Notably, we also have the highest levels of malnutrition in the world and the lowest public health expenditure of 1.5% of the GDP.

This trivialized and misunderstood right to play is an inalienable right accorded to children in Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1992). The Article provides for the right of a child to play, recreation, rest, leisure, and participation in cultural and artistic life.

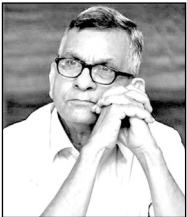
-Rewati Karan

Put your heart, mind, and soul into even your smallest acts. This is the secret of success.

-Swami Sivananda

Statehood to Ladakh coupled with assembly, will hurt Buddhists

■ PROF HARI OM



The political history of post-1947 Ladakh could be legitimately considered as the history of the rise of nationalism and integration with India. In fact, nationalism became their watchword and their battle-cry, with the highly revered Buddhist Kushok Bakula as the champion of this mass ideology. It was he who started propagating nationalism in the cold desert of Ladakh to counter the separatist ideology of the Kashmiri leadership. It was this nationalism which became the ' rallying force among the Ladakhis to fight back the Pakistanis and the Chinese who made frequent bids to conquer (their) land in 1948, 1962, 1965, 1971 and 1999.' Who played the exemplary role in these wars to comprehensively defeat the enemy's misadventures! The brave Jawans of the Ladakh Scouts did all they could to defeat the Pakistani and Chinese evil designs. They made supreme sacrifices to preserve the unity and integrity of India. The Buddhists of Ladakh had made it loud and clear from day one that they wanted to be part of India and that they would not become party to any agreement biased in favour of the separatist and communal Kashmiri leadership, and against them. In fact, at the time of the communal partition, they submitted memoranda to the Maharaja of J&K, Hari Singh, as also to the Government of India, containing demands based on (their) bitter experience.'

The memoranda contained three specific alternative proposals:

1. 'The Maharaja should govern Ladakh directly without tagging it on to Kashmir Valley';
2. 'Our homeland be amalgamated with the Hindu majority Jammu and should form a separate province in which adequate safeguards should be provided for distinctive rights and interests of Ladakhis'; and
3. 'Ladakh should be permitted to join East Punjab.'

It bears recalling that the Maharaja could not respond because certain developments had in the meantime worked against him, and he had to abdicate his authority in favour of Sheikh Abdullah who enjoyed the full backing of

Jawaharlal Nehru. The result was that the Buddhists decided to merge with India straight-way and the decision to that effect was communicated to the Prime Minister of India on May 4, 1949, by the President of the Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA) Chhewang Rigzin. The operative part of the communication/memorandum read: 'Ladakh is not prepared to go to Pakistan whatever the result of the plebiscite may be.' The communication also said: 'We seek the bosom of that gracious mother (India) to receive more nutriments for growth to our full stature in every way. She has given us what we prize above all other things - our religion and culture. The Ashoka wheel on her flag, symbol of goodwill for all humanity, and her concern for her cultural children, calls us irresistibly. Will the great mother refuse to take to her arms one of her weakest and most forlorn and depressed children (Buddhists) - a child whom filial love impels to respond to the call?' 1964 witnessed the first ever well-organized attempt on the part of Ladakhi Buddhists in this direction under the inspiring and effective leadership of Kushok Bakula. 'The Government of India', in the words of the Ladakh Union Territory Ffront (LUTF), 'made us to be governed by Kashmiris during these decades to our utter ruin. In the post-independence period we have been reduced to the status of slaves in our own homeland. The impact of oppressive rule by the J&K Government over us has obliterated our cultural and social ethos'. However, nothing came out. They continued their struggle, but with no result. Convinced that the powers-that-be will not concede their demands, the Buddhists took recourse to violent methods in October 1989 to achieve separation from Kashmir. Their single-point agenda was to achieve UT status for Ladakh. The Buddhist agitation brought everything to standstill. Two persons lost their lives during the police-crowd clashes and many got injured, some fatally. The situation had turned so grave that the Government of India had to intervene. As a result, negotiations took place between the agitating Buddhists, Farooq Abdullah-led government and representatives of the Government of India. The result: it was decided to create two autonomous hill development councils, one each for Leh district and Kargil district, much to the chagrin of the Kashmiri leadership, and despite the fact that the Kargil leadership

had never ever sought UT status for Ladakh. Nor had it ever demanded autonomous hill development council for Kargil. Its ideology and aspirations were totally different from the ideology and aspirations of the Buddhists and it got autonomous council on a platter. Right now, the Leh Council is under BJP and Kargil council under NC and Congress. As per the 2011 census, the population Leh district is 133,467 and that of Kargil district 140,802. It needs to be noted that the Kargil leadership consistently opposed the Buddhists' demand seeking separation of Ladakh from Kashmir and UT status for the trans-Himalayan region. It consistently made common cause with pro-autonomy Kashmiri leadership comprising National Conference (NC) and Congress. Kargil district was created by the Sheikh Abdullah government in 1979 out of the Buddhist-majority Ladakh district to pit the followers of one religion against the followers of another and weaken the Buddhists' movement aimed at protecting and promoting further their religion, culture and identity. It bears recalling that the Buddhists accepted the 1989 autonomous hill development council formula as a first step towards their ultimate goal - UT. They never abandoned their UT demand, with Kargil leadership leaving no stone unturned to defeat it and again and again reposing full faith in the Kashmiri leadership. The Buddhists finally achieved their goal on August 5-6, 2019, when the Narendra Modi Government abrogated the pernicious, divisive and discriminatory Articles 35A and 370 and divided J&K into two UTs - J&K UT and Ladakh UT. The Buddhists celebrated the reforms as a day of deliverance and thanks-giving. As for the Kargil leadership, it, like Kashmiri leaders - Abdullahs, Muftis, Mirs, Azads, Sozs, Lones, Bukharis, Tarigamis and who not - did not appreciate August 2019 reform scheme. Sadly, however, things changed dramatically in Leh. The non-BJP Buddhist leadership in the district started changing their goal posts with each passing day. So much so, they and the Kargil leadership came on one platform to first demand Sixth Schedule so that the Ladakhis could control land and all jobs and then put forth a demand seeking full state status for Ladakh, coupled with an assembly invested with all powers, including legislative powers. Not just this, they also formed what is called Apex Body com-

sisting of Leh Buddhist leaders and Kargil leadership and caused political explosions at regular intervals in support of their demands.

It's obvious that the Buddhist leadership in Leh has not taken cognizance of the grave evils that would follow on the conversion of Ladakh UT into Ladakh State coupled with one legislative assembly. As said, the highly strategic Ladakh was Buddhist-majority on October 26, 1947, when Maharaja Hari Singh acceded J&K to the Indian Dominion. Today, the Buddhists are a minority; they constitute only 40 per cent of Ladakh's total population. The Buddhists constitute a majority (66.40 per cent) only in Leh district. As for Hindus and Muslims, they constitute 17.14 per cent and 14.28 per cent population, respectively, in Leh district. In Kargil district, the Buddhists are only 14.29 per cent and Muslims 76.87 per cent. What would be the immediate results if Ladakh granted state status and a legislative assembly established in the region? One, the institution of autonomous hill development council both in Leh and Kargil would become a story of the past. Two, everything would be controlled by the state government and the Buddhists, who today are a majority in Leh district and play all shots there, would lose the political status they today enjoy in their district. Since they constitute only 40 per cent of Ladakh's population, they will only be a minority in the assembly, which discusses and decides questions of supreme importance. In other words, the majority population in Ladakh would exercise veto power like the Kashmiri leadership enjoyed veto power between 1947 and August 2019. It would be a negation of what Chhewang Rigzin, Head Lama of Ladakh Kushok Bakula and other Buddhist leaders did after 1947 for the region and for the Buddhists. In short, the Buddhists would suffer grievous injuries if Ladakh UT is converted into state and legislative assembly created in the region. The Buddhist leadership would do well to consider the ramifications of what they are doing and demanding. They must abandon the statehood demand. The only option available to them to protect and promote further their religion, culture and identity is UT status. Instead of insisting on statehood and assembly, they should strengthen the Leh Autonomous Hill Development Council.

Infrastructural development in School Education

■ ANUPUM SHRIKANDIA

During the last two decades a major emphasis has been given on improving school environment by different educational programmes like Operational Blackboard, District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhnik Shiksha Abhiyan (RAMSA) and Samagra Shiksha in order to enhance regular participation of students and finally resulting in improvement in their learning level. An attempt has also been made to provide adequate facilities as per needs of schools, as recommended by National Education Policy (NEP). The policy has recognized that unattractive school environment, unsatisfactory condition of buildings and insufficiency of instructional materials functions as de-motivating factors for children and their parents. The main aim of two major centrally sponsored schemes for school education SSA and RAMSA works to ensure that all children in country have access to elementary and secondary schools with adequate infrastructure in partnership with states/UTs. Some of the important infrastructure facilities provided during SSA and RAMSA are discussed below.

Increase in number of schools: SSA &RAMSA during its decade long programme have sanctioned more than 3.64 lakh elementary and secondary schools which has resulted in significant increase in number of schools in rural areas. The figures of 8th All India Education Survey revealed that rural population have access to primary stage education facilities within a distance of 3 Km. Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) are residential upper primary schools set up in educationally backward blocks for girls from SC, ST, OBCs and minority communities. Girls hosted for students of secondary and higher secondary schools: This is also centrally sponsored scheme been implemented since 2009-10 to set up a 100-bed girls' hostel (Chart 1: Student Classroom Ratio (Rural Area) Source: UDISE 40 in each of the 3,479 educationally Backward Blocks (eBBs) of the country in an effort to ensure that girls are retained at the secondary level of education. 2,483 Girls' Hostel are sanctioned in rural area to improve access and retain the girls in secondary and Higher secondary classes (X-XII) so that the girls get the opportunity to continue with their studies irrespective of distance to schools and other socio-economic factors.

School building and classroom: There are 98 per cent schools in rural areas, having their buildings. Since the inception of the erst-while Centrally sponsored scheme, SSA and RAMSA 18.40 lakh classrooms has been constructed as a result the student classroom ratio (SCR) reduced drastically: Drinking Water: Investment for

enhancement in facilities was not limited to opening of new schools alone. The school infrastructure (physical facilities in the school) has also augmented substantially with financial and technical support provided from SSA & RMSA. As per UDISE 2016-17, there are 97 per cent schools in rural areas equipped with drinking water facility. Many states have already achieved universal availability of drinking water facility with 100 per cent in schools.

Separate Toilet for Boys and Girls: Department of School Education & Literacy had launched Swachh Vidyalaya Initiative with an objective to provide separate toilets for girls and boys in all government schools within the timeline of 15th August, 2015. Under this Chart 2: Improvement in toilet facility (Rural Area) initiative 4,17,796 (2.26 lakh boys' and 1.91 lakh girls' toilets) toilet blocks were constructed or made functional in 2,61,400 schools within the given timeline. This included schools in the most difficult to remote areas in the country or areas facing Left Wing extremism (LWE). The Initiative was made successful in partnership with all State Governments, 64 Central Public Sector Undertakings, and 11 private Corporates. With this, about 13.77 crore children in 11.21 lakh government schools all over the country now have access to toilet facilities. Ramps and CWSN toilet: One of the major objectives of all education programmes that have been implemented at present is to develop an inclusive education system by providing access to children with disabilities. provisioning of ramp and CWSN toilet facility are two major interventions in this regard. It has been found in DISE 2016-17 that around 64 per cent schools are having ramp and 23 per cent schools having CWSN toilet facility. The proportion of schools without ramp facility is much higher in case of secondary and higher secondary level though there has been considerable decline of such schools during last two years of all levels.

Library: The RTE Act and RMSA specifies that the Library will be an essential component of the school, providing not only resource for learning, but also for strengthening the idea of reading for pleasure, among the students. The UDISE 2016-17 data indicates that there has been an increase in the facilities from 2010 after the implementation of RTE Act and RMSA. In rural areas the percentage of schools with library has been increased from 55 per cent in 2009-10 to 82 per cent in 2016-17. Computer Aided Learning (CAL): Under SSA the CAL is primarily introduced in rural government upper primary schools covering the classes VI to VIII to attract and retain children and also in the process, enhance the quality of learning. The main objective of the CAL programme is to attract the rural children, retain them in the schools and to

improve the quality of the education through animated multimedia based educational content. Since the inception of the programme, approximately 1.06 lakh upper primary schools have been benefited from the intervention. This program improves the IT literacy in the rural areas particularly and will go a long way in removing the digital divide in India. Electricity: Electricity is a lasting need for education, particularly in rural areas within a few years, students will be using digital devices to access information needed for studies, instead of using traditional textbooks. Computers and smart classrooms in rural areas have changed the need for electricity in schools. Although more than 80 per cent of secondary and higher secondary schools in the rural areas are equipped with electricity facility, large number of primary schools are still devoid of electricity, despite having electricity in villages. Playground: RTE Act 2009 gives emphasis on playground in schools as playing puts enormous positive impact on children in their learning and overall physical development. The situation regarding availability of playground in schools is far from satisfactory even in rural areas. There are 59 per cent schools having playground within it. Lack of availability of playground hampers engagement of children in different games and physical activities making schooling monotonous and unattractive. The situation is slightly better in case of upper primary, secondary and higher secondary levels. Boundary Wall: It is also noteworthy that although most of the schools are running in a building but many of these schools are found without any boundary wall. The analysis of U-Dise data indicates that a 47 per cent of schools in 42 rural area do not have boundary wall which is very important for safety of children. Science Laboratory for Secondary & Higher Secondary schools: Science is different from any other subject. It is believed that laboratory teaching and experiments that are being conducted help encourage deep understanding in children. Children are able to retain the knowledge for longer when they see the experiments being performed in front of them. Under RMSA, integrated science labs have been sanctioned to the secondary schools. The chart below shows the availability of the labs in rural area. Conclusion: A good school infrastructure with good spaces makes conducive place for the children to study. Both SSA and RMSA have improved access to elementary and secondary education in the country. In rural areas, the augmented school infrastructure has enhanced enrolment of children in schools especially girls and other disadvantaged groups. It makes the learning more interesting and gets the children motivated to attained school this in turn improves the attendance and interest of students in learning.

Karwan Guzar Gaya, Gubar Dekhte Rahe

■ MAHADEEP SINGH JAMWAL

An election is a formal individual decision-making process by which individuals choose who will make laws for them, who will form the government and take major decisions. At the same time they can choose the party whose policies will guide the government and law making. Elections provide an important opportunity to advance democratization and encourage political liberalization. Elections belong to the people. It is their decision. By voting, we add our voice to the chorus that forms opinions and the basis for actions. So to say, election results should not be criticized by any party what so ever may be the results. In a country like ours where we are having 28 states and 8 union territories, it is hard reality that one political party's ideology will be acceptable across the nation. Every state or union territory has its own genesis of problems and their voters have their own vision as to which political party can meet up their expectations. But here in our country, the political party's leader are infested with a contagious virus of having only its government across the country and this is not less than a monarchial bent of their minds disguising themselves as true democrats. The most dangerous myth they carry is that they are born-

that there is a genetic factor to leadership. That's nonsense; in fact, the opposite is true. Leaders are made rather than born - Warren Bennis. During election bro haha the parties and their astounding leaders claim themselves to be only the angel for voters and they propagate the other political parties and their leaders as devil for the common people. They forget that while condemning the other political party, in actuality they are condemning those people who follow the other party ideology. But here Mehmet Murat Ildan has rightly said, "If you are stupid enough not to know the difference between the devil and the angel, you quickly find the devil! This is what happens to most people in democracies just after elections".

The ignorance of one voter in a democracy impairs the security of all. Voting is as much an emotional act as it is an intellectual one. During recent assembly elections in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh and MCD elections in Delhi, the treasury benches have been passed on to different political parties in HP and in Delhi MCD than to the party that had been in power where stalwarts of the party already in power have moved from pillar to post and door to door campaigning to woo the voters to retain the turban on their heads. But alas! They have to face dry spell from the voters and had to sol-

ace tuning with the song of the movie 'Nai Umar Ki Nayi Fasal' written by Gopal Dass Neeraj 'Swapn' Jhare Phool Se-Meet Chube Shul Se-Lut Gaye Shinghar Sabhi Bagh Ke Babul Se-Aur Ham Khade Khade Bahar Dekhte Rahe-Karvan Gujar Gya, Gubar Dekhte Rahe'. When we talk of Gujarat retained by the existing ruling party, it is not wonder that happened but the charismatic influence of the top two of the ruling party hailing from Gujarat clubbed with dozens of election rallies by them and announcements of lakhs of crore for various projects even after remaining in power for three tenures. AAP in the state tried to put his hand in Lion's den and got injured. Congress has smelt this situation hence kept safe distance. Losing HP where top leadership among congregation of all CMs and towering leaders across country of the ruling party remain buzzing in the state and more so ruling party president and another big face Minister of Information and Broadcasting hailing from HP, were all given shocking beat by the voters of the state. It cannot be taken merely as power rotational attitude of voters but rejecting all the commitments taken by voters as fake on previous experience. Salient feature of the change of batons in the state is remarkable that none of

party stalwarts clinching the power turned for campaigning. Delhi MCD results take us to the conclusion that Delhites tolerate none else than AAP to manage all the affairs in the UT and this has shattered the dream of the party in power to remain glued to power corridors in the MCD. The most important aspect that requires to be incorporated here is how the tax payer's money is freely distributed during elections by announcing big packages only at the fake end when elections fall due at the cost of other states. During elections those at the helm of affairs consider the government exchequer as party fund to woo the voters. During elections the Government that is thought for one and all behave like particular political party and leaves no stone unturned to capture power seats behaving like political agents forgetting that they are public servants. Election season is longer than most and seen whole political government remains on heels worrying only for capturing the power for their party. The politicians don't have the right to interfere with voters' freewill. To do so in the guise of angels, it is a sign of lust for control and power. When they attempt to dictate how we should follow them or believe them we must realize they are not leaders but lions in wolves shell.