

## A Growing Concern

Climate change is no longer a distant environmental theory or a matter confined to scientific conferences. It is a lived reality that is reshaping ecosystems, economies, and everyday life across the globe. From erratic rainfall and prolonged droughts to devastating floods and rising temperatures, the signs are unmistakable. The changing climate has emerged as one of the most pressing challenges of our time, demanding urgent, collective, and sustained action.

In recent years, extreme weather events have become more frequent and intense. Heatwaves are breaking historical records, glaciers are retreating at alarming rates, and sea levels are steadily rising. Regions that once enjoyed predictable seasonal cycles now face uncertainty. Farmers struggle to plan sowing and harvesting, urban areas grapple with water scarcity or flash floods, and vulnerable communities bear the brunt of disasters they did little to cause. The climate crisis is not merely an environmental issue—it is a humanitarian, economic, and social concern.

Scientific consensus is clear: human activities, particularly the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, and industrial emissions, are major contributors to global warming. The accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere has disrupted the Earth's natural balance, leading to a steady rise in global temperatures. While nature has its own cycles, the speed and scale of current changes point unmistakably to human influence.

The consequences are far-reaching. Agriculture, which sustains billions, is highly sensitive to climatic shifts. Unseasonal rains, hailstorms, and prolonged dry spells affect crop yields and threaten food security. Water resources are under stress as glaciers—natural freshwater reservoirs—shrink. Coastal communities face the risk of submergence due to rising seas, while biodiversity suffers as species struggle to adapt to rapidly changing habitats.

Moreover, climate change exacerbates inequality. Those with the least resources often face the greatest risks. Marginalized communities, small farmers, and low-income households lack the infrastructure and financial capacity to recover quickly from climate-induced disasters. This deepens existing socio-economic divides and fuels displacement and migration.

Addressing climate change requires a two-pronged approach: mitigation and adaptation. Mitigation involves reducing greenhouse gas emissions through a transition to renewable energy, energy efficiency, sustainable transportation, and responsible consumption. Governments must accelerate investments in solar, wind, and other clean energy sources while phasing down dependence on fossil fuels. At the same time, industries must adopt greener technologies and sustainable practices.

Adaptation, on the other hand, focuses on preparing for and managing the impacts that are already unavoidable. Climate-resilient infrastructure, improved disaster preparedness systems, water conservation strategies, and climate-smart agriculture are essential components of a comprehensive response. Urban planning must account for extreme weather risks, and rural communities need support to diversify livelihoods and enhance resilience.

However, policy measures alone are not sufficient. Individual and community-level actions also matter. Reducing waste, conserving energy, supporting sustainable products, and planting trees are small but meaningful steps. Educational institutions and media have a crucial role in raising awareness and fostering a culture of environmental responsibility.

International cooperation remains vital. Climate change does not recognize national borders; its impacts are global. Collaborative frameworks, financial support for developing nations, and technology sharing are essential to ensure a just and equitable transition to a low-carbon future.

The changing climate is a warning signal—one that calls for immediate and sustained action. The cost of inaction will far outweigh the investments required today. Protecting the planet is not just about preserving nature; it is about safeguarding livelihoods, ensuring food and water security, and securing a stable future for generations to come. The time to act is now, with determination, unity, and a shared sense of responsibility.

## Securing the future: How economic stability shapes progress

■ MOHAMMAD HANIEF

Economic stability forms the foundation of national prosperity, influencing the well-being of citizens, the growth



of businesses, and the strength of governments. It represents a condition in which an economy experiences steady growth, manageable inflation, predictable employment, and minimal fluctuations in financial markets. While often discussed in technical terms, its impact is tangible, affecting household incomes, investment decisions, and the capacity of governments to deliver essential services.

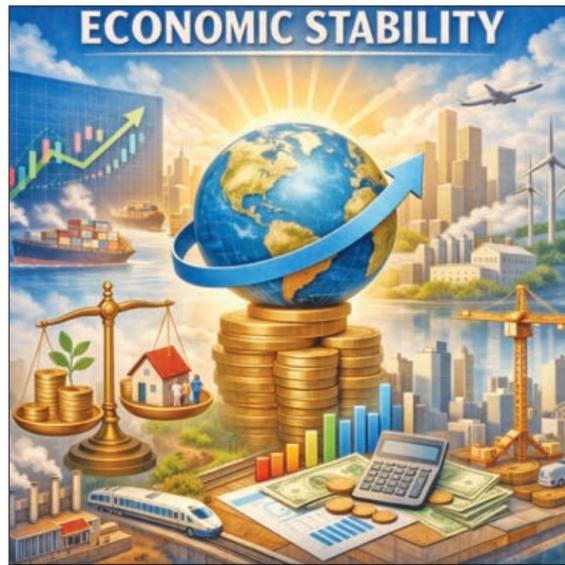
A stable economy is characterized by consistent growth in output, controlled inflation, and low unemployment. Such conditions provide confidence to investors, entrepreneurs, and consumers, encouraging economic activity and long-term planning. Conversely, instability, marked by sudden inflation, high unemployment, or financial turbulence, erodes trust, reduces investments, and threatens sustainable development. Governments and central banks play critical roles in achieving stability through careful monetary and fiscal policies. Interest rates, money supply, taxation, and government spending are all tools used to balance growth with stability, and their coordination is essential to prevent economic disruption.

Economic stability is significant not only for macroeconomic indicators but also for everyday life. For households, it ensures predictable prices for goods and services, preserving purchasing power and reducing financial stress. Families can plan for education, healthcare, and savings

when the economy is stable, knowing that wages and the cost of living will not fluctuate unpredictably. Businesses benefit from an environment in which investment and expansion decisions can be made with confidence, fostering innovation and job creation. Stable economies also attract domestic and foreign investors, providing capital that fuels further growth. Governments, in turn, are better positioned to plan social programs, fund infrastructure projects, and deliver essential services when revenue streams are reliable. Instability, however, can force sudden budget adjustments, cutbacks in social welfare, and an overall decline in public trust.

Historical examples underscore the consequences of economic instability. Global crises, such as the Great Depression in the 1930s and the financial collapse of 2008, reveal how disruptions can ripple through economies, causing unemployment, poverty, and social unrest. In contrast, nations that maintain strong institutional frameworks, prudent fiscal policies, and adaptive monetary strategies often achieve long-term stability and growth. Post-World War II Germany, for instance, rebuilt its economy through careful planning, currency stabilization, and strategic investment, while countries like Singapore and Switzerland have leveraged consistent policies to attract global investments and foster innovation. These examples highlight that stability is not simply a matter of chance; it is the result of long-term planning, disciplined governance, and social cohesion.

Today, the global economy faces unprecedented challenges that test stability in every corner of the world. Inflationary pressures, supply chain disruptions, geopolitical tensions, and climate change have created an environment of uncertainty. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated how rapidly economic stability can be threatened, with contractions in growth, surges in unemployment, and widening fiscal deficits. Emerging economies, in particular, struggle with rapid population growth, urbanization, and dependence on commodities, making them vulnerable to external



shocks. For countries dependent on exports of oil, gas, or agricultural products, fluctuations in global markets can lead to sudden fiscal shortfalls and economic instability. Advanced economies face challenges in managing debt and supporting aging populations, which affect productivity and social welfare systems.

These complex realities require a careful balance between short-term interventions and long-term structural reforms.

Maintaining economic stability requires continuous, coordinated action. Monetary policies must balance growth with inflation control, while fiscal discipline ensures sustainable government spending and debt management. Diversification of the economy reduces reliance on a single sector or commodity, while investment in infrastructure, education, and healthcare strengthens resilience. Social policies that promote inclusion and reduce inequality further contribute to long-term stability by fostering trust and cohesion among citizens. Ensuring access to quality education and healthcare empowers the workforce, while investments in modern infrastructure and technology support competitiveness in global markets.

Technological advancement adds a new dimension to econom-

ic stability. Automation, digitalization, and artificial intelligence reshape industries, labor markets, and consumer behavior. While innovation drives efficiency and growth, it also poses challenges such as job displacement and cybersecurity risks. Proactive management of these transitions, along with regulatory oversight of emerging financial technologies, ensures that technological benefits are widely shared without compromising stability. Financial technologies, including mobile banking and online investment platforms, can enhance financial inclusion, particularly in developing countries, but they require robust regulations to prevent fraud and systemic risks.

Economic stability also intersects with environmental and social factors. Climate change, for example, has become a major economic concern. Natural disasters, shifting weather patterns, and environmental degradation can disrupt agriculture, industry, and supply chains, creating both short-term crises and long-term vulnerabilities. Economies that integrate sustainability into planning—investing in renewable energy, resilient infrastructure, and sustainable agriculture—are better positioned to maintain stability in an era of environmental uncertainty. Social factors,

including inequality and political unrest, can amplify economic shocks. Societies that provide equitable opportunities and social safety nets are more resilient to financial crises, whereas marginalized communities often bear the brunt of instability.

Economic stability is not a fixed goal but a dynamic process that requires foresight, adaptability, and responsible governance. It is a shared responsibility that connects governments, institutions, businesses, and citizens. A stable economy fosters confidence, encourages investment, supports social programs, and cushions societies against external shocks. Conversely, instability threatens livelihoods, social cohesion, and national progress. In a rapidly changing world, nations that prioritize stability are better equipped to achieve sustainable growth, resilience, and inclusive prosperity.

Ultimately, economic stability underpins national progress and quality of life. It is the steady force that allows societies to plan, invest, and thrive in the face of uncertainty. Achieving it demands vigilance, thoughtful policy, and cooperation across all sectors of society, but the rewards—lasting growth, reduced inequality, and enduring prosperity—make it an indispensable pursuit for every nation. Countries that focus on stability ensure that development benefits reach all citizens, creating an environment where innovation, entrepreneurship, and social welfare can flourish simultaneously.

In conclusion, economic stability is not merely a technical measure or an abstract concept; it is the lifeline of national prosperity. By fostering predictable growth, low inflation, and inclusive development, it strengthens economies and societies alike. While the path to stability is complex, involving careful management of monetary, fiscal, technological, social, and environmental factors, the benefits are profound. A nation that achieves economic stability safeguards the future of its citizens, builds resilience against global uncertainties, and lays the groundwork for long-term prosperity that is shared across generations.

(The author is a senior analyst)

## Festivals, Fun, and Fainting: An Overlooked Child Health Issue at Melas

■ POOJA RANI

Bright lights, thrilling rides, and festive treats bring joy to children at melas, but repeated incidents of fainting and sudden illness reveal a neglected child health concern that calls for greater awareness and shared responsibility.

Festivals are an inseparable part of Indian social life. They bring families together, fill streets with colour, and create moments of joy that children eagerly wait for all year. During occasions like local melas become the centre of attraction. Swings, giant wheels, loud music, toy stalls, balloons, and ice cream counters transform ordinary grounds into spaces of excitement and celebration.

However, hidden behind this festive charm is a reality that often goes unnoticed—children's health is frequently compromised in the rush of enjoyment.

Across towns and villages, parents recount similar experiences. A child enjoys repeated swings without breaks, consumes ice cream or sugary snacks immediately afterward, and soon complains of dizziness or nausea. In some cases, the child vomits or even faints, causing panic among family members. After a short rest, the child recovers quickly and insists on returning to the mela, leading adults to dismiss the incident as minor.

What is more concerning is that such episodes often repeat under similar conditions, sometimes even on the same festival after a gap of years. These repetitions are often attributed to coincidence, superstition, or fate, rather than being examined through a health and safety lens.

Medical explanations, however, are clear and grounded in science.

One of the most common causes is motion sickness. Continuous swinging disturbs the inner ear balance in children, leading to nausea, dizziness, and disorientation. Children often do not recognize early discomfort and continue riding until symptoms worsen.

Another major factor is improper food consumption. Ice cream, cold drinks, and heavy sugary snacks are difficult to digest immediately after intense physical activity. During excitement and exertion, blood flow shifts away from the digestive system, increasing the chances of vomiting and abdominal discomfort. Dehydration is a silent contributor. Amid running, shouting, and playing, children often forget to drink water. Even mild dehydration can cause weakness, headaches, and fainting, particularly in crowded and warm environments.

Low blood sugar is equally significant. Many children skip proper meals before attending melas and rely only on sweets,

which leads to sudden energy crashes. Additionally, loud noise, flashing lights, overcrowding, and emotional excitement can overwhelm a child's nervous system, sometimes resulting in brief unconsciousness as a protective bodily response.

The quick recovery seen in many such cases often leads adults to underestimate the seriousness of the episode. Vomiting or resting may relieve immediate symptoms, but it does not mean the situation was harmless. Children, driven by excitement, may suppress discomfort and rush back to play.

This is where parental awareness becomes crucial. Festivals should be moments of happiness, not health emergencies. Simple preventive steps can make celebrations safer without reducing joy.

Parents and caregivers must ensure children eat balanced meals before visiting melas, limit continuous rides, insist on rest breaks, and encourage regular water intake. Early warning signs such as unusual silence, pale skin, dizziness, or irritability should never be ignored. Responsibility also lies with mela organizers and local authorities. Safe ride operations, drinking water facilities, shaded resting areas, basic first-aid booths, and clear safety instructions can significantly reduce health risks. Vendors selling food near children's rides should be encouraged to display consumption advisories.

Perhaps the most dangerous mindset is normalization. Statements like "this happens every year" or "children are like this" prevent learning and preparedness. Repeated incidents are not coincidence; they are patterns that demand attention.

Festivals symbolize joy, faith, and togetherness. Conscious celebration does not mean restricting happiness—it means balancing excitement with care. When awareness guides celebration, melas remain spaces of laughter, not fear.

Protecting a child's health is not an interruption to celebration—it is the most meaningful way to honour it.

What Parents Should Remember  
 ? Avoid continuous swinging without breaks  
 ? Do not give ice cream or cold drinks immediately after rides  
 ? Ensure proper meals before attending melas  
 ? Encourage frequent water intake  
 ? Watch for warning signs: dizziness, paleness, nausea, silence  
 ? Allow rest at the first sign of discomfort  
 "Repeated health incidents during festivals are not coincidence—they are patterns that call for awareness and prevention."

(The writer is an Educationist)

## Question of Pahari Reservation in Jammu & Kashmir: A Scholarly Analysis of Social Justice, Identity and Policy-Making

■ ASHUTOSH PANDEY

The problem of giving status to the Pahari community in Jammu & Kashmir is a big deal in India today. It is not about how the government categorizes people. The Pahari community issue is really about understanding how people see themselves how they have been treated unfairly in the past. If everyone in the region has equal opportunities. When we talk about the community and reservation we have to think about if the rules that are supposed to help the Pahari community are actually working for the Pahari community. The Pahari reservation discussion makes us think about what's fair and just, for the Pahari community.

The Pahari community situation is something that people have been talking about for a time.

The Pahari community people who live in away places like Jammu, Rajouri, Poonch and some parts of the Kashmir Valley have a lot of problems. They have to deal with being far from everything, bad roads and not being able to get to schools or hospitals easily. When the Pahari community people are away, from everything they often have a hard time socially and economically. This is why some people think that the Pahari community

needs help to make things fair because the Pahari community has been treated unfairly for a time. The Pahari community needs things like reservation to make up for the past and help the Pahari community people have a life.

The thing is, any policy about reservations really needs to be based on facts. One big problem is that we do not have honest surveys that show us everything about the Pahari community like their social and economic situation. When we make policies without knowing all the facts they do not really. We are not sure what will happen. Everyone knows that if we want to help people we need to have information to make the right decisions about the Pahari community. The Pahari community needs policies that are based on evidence so we can really make a difference, for the Pahari community.

There is a problem in this discussion about people who had to leave their homes. This is especially true for families who moved from Pakistan-occupied Jammu & Kashmir after 1947 and settled in the Jammu region. These families say they are Pahari because of their culture and language. The government does not consider them Pahari because they do not live in the right

area. This causes a problem. The problem is whether people should get help from the government because of where they live or because of what happened to them in the past.

The Pahari communities are affected by this decision. Pahari people want to know if they can get the benefits, as others. This is a question. Should the government help people because of where they live or because of what happened to the people? The answer is not easy. Pahari communities have been affected by this for a time. The way reservation policies affect relationships between communities is also very important. When it seems like people are competing for resources it can cause problems between groups of people. For example with the reservation some people are worried that it will make life harder, for communities that already get help from reservation policies. This is a concern that policymakers should think about.

It means that reservation policies should not be seen as a situation where one group wins and another group loses but rather as a part of a bigger plan to help everyone. Reservation policies and development should go hand in hand to include all communities. Reservation policies are a part of this and they should be used

to help all communities, not just a few.

When we talk about helping people we see that just setting aside spots for them is not the solution. It can help people move up in society. To really make things fair we need to make sure people have good education jobs where they live, good roads and bridges and it must be easy for them to talk to the people in charge. If we do not have programs to help people in addition to setting aside spots it does not work well. If we put money into schools, hospitals and roads in the hill areas of Jammu & Kashmir it could make a difference and be more helpful, than just setting aside spots.

In conclusion, the question of Pahari reservation is a test for Indian social policy, where constitutional ideals meet real-world challenges. A successful solution needs policies based on reliable data, multi-level discussions, and an understanding of the specific conditions faced by displaced populations. From an academic standpoint, this case shows that social justice comes not just from laws, but from ongoing evaluation and inclusive development.

(The writer is a student of Indian Institute of Mass Communication, Jammu)

## Recognizing the Unsung Heroes of Taxation

■ DR. VINOD CHANDRASHEKHAR DIXIT

Central Excise Day is observed annually on February 24 to commemorate the establishment of the Central Excise and Salt Act in 1944. This day honours the contributions of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) and its officers, who play a vital role in India's economic development through efficient tax administration. The Central Excise and Salt Act consolidated eleven Acts relating to excise duties, paving the way for contemporary excise laws. Over time, the Act has undergone changes, with the CBIC taking on wider mandates such as customs, central goods and services tax, and anti-smuggling.

The CBIC and its officers work tirelessly to promote compliance with taxation laws and curtail corruption in the manufacturing industry. Their efforts are crucial in generating revenue for the government, which is used to finance public welfare programs like education and health. Despite the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), central excise levies persist on specific goods such as petroleum, alcohol, and tobacco, remaining an important source of tax income for the

government. The Central Excise Department has played a significant role in India's industrial development, with reforms aimed at simplifying tax payments and increasing the use of technology.

The department's key roles include revenue generation, administration of specific goods, compliance and anti-evasion, policy formulation, and regulatory border control. Excise duty is levied on goods produced in India, with the tax burden ultimately falling on the consumer. The history of excise duty in India dates back to the British Era, with the Central Excise Act of 1944 forming the framework for excise duty implementation and collection. The Central Excise Tariff Act of 1985 provides provisions for tariff on central excise duties, listing products and associated duties. The CBIC has implemented various measures to facilitate trade and industry, such as the introduction of the GST and digital initiatives like e-way bills and online tax payments. These efforts have improved compliance and reduced tax evasion, contributing to increased revenue collection. The revenue generated from central excise duties is utilized for various public services, including infra-

structure development, social welfare programs, and defence. As India continues to develop economically, the role of the CBIC and central excise remains crucial in promoting growth and development. The significance of Central Excise Day extends beyond celebration, as it also serves as an opportunity to reflect on the contributions of CBIC officers and the impact of their work on India's economy. Their dedication to promoting economic growth, curbing corruption, and ensuring compliance with taxation laws is commendable. As we recognize the importance of central excise, let's appreciate the efforts of those working behind the scenes to build a stronger and more prosperous India.

Central Excise Day is a testament to the CBIC's commitment to excellence in tax administration and its role in shaping India's economic landscape. As the nation progresses, the CBIC's efforts will remain pivotal in fostering growth, ensuring compliance, and contributing to the country's development. Let's acknowledge the tireless efforts of CBIC officers and look forward to their continued contributions to India's economic prosperity.