


Strengthening agriculture through CSR

CONSTITUTING SHRINE BOARDS



OFF 'D' CUFF

A Living Democracy

Sometimes it feels like we inhabit a land that is in a perennial state of election. With the assembly elections around the corner, our print, digital and social media are ablaze with election fever.

Elections in the world's largest democracy are invariably an emotional issue: passions fly; voters turn volatile; arguments turn heated; leaders make wildly inflammatory statements; and desperation rules.

In such a climate, consciousness — a prerequisite for both spirituality and politics — is compromised. Also, unsurprisingly, political leaders are unable to perform with any degree of efficiency.

It would be ideal to have assembly and parliamentary elections just twice in five years. The alternative is the gladiator sport of today, where rule books are habitually thrown to the wind and everyone is in survival mode, trying to outshout and obliterate the other. When every state election is fought under the glare and hysteria of media attention, the ensuing drama is not democracy, it is populism.

I actually empathise with politicians of all stripes, because to be in perennial election mode is to be in a state of constant existential siege. Scarcely is one election over when another has begun. Even if you win there is no time to deliver on your promises towards the larger well-being of the state, the nation and the world. Unless this country's voters collectively show their refusal to be seduced by short-term benefits, nothing will change. We will simply be given sops, cash and trinkets at election time, and little else afterwards. It is time to insist on longterm priorities, rather than populist dividends. For instance, it is time for us to insist that education, ecology and health be viewed as key election issues. If population is our demographic dividend, a significant percentage of the GDP must be invested in education. This is the only way to leverage our core strength and create a skilled and accomplished young workforce.

Similarly, ecology is no longer an elite preoccupation. The desertification of Indian soil is happening at an alarming pace. This means an impending food crisis, plummeting levels of nourishment, as well as sociological and economic disruptions produced by mass urban migration.

Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev

The country's transition from a food deficient to a food surplus country has been achieved through a mix of technological interventions, appropriate planning and a policy back up that the farmers of the country took just like the fish takes it to water. Now country is the largest producer and exporter of many commodities. But, unfortunately despite all this, the sector still is confronted with some serious challenges. These include non-remunerativeness, degradation of natural resources, climate change, low adoption rates and technology diffusion, very less percentage of processing and value addition, lack of adequate infrastructure and many other associated problems. All these challenges can be attributed to lack of adequate investments in agriculture sector. The public extension system in the country which has been entrusted with the technology dissemination and adoption among the end users faces some inherent defects. These services are criticized for poor show in terms of making available the technology to the farming community both in terms of time as well as relevance. The public extension system in the country has already been crippled in the country due to lack of financial resources, adequate men power, lack of necessary skills, inadequate farmer research extension and market linkages, lack of convergence among the parallel stakeholders, top down approach without the participation of farming community in planning and implementation of its various programmes. Agriculture sector in the country also needs huge investment. Consequent to some inherent defects in the public extension system, last few decades have witnessed the emergence of pluralistic extension system in the country with the involvement of some private players, NGOs, business houses, agribusiness companies, producer organizations and corporates. All these are strengthening agriculture extension system in the country with their additional human and financial resources, expertise and infrastructure.

■ **OMKAR DATTATRAY**

YOUR COLUMN

Curbing increasing crime

Dear Editor,

Street crime is a broad category that refers to multiple crimes, such as house robberies, pick pocketing, drug trade etc. It can extend both to public and private spaces. Some of these crimes are born out of opportunity, others out of necessity. Each crime type requires context-specific responses, though they may be analysed collectively. Citizens wonder why 2013 Indian operation failed to curb this form of criminality. This is because dismantling terrorist groups, terrorist wings or armed gangs can temporarily reduce specific types of violent crimes (although recent attacks may call these successes into question). However, street crime is a different challenge linked to broader socioeconomic issues. Indeed, some street criminals have previously been connected to groups engaging in religious or political terrorism, but the latter's decline is unlikely to disrupt the former. Policing, performed through public or private forces, is a limited response to street crime. At most, we can deploy more resources to certain areas, for hotspot policing, deterrence, or intelligence-collection. Such securitized responses may reduce crime in selected areas, but they cannot stop people from offending. Security deployment is a form of target hardening which is reactive, not preventive. It can also lead to punitive and populist penal policies. Prevention requires targeting structural problems in a society,

Prior to Companies Act 2013, CSR in India has traditionally been seen as a philanthropic activity where in keeping with the Indian tradition, it was believed that every company has a moral responsibility to play an active role in discharging the social obligations, subject to

CSR initiatives in agriculture: Various industrialists and corporates in the country have also come forward for the socio-economic upliftment of the resource poor farmers in the country by way of initiating various projects for their benefit under the broad ambit of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). In this regard private giant Mahindra & Mahindra, with the help of Swades Foundation, BAF Development Research Foundation and Dr Punjabrao Deshmukh Krishi Vidyapeeth has launched the Krishi Mitra project where it is helping small and marginal farmers by educating them in updated techniques in farming like soil health, crop planning, creating model farms with bio-dynamic farming practices, infrastructure development and capacity building resulting in improvement in agricultural productivity, for the benefit of the farmers. Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) in partnership with UDAY a skill development

The concept of CSR is nothing but looking beyond profits. However, the data shows that, very meager amount only 3 per cent of CSR fund has been spent in the agricultural sector by the companies though there is huge potential for investment in the sector. The CSR spending in agriculture is far less in comparison to many sectors such as education, healthcare, art and culture etc. More funding to agriculture sector through CSR has all the potential to address many challenges of the farm sector.

Is this the normalcy?

such as income inequality, unemployment, class-based discrimination, and a lack of political representation and empowerment of the working class. This is only possible when all stakeholders come together and have their needs heard and addressed, especially grass root organizations fighting for the basic rights of the most marginalized - their right to housing, water, work, protest.

Our sociopolitical structures and ruling elite do not have the appetite for this; they offer short-sighted, reductive and classist crime-control solutions, such as criminalising beggars and shunting them from affluent residential areas. This risks further marginalising entire communities most vulnerable to violent crime. They also romanticise zero-tolerance policing styles of the 1990s, as seen in New York City when crime rates were brought down. They forget to mention that this could not have been possible without other significant changes taking place in political, judicial and infrastructural spheres, and in healthcare, to improve urban life. We must also consider that where there are structural problems in a society (such as economic disparity), and there are institutional problems within the police (such as underpaid officers), you will have a natural collusion between police officers and criminals. Karachi is no exception. Street cops rely on maintaining relations with local criminals (which is not always prohibited by the higher ups), because they cannot get their needs met by their menial salaries alone. If most officers are underpaid, they will strategically consider means of supplementing their income. Such collusion may also help recruit potential informants. In other words, where there are criminals, there will also be the police;

forces. While the security forces are killing the terrorists involved in the heinous crimes against the man and god but it is also a fact that the terrorists continue to martyr the security forces and it is a matter of serious concern. Though the security forces have an upper hand in fighting terrorism but the terrorists continue the killings of the innocent people. Not only the innocent people get killed by the terrorists but the security forces also lose their precious lives while defending the integrity and sovereignty of the country. Much human blood has been lost in over three decades of terrorism due to the barbaric incidents and acts of terrorists and there is no stop to the mayhem and dance of death and it is going unabated and is consuming precious lives of the innocent people and the security forces which is very disturbing and should not take place. The naked dance of death is continuing in Kashmir and there seems no possibility of its end in near future as the mastermind of terrorism -Pakistan is fomenting trouble in Jammu and Kashmir. Thus unless and until the base of terrorism is not attacked and dismantled the talk of normalcy is humbug and therefore for normalcy in Kashmir the terrorist sites and camps in POK and Pakistan should be attacked to dismember terrorism and terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. This if we want an end to the gun culture and terrorism in Kashmir the urgent need is to destroy the terrorist training camps in Pakistan occupied Kashmir so that Pakistan is not in a position to train, support and export terrorists to Jammu and Kashmir. Therefore India should attack the terrorist training camps in PoK and other parts of Pakistan to give a death knell to terrorism and terrorism. Since there is an upper hand to security forces in the fight against the terrorism in Kashmir and this should be maintained to defeat the scourge of terrorism. Not that the terrorists are not killed by the security forces but it is very unfortunate that he security forces also get martyred and this is a great loss to the country. Roughly speaking everyday army Jawans, CRPF men and the Jammu and Kashmir police men give the supreme sacrifice of their lives to uphold the integrity and sovereignty of the country. So where the normalcy is in Kashmir, as innocent human blood continues to be spilled by enemies of humanity which includes the precious blood of our security forces. Thus for the normalcy, peace and development the killings of all sorts should stop so that normalcy in true sense of the term will return to Kashmir so that the people will recognize and appreciate it.

(The author is a retired Education Officer and Columnist).

Curbing increasing crime

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expecting a neat divide in this relationship ignores the messiness of policing India's streets.

While I hesitate to compare policing in developed and developing contexts, a relevant observation can be made from recent events surrounding the unceremonious ouster of London's police commissioner. Touted for following a 'policing by consent' model, the Met Police has suffered repeated allegations of institutional racism, sexism, corruption and a misogynistic police culture. While the commissioner's departure is celebrated, analysts caution that the chief's removal is unlikely to address deep-rooted structural problems in the police. Similarly, leadership changes within Indian police forces are often cosmetic and superficial responses. These manoeuvres enable police administration to show that something is being done, while still leaving the force open to criticism and blame when crime escalates, and insecurity intensifies. The brunt of this blame is directed at lower-ranked officers whose complex existence is uncritically problematised as 'Thana culture'. In short, street crimes and similar offences cannot be addressed by security administrators alone. These are not 'crises' to be 'policed', but symptoms of deep-rooted grievances, both within and outside the institution of the police. To therefore frame this as a 'policing' problem or a security challenge, necessitating a so-called 'war on street crime', diverts attention from faulty governance and unfulfilled political promises.

**Mool Raj,
Doda.**