

## WORK IN PROGRESS

The people in the country should not get disheartened over peace not returning to Valley because still the work is in progress and day in day out terror mongers are being given befitting response either in the shape of eliminating them or by landing them into jails, which are their rightful dwelling sites. In this context, two Lashkar-e-Taiba (TRF) terrorists were neutralised in a cross-firing in Rangpora, Zakura area of Srinagar. Arms and ammunition were also recovered from the slain terrorists including two pistols, and five hand grenades. Going by record and analysis, one can conclude easily that terrorism in its last legs in the Valley as things on ground are not that bad because public support for extremism is ending as people are fed up with violence and want development to take place like other parts of the world. Although certain entities having vested interests including the country based stooges of Pakistan are giving air to anti-India propaganda to give negative perception to the world but reality is contrary as things are fast changing in Kashmir and time is not far when normalcy will be back. With successes coming so often the morale of the security forces is also upbeat and that is the reason the terror mongers are at back foot. Modi Government has given free-hand to security forces to deal with the situation and that is the reason the stone pelting has vanished from the Valley and in the same way the terrorists will also peter out from the scene as the government is resolute in its mission to free the Valley from the clutches of terror spreaders. One can say with confidence that in the Valley the work of bringing back tranquility is going on at full pace and no power on the earth can stop this from happening. It is advisable for those who have taken the path of violence in the past to revisit their decision and come back to mainstream as there are so many opportunities for the peaceful people in India that sky is the limit but for those abetting or indulging in terror, the end is frightening and therefore the choice is clear.

## AUDITING E-SERVICES

Ensuring complete transparency and accountability in the official system remained a major aim of the ruling dispensation from the very beginning and it has initiated various reformative measures for ensuring the same at every level. During the successive Governments, the news regarding involvement of several ministers in various scams often used to hit the newspapers and media, but right from the first day of the ruling Government, the Prime Minister has always stressed to ensure complete transparency and honest approach by every functionary of the Government right from the bottom to the top level. In order to reduce the corrupt practices earlier prevalent in the Government offices, the ruling dispensation besides directing the officials to adopt a honest and transparent conduct of working, has also introduced various latest scientific advancements in the working system in order to reduce the employee-beneficiary interactions as a number of services were started online and people were asked to avail the same from their houses without physically visiting the respective Government offices. In J&K also, the Government followed the same trend and launched several e-services for people. Now, in order to give a major boost to this high-tech initiative, the UT administration has decided to get conducted a third-party audit of approximately 150 e-services presently going on in J&K. The audit of these services, where on one hand will provide a great support and guidance for further enhancing the same in order to ensure better public delivery system in place, on the other hand it will enable the UT to get suitable ranking at national level for providing these services. Moreover, very soon all these e-services will be made available on a unified platform for analysis under National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment Framework which assess the service delivery system in terms of ease of use, content availability, accessibility, information security and privacy, integrated service delivery & status and request tracking. With the audit and accessibility on unified portal, the e-services launched by the Government will ensure provision of due benefits to the masses, in a much efficient and effective way, that too within minimum possible time frame thereby helping in achieving the aim of Government to ensure transparency and accountability.

## OFF 'D' CUFF

## Grow yourself with your incredible mind power

to start something new and give a fresh turn to your life.

Let the world around you change, you don't change and keep your vision intact despite distractions. Undoubtedly, a firm decision is the foundation of a renewed life that comes out of a strong mind.

Any Victory is an 'Inside-Out' Experience

Further, many people feel that success is an external occurrence. It happens because of external factors and if they are not conducive, it would be difficult to achieve it. You should change this notion because it is simply untrue.

Know that any triumph, no matter how small or big, is definitely not an 'outside-in' affair, rather it is an 'inside-out' thing.

So, it's not about the external factors, but it's about the effectual utilization of the incredible power of the mind. Realize the incredible power of your mind that can build, plan, implement and produce the required material for success, and grow fearlessly.

Utilize the Powerful Creative Force- Your Mind

Your mind is not less than a supercomputer having the power to unlock limitless success and growth in your life. Try to use this power in a disciplined way.

Shri Sudhanshuji Maharaj

I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy.

-Rabindranath Tagore

## EDITORIAL

## No freebies in elections

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

Elections are soul and breathe of a democracy and it is very much true for the electoral democracy of India. A democracy loses its meaning and it is a meaningless proposition without the elections. So it can be said with certainty that the democracy loses all sheen and meaning without elections. Thus you cannot have democracy without the elections. In India we have and conduct the elections from the Panchayat to the parliament. But in elections there is the bad practice of distributing pre-poll freebies among prospective voters and also of promising unrealistic things. The menace of distribution of the freebies and making unrealistic promises just to woo voters is a really a serious matter. The shallow promises and hollow slogans coupled with the freebies is polluting the whole electioneering and this should be halted for the success of the elections and the democracy. Therefore, distribution of freebies before the elections by the political parties and making of the unrealistic promises should be put to halt. The election commission and the centre government should pay attention towards these disturbing things and rid the elections from the menace of election freebies. The Supreme Court, in its judgment in 2013, directed Election Commission and the Centre Government to regulate the menace of election freebies and make provisions for the deregulation of the political parties which resort to the pre-poll freebies and make unrealistic promises to the prospective voters. The Apex court has in this judgment also directed the election commission and the centre government to seize the election symbol of the political parties found involved in the distribution of the freebies and making of utopian promises which are far from reality. In 2013 judgment the top court has said that distribution of freebies of any kind, undoubtedly is a serious matter and the centre and the election commission should take necessary steps to regulate the menace of the pre poll freebies and unrealistic promises. The freebie budgets are more and above the normal budgets

of the political parties. The distribution of the freebies and making of the irrational promises is also found in the poor states of India and there is need to curb such practices for providing a level playing field to political parties. The distribution of the freebies and making of irrational promises has unfortunately become a part of our elections and electioneering and sooner or later such practices should be stopped in the interest of the country and democracy. This matter has once again come to the centre stage in January 2022 because of cognizance of the matter by the apex court in a Public Interest Litigation by BJP leader Ashwani Upadhyay to restrain parties from distributing freebies before the elections. In this petition the Supreme Court has issued notices to the centre government and the election commission on a petition seeking the top courts intervention to put a stop to the practice of political parties either distributing or promising irrational freebies to the electorate in the run up to the elections. Such freebies are not confined to any one political party but all the political parties practice this malpractice and therefore there should be a full stop to these unlawful practices. Such freebies destroy the level playing field between the parties as they act as inducements to vote and place additional pressure on the budgets of cash-strapped states. The practice of irrational freebies irks the Supreme Court.

The Tamasha of the freebies has been going for decades and promises remain promises maintains the petition. The Madras high court said that the freebie culture makes people lazy, vitiates purity of the elections, must be viewed as a corrupt practice. The court has asked as to why not de-recognise elected political parties based on which the voters are lured and parties are elected to form the government. The court expressed strong opinion against the freebie culture indulged by the political parties during the election season and called for amending the Representation of Peoples Act, 1951 so that freebies offered by the political parties are also viewed as corrupt practice under section 123. The

supreme court has said political parties competing with each other to announce freebies and doles during electioneering has the potential to upset states finances and vitiate free and fair polls and asked the centre and the election commission to respond to a PIL seeking measures to curb this infectious poll eve tendency. The Apex Court has said that this is a serious issue and needs to be stopped for the cause of the free and fair elections. The Supreme Court issued notice on a plea seeking direction to the election commission to frame guidelines to stop the political parties from resorting and indulging in the election eve freebies. The apex court observed that the budget for freebies goes above the regular budgets and this disturbs the level playing field. Terming unrealistic poll promises and hand outs a serious matter that disturbs political arena, the supreme court has asked for explanations from the union government and election commission and what steps have been taken by them since courts 2013 judgment to regulate electoral promises and distribution of freebies by political parties using public funds.

It is not hidden from anyone that the different political parties are promising the moon during the elections but when elections are over and the governments are formed they fail to give even a straw to the gullible people. Samajwadi Party Chief Aklesh Yadav has promised provision of electricity up to 300 units to residents of UP in case they vote his party to power. Similarly, Chief of Aam Aadmi Party Arvind Kejriwal has promised free electricity and free drinking water to people of Delhi and Punjab in case the people of these states vote in favour of AAP.

There is competition between the political parties so far as the promising of freebies and making of irrational promises are concerned. The freebies and unrealistic promises are a drain on the public exchequer and particularly in our developing economy and therefore these freebies and unrealistic promises are against the interests of country and thus these should be banned to purge the elections and make the free and fair

elections possible. The freebies and utopian promises are not needed and they should be curbed for the cause of the free and fair elections. The election commission and the centre government should pay due attention to the problem of freebies and unrealistic promises and purge elections from freebies and unrealistic promises. The populous schemes and slogans are against the interests of country and thus populous schemes and freebies should be stopped for the growth of the electoral democracy of India. The freebies, unrealistic promises and the doles and populous slogans as well as schemes are not in the interest of the country and as such the steps should be taken by the election commission to put a halt to such malpractices which are an obstacle to the free and fair elections. Thus, for ensuring free, fair and smooth elections, the Election Commission and Centre Government should tighten noose of the political parties and election-eve freebies and irrational promises which have a potential of polluting polls.

Therefore without wasting time the election commission and the centre government should take sincere steps so that the freebies in the elections and the populous slogans and schemes are curbed in the interest of the electoral democracy. So, what is needed is that election-eve freebies of political parties and the irrational promises should be curbed for the flourishing and growth of the democracy and for this it is all necessary that freebies and unrealistic promises and populous doles should be curbed in order to ensure free and fair elections.

The freebies and unrealistic promises and populous schemes are not needed and these have no place in the elections and these make level playing field difficult.

To conclude one can say that the political system and the elections should be purged of filth and dirt of freebies, unrealistic promises and populous slogans as well as of political parties and electorate lies in it.

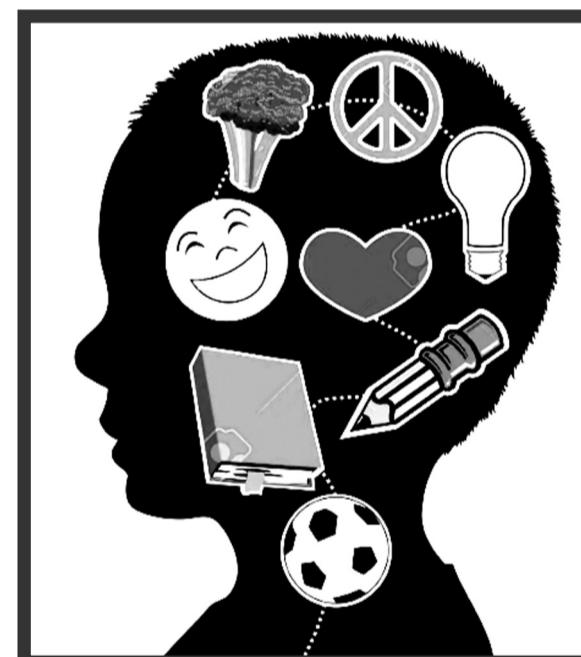
(The author is a retired Education Officer and Columnist).

## Children's mental health-a treasure for future

■ M R LALU

The impact of the pandemic on children's education was immense. It forced schools to shut in many states and children were leaning on the mobile screens to learn their lessons. The reopening process is on and we can expect that the schools will be back to a normal offline routine in a couple of days. The process of learning should be a never ending one. There have been studies and researches to delve into the health hazards that prolonged screen time can cause. Studies reveal that lengthy screen time can definitely cause physical and mental health issues. The World Mental Health Day was observed with a slogan 'Mental Health of the Youth in the Changing Times.' Not only lengthy screen time that causes mental and physical issues, there are also factors that most of us rarely take notice of. It is estimated that about 50 per cent of the mental health problems among the youth start well before the age of 14. When the person is 24 years old, he would gather almost all habits and behavioral benchmarks which would ultimately work as the basics of his future mental health. It has become a normal affair for any society to deal with issues such as mental health problems, drug addiction, criminal behavior and many other diseases among children. A young man of 24 years hacked his aged parents to death recently in Kerala. To ensure their death, he hacked them multiple times and managed to flee to the neighboring state. His revelations to the police were so startling that after killing his parents, hacking them multiple times, he tried to inject pesticides on their dead bodies. Since he did not work, he poured it on their face and mouth. The reason that led to the crime was more shocking than crime itself. His mother asked him to fetch a glass of water from the kitchen as she sat on the couch and he got easily provoked by his mother's demand. When his paralysed father started to cry out of fear, he hacked him several times. This is not an isolated incident. There are many such incidents to quote from. Who should we pin blame on when a society has to undergo such incidents?

Studies with regard to the functioning of human minds reveal the fact that the behavioral changes that the child captures when he is a child would continue to stay with him as he grows. Small behavioral issues that we neglect usually get accumulated and mutated into issues that become difficult to handle in a later stage. Doctors speak of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), a chronic condition which includes attention difficulty and hyperactivity. This situation, starting at



a young age, persists into adulthood. Experts say that children with ADHD at a young age would carry the imprints of its modified version into their adulthood. This indeed, according to some surveys, leads to issues such as low self-esteem, inconsistency in the workplace, distorted family life, mental sickness and criminal mentality. Impact of adverse childhood experience would lead the child to serious health issues both mental and physical. To some extent, the surveys reveal that such issues may indeed lead to the premature death of the person. A study conducted among 500 prisoners at one of the jails in Kerala came out with shocking findings. It says that about 150 sampled prisoners had attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in their childhood. The study also reveals that proper intervention in their childhood could have averted such behavioral problems. A large number of kids housed in the Children's Home by the state government have mental health problems. Children living in such an environment are away from their parents bereft of parental care and love. This affects their mental health seriously and brings irreparable hazards in their behavior. Studies also reveal that mental health of the mother during pregnancy is an important factor. The

Last year, UNICEF projected that by 2030, the country's working-youth population would exceed 96 million, the highest in the world with 310 million graduates. However, only half of the total applicants will have the skills required for employment. Studies show that the number of people who lack the skills for the job is increasing. It has also been suggested that there is a need for immediate corrective action. However, the slogan of the new National Education Policy is that 'Quality Education is the right of the student'. It is good to hear, the broader agenda of mobilizing human resources to maximize their contribution to the country's development is yet to emerge as the main agenda of the governments. Launched 'Skilled India' policy with an aim to convert 40 crore people into highly skilled resources till date. The Center itself admitted that only 24.17 per cent of those who were trained in the first phase of the 'Skill Development Scheme' during 2016-2019 could get employment. The fact that out of 72 lakh trained candidates, only 15 lakh were in employment can come. This proves beyond doubt that the Skill India target has been badly missed. Both the Telugu states have recently signed an agreement with American company Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to improve the talent of 80,000 students by next year.

mental impulses of the mother during the pregnancy sends waves impacting the child's brain and becomes a part of the child's mental aptitude as he grows.

The virus has once again chained our kids to the mobile screens and chances of real-life socializing became less. Incessant gluing to the mobile screens would take away the energizing elements of genuine socialization. The virtual world the child captures and scrolls down on the mobile screen is not small but that is not as enduring and effective as the real-life situations that a child can involve and experience from. Children need to be monitored by the parents and positive parenting needs to be a natural agenda of the family. There should also be initiatives taken at school and college-level to address the issue. Adequate interventions by the teachers by regularly monitoring the mental growth of the children with better refreshing activities should be put in practice. When it comes to the schools, the class teachers can play a greater role by monitoring the physical and mental requirements of the children with the support of the parents. But locking the children up in their houses curtails all such interventions. What becomes riskier is the fact that the children, being put in isolation, begin to create a virtual world of imagination and the influence of materials available on the screen mounts. It becomes more difficult for the parents and the teachers to accurately study the impact of screen life in a secluded real life. Not only is the real educating process getting disrupted but home confinement of children pull them away from creative socialization. Parents have a great role to play in helping the children. This pandemic and its enforced home isolation should be used for more creative interventions in the family itself. Especially, parents should be a consistent listener to their children and try to spend more time with them. Without avoiding their feelings, they should be helped to pick up and nurture positivity in a large way. Setting separate time for online learning and online enjoyment, parents can regulate children's mental involvement on virtual contents. Creating a positive environment in the family would help the children to become more inventive and help them appreciate goodness around them. Interacting with their friends would also help the children come out of their mental stress to some extent. No doubt, living a healthy life in a pandemic hit world, without our children being lost in the virtual world of illusion is a challenge but not impossible.

(The author is a freelance journalist, teacher and social-worker).

He has collaborated with Microsoft and National Skill Development Agency to equip one lakh young graduates with digital skills. In India, where more than a third of the country's population is in the age group of 15-24 years, it is urgent to mold them into skilled human resources is not possible, a special system which periodically assesses the number of skilled human resources required in each sector over the next five to ten years, says that such system should be created and suitable based on its research and recommendations. Curriculum should be designed.

Priority should be given to basics of language, maths and science up to secondary level, moral education and character development should be limited and priority of studies at college-level should be employment and skills. While many companies do not have jobs, reasons for giving are attributed to non-availability of properly qualified skilled workers. It is a viable strategy to allay the plight of postgraduate and doctoral candidates competing for modest jobs. If education is turned into a powerful tool to meet the emerging employment requirements from time to time, then country will be able to move ahead and lead with multifaceted development.

Vijay Garg.

## YOUR COLUMN

## Skilled Youth- future of country

Dear Editor,

The beginning of the robot revolution, which was predicted earlier, will now be premature due to the spread of the corona virus. The latest report of the World Economic Forum (WEF) has also said that the nature of billions of jobs will change by the year 2025. Billions of jobs are being changed as a result of the rapid increase in automation and digitization. Due to this, up to ten crore new jobs will be created. The good news is that due to artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics, more jobs will be created than the number of people who will lose their jobs. However, it is most important for the youth to be ready with the skills to grab them with both hands. The WEF analytical report means that the plans of the countries of the world need to be accelerated to the extent of necessity. Twenty sectors such as satellite services, electric vehicles, innovative antibiotics, ed-tech etc. are expected to change the world in the near future. To what extent will India benefit from such expansion opportunities?