

CROWN OF INDIA

With no doubt in countrymen's minds now about which place is Crown of India, the assertion by the Home Minister Amit Shah that PM Narendra Modi has raised Jammu and Kashmir to this stature is true to the hilt and no one can deny this fact that soon after the abrogation of Article 370 the development has attained extraordinary momentum in the Union Territory leading to exemplary progress which was never witnessed here. There is no doubt that the opposition parties had made Article 370 a bugbear and indulged in propaganda that there will be a holocaust in case this Article will be abrogated but what actually happened after the end of this contentious Article is the history as not even a bird was killed as a reaction to such a big decision. This really was the charisma of PM Modi and HM Shah and the country especially the people of J&K should express gratitude to both the tall leaders of the country, who have accomplish this wonderful job with extreme ease and bailed out people of J&K from the miserable life to breathe in a new era of peace, progress and prosperity. The place which was marred by death and destruction for so long has now been transformed into the most happening place in the country where except development, new projects, tourism promotion, health edifice and educational hub, nothing else is discussed as violence, separatism and blackmailing have become the things of the past. The credit for this goes to PM Modi led central dispensation which did what the opposition parties could not do in the last over 70 years. What is more important as far as PM Modi's Kashmir policy is concerned is the fact that everything which has been brought to this part of the country by the government is for one and all and there is no subjugation or discrimination on the basis or region, religion or any other distinction. This lead the people of all hues to show confidence in the governance model of Modi government thus the number of those who were dissuaded has diminished considerably and it is likely that sooner than later more people will change their stance and will become part of mainstream thus helping in restoring the pristine glory of J&K in general and Kashmir in particular.

AMBITIOUS MISSION YOUTH

Continuing its pragmatic approach to ensure a dignified source of livelihood for every individual in J&K, especially those who despite having technical skills and high education, are suffering since long due to unemployment, the administration has launched a number of schemes providing innumerable benefits and facilities to the deserving lot. Where, all possible efforts are being done to inspire more and more youth towards entrepreneurship, on the other hand it has also been ensured that all skilled youth are provided adequate guidance and assistance for setting up their own units. Not only males, but equal stress is also been laid to ensure availability of all facilities for girls and womenfolk in UT to make them self-reliant besides ensuring their empowerment on ground level. During a recent review meeting, it was made public that almost 4882 beneficiaries have been provided self-employment under the Mumkin scheme of Mission Youth till date while it is expected that the number will reach 8000 by the end of this financial year. It was also revealed that about 3447 women entrepreneurs have been supported under the Tejaswani scheme till now and it is expected that the number will touch 6600, by March 2022. Pertinent to mention here that both these schemes form an integral part of the Mission Youth programme launched by J&K administration with an aim to empower about 50000 youth of Union Territory by providing them employment avenues. It is really a matter of satisfaction that the mission is going on as per expectations and will reach its target quite soon. Moreover, as a number of new locations and places have been identified by the administration to be developed as tourist places, there is ample scope for the administration to provide employment opportunities to local youth of that particular areas by supporting them in establishing various units, which will not only help in tackling the challenge of unemployment significantly but shall also ensure several basic facilities to the visiting tourists thereby giving a considerable fillip to the economy of Union Territory, thereby providing an opportunity to the administration to hit multiple targets by a single arrow.

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Exploring the Asatoma Sadgamaya (prayer)

Today, I wanted to explore this Sanskrit prayer with all. It is a prayer that we all need to digest, and not just utter with our lips. Its meaning is both powerful and potent. Let us see what it teaches us.

Asato Ma Sadgamaya
This line means, “O Lord, lead me from the unreal to the real.” As seekers and students, we still do not know what is real and unreal. But as we consciously create the Sankalpa (intention), declare it to existence, and seek God's blessing, we are led from the unreal to the real. In life, if you are sensitive and observe humanity closely, you will notice we are all trained to listen to lies. Very few are trained to listen to the truth. Hence spiritual Anushasana (discipline) is needed where we can devote our energies to listen to truth and not lies.

Tamaso Ma Jyotirgamaya
This line means, “O Lord, lead me from darkness to light.” This is the reason we light the lamp and call it the Gnana Jyothi. This line refers to the light of wisdom and urges us to bring in the jyothi (light) of understanding into the areas of our tamas (darkness). The areas of darkness referred to here are the areas of our ignorance. The Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna says, “AgnanaNetuGnanamAavrutam Tena MuihyanthiJantavaha.” Krishan is reminding us that

humanity is suffering not because of the situations in life, but because of the ignorance which has covered our intellect. Hence our Sadhana(spiritual practice) should be to bring in the Gnana (wisdom) into the areas of our ignorance.

Mrityor Amritangamaya
This line means, “O Lord, lead me from death to deathlessness.” We know about Mrutyu (death), but we do not realize that wherever there is death, there must be deathlessness. Death is defined only in a space where deathlessness exists. If you say darkness exists, then there must be light, or the word darkness becomes redundant. The moment you say ignorance it means that there must be knowledge. The moment you say day, there must be night, because things only exist in contrast. By such logical inference, you will realize that if death exists then there must be something which is deathless, from which the phenomenon of death happens. If there is change, then there must be something changeless from which the change happens. If we believe death exists, there is a point from which death is defined, and a point of reference which is deathless. Since we do not know what deathlessness is, we pray, “O Lord, please by your anugraha (blessings), lead us from death to deathlessness.”

Swami Sukhabodhananda

Berozgar Se Swarozgar: Scheme to provide job opportunities to J&K youth

In order to provide adequate Job opportunities to youth of J&K and make them self dependent, the Government of Jammu and Kashmir has started 'Be Rozgar Se Swarozgar Scheme'. Prime objective of scheme is to generate employment opportunities in urban and rural areas by promoting self-employment ventures. The scheme is part of 10-point campaign initiated by government to give a renewed push to the implementation of employment and other beneficiary oriented schemes on the ground. The objective of the 10 point campaign is to achieve quantifiable results within specific timelines, in an effort to touch the lives of ordinary citizens at the grassroots level. Under

'Berozgar Se Swarozgar' scheme, the youth of J&K will get a chance to get employment. This Scheme is launched to provide job opportunities to youth who are struggling to earn their living. It is a targeted campaign to identify and provide self employment to at least 5 persons in every Panchayat and overall two lakh youth in the entire UT. It will include financial support and skilling as part of the process. It will ensure that a local youth will get a chance to earn livelihood.

The main objective of the scheme is to generate employment opportunities both in urban and rural areas through setting up of self-employment ventures. Due to adversities of COVID-19 on economy of

our country, many youths lost jobs. In order to hand hold these youth and provide them adequate opportunities, the Government of Jammu and Kashmir has decided to run this scheme so that unemployed people will be provided employment.

The young entrepreneurs are being sensitized about the different schemes that are being run through different line departments. are also being issued to youth's who will now become eligible to participate in online tendering process of District Capex Plan under 3 lac ceiling in their respective Panchayats. To create awareness among the youth about 'Be Rozgar Se Swarozgar' scheme, the government started 'Yogyata se Rozgar

Mahotsav'. The scheme has been launched with an aim to help the youth of a country to build their future better for tomorrow. This scheme will not only help the youth of the country to get employed but also help the country to get developed. The scheme will be effective for those applicants who want to have job but are facing problems in finding them.

Apart from this scheme, the government is doing constant handholding of youth through various schemes to facilitate employment, provide self-employment guidance and skill development for the unemployed youth so as to enhance their incomes, thus promoting inclusive growth.

Gender inequality in 21st century

■ SHONIMA MALHOTRA

As quoted by Pitrim Sorokin, "Unstratified society with real equality of its members is a myth that has never been realized in the history of mankind," social stratification results to social inequality. Every society has unequal distribution of resources - wealth, or property, power and prestige among its members. Notably this inequality is not merely a matter of individual abilities and aptitudes but socially created inequalities. A society becomes unequal for a variety of factors, for example age, gender, caste, inheritance of property etc. Gender refers to the socially constructed roles and behaviors that a society typically associates with males and females. It concerns the psychological, social and cultural differences between males and females. 'Gender Equality Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow' is the theme of 'International Women's Day 2022'. But the question arises 'has the society really attained gender equality to a notable extent?' I personally feel that we are still miles away from realizing the theme of gender equality and doing away with gender bias and differences. Despite many efforts - legislative and non - legislative on the part of different agencies of the society, we have still not been successful in altering the mindset of the members of the society. As a matter of fact, gender-based stratification, inequality and disparity still exists in different forms, ways and extent in our society. So, simply mentioning such themes is not enough unless efforts are made to implement these themes in letter & spirit. I feel the celebration of International Women's Day itself is a reflection of gender biasing. Why a special day needs to be dedicated to women and not to men? Why is no such day celebrated for male members of the society not even at national level, not to talk of international level? Does that mean that 364 days out of 365 in a year are 'Men's Day' and just one day is 'Women's Day' or 'does it reflect opinion of the society that dedicating just twenty four hours i.e. one day in a year is enough to commemorate and recognize the commendable achievements of women in different spheres of life'? We have been celebrating this day since 18th century with an aim to address the social, political, economic and cultural issues faced by women and also to give recognition and encouragement to women whom have made significant contributions to the advancement of their gender. Since then we have covered a distance of more than two centuries but the celebration of this day is still in practice. It is truly an implication of the reality that even after covering such a long distance, still our women are facing problems and issues and needs a special day for their achievements and success to be acknowledged. This is so pitiable and pathetic state of affairs. Though women are moving shoulder to shoulder with men, and are doing wonders in different spheres of life, they are still lagging behind and are not treated at par with their male counterparts. In such a situation how can we expect gender equality? Having briefly discussed my views and opinion about gender inequality at international level, I will now focus primarily on gender bias and inequality in Indian society. Social inequality in distribution of various rewards or desired goods and services manifests itself in a country like India



strongly through differences of gender. In fact, gender inequality has been a social issue in India for centuries. It is hard to imagine this state of affairs in the 21st century when women have proved to be strong leaders in every field possible. But inspite of such progress, even today, the girl child is discriminated against in the society. The cultural construct of Indian society which reinforces gender bias has led to the continuation of India's strong preference for male children. In the Indian social context even today male children are preferred to female children. It is a known fact that this discrimination starts even before the girl child is born. An expected woman is always given the blessings to have a male child. This male preference has led to the abuse of advanced technology. The sophisticated scanning and super-sonographic equipments are being misused to find out the sex of the child; that is to go for abortion if the child is found to be an unwanted female. Even among the educated, urban, well-to-do people, advanced medical technology such as amino-centesis and super-sonography are used and if the fetus is found to be female, abortion is induced. The practice of female feticide through sex selective abortion continues to be practiced in spite of the Prenatal Diagnostic Technique Act of 1994. The statistics still narrate a grim story of female foeticide, girl child discrimination and gender bias. Sometimes she is killed as a foetus, and if she manages to see the light of day, she is killed as an infant. In many parts of India, the birth of a girl child is not welcomed is a known fact. The birth of a baby boy is celebrated with great pomp and ardour, but the birth of a girl child is received with dismay especially if she happens to be a second girl child. This discrimination does not end at this stage but can be seen prevalent at different stages and in different aspects throughout life. Discrimination and distinction between male and female children is made in matters relating to socialization, food, dress, health, education, domestic work, official work etc. The members of the society treat boys and girls differently and as such are provided with unequal opportunities in different spheres of life. It is seen that both male and female children are exposed to traditional masculine and feminine traits and activities from the very childhood through the process of socialization. Boys are socialized to think that they should be invulnerable, fearless, decisive and even

emotionless in some situation and are expected to be actively engaged in some good job, confident, courageous, responsible, respectful and be very competitive. They are expected to play with trucks, blocks and toy soliders and are made to play tough games like cricket, football, basketball and hence make them masculine girls, on the other hand, are expected to be very affectionate, mild, gentle, pleasing, shy, tolerant, obedient, loyal, dutiful, hospitable, service-minded, loving, more committed to family than to their personal career, and so on. They are socialised to play all the indoor games and made to do soft jobs. They are given dolls and kitchen goods to play, because, according to society, these things make them soft, emotional, sweet and submissive- all marks of being feminine. Girls are less likely to get toy guns, trucks, trains, or bats and balls and boys are less likely to receive dolls and carriages. As a matter of fact, male children are strongly discouraged by their own family members to use or play with such things whereas girls are asked to help their mothers with household chores. There is a male-bias in food allocation too in some Indian families. Indian women are thus malnourished. Besides anti-female bias, poor women are deliberately denied basic health care facilities. This disparity not remaining restricted till here extends to other sectors also such as educational sector, professional sector and property sector. Education is not equally attained by Indian women. If a choice has to be made between sending a boy or a girl to school, the boy will usually be given precedence. Although literacy rates are increasing, the female literacy rate lags behind the male literacy rate. An underlying reason for such low literacy rates are parents' perceptions that education for girls are a waste of resources as their daughters would eventually get married and live with their husbands' families.' Educating a girl is like nurturing a plant in someone else's garden' - this saying very aptly explains this perspective held by some parents regarding the education of their girl child. Traditional division of labour (more likely to have to work in the home, care for siblings etc) further disadvantages girls. In such a scenario, it is but obvious that for myriad reasons, many girls across the country are forced to drop out of school. It is found that girls are being discouraged to go for higher education and also for professional and technical education. Academic cours-

es and sports activities which the students opt for in educational institutions are distinctly gender- segregated. No doubt, this trend is reversing in the past few years with both sons and daughters being sent to good educational institutions (this is, of course, also linked to economic prosperity and being able to afford quality schools for all children), but still much needs to be changed to enhance the literacy rate amongst girls and to provide them an opportunity to select their choice based subjects in academic field. Though women constitute an important labour force in the country, there is a gender-based division in the professional field too. Women are discriminated with regard to recruitment, promotion, increment, training, overtime allowance, facilities at work place, and so on. Male workers are given preference in these matters. There are also sufficient instances of exploitation of female workers in even in the organized and unorganized sectors. And to add to this they have to shoulder the burden of performing dual role responsibility of managing their homes and offices too. Though women have equal rights under the law to own property and receive equal inheritance rights, but in practice women are at a disadvantage. Women are not only subject to income or asset inequality but also in terms of freedom and power deprivation of women goes beyond one's imagination. In present progressive society, gender inequality, though reduced to a certain extent, has not been totally wiped out from the minds of the people. Different gender roles are still propagated through different agencies of society like family, education, media etc. In fact, in addition to the early prevalent forms of gender bias, certain new forms of gender inequality have cropped up and gained momentum in the society. Rape, dowry murders, cyberstalking are some of the examples reflecting these new variants of gender disparities and differences. In the ancient times atleast girls and women were safe to move outside without any fear and apprehensions. But is it possible in the present scenario? Cases like Nirbhaya are an answer to this question. Males on the other hand can still move out even at late nights without any fear and restrictions as before. Dowry deaths and murders have become common news. But do we ever hear of any male being tortured for dowry? Why is this practice applicable to girls and their families only and that too in times when the girls are also highly educated and well-employed? As if this was not sufficient now-a-days digital technology too is being used to torture, blackmail and harm females in varied ways. Can this be called a state of gender equality? I don't think so. Simply providing equal fundamental rights to both the genders is not enough. There is a dire need to introduce practical changes. We cannot think of a sustainable future unless we initiate the necessary changes and build a strong and sustainable present. So lets come together and take the essential steps to generate a gender balanced rather than gender biased Indian society Let's join hands to do away with the concepts of patriarchy and matriarchy and encourage a gender secular society wherein not just one day but each day can be celebrated as 'Women's Day'. I firmly believe that will be the celebration of 'Women's Day' in true sense of the term.

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YOUR COLUMN

Loss of a legend

Dear Editor,

From millions of cricket lovers across world, a cruel spin of destiny took legendary one of greatest leg-spinners of all-time, Shane Keith Warne (52) away from us on March 4, 2022. Warne's death is the second devastating blow for Australian cricket in 24 hours with fellow great, Rod Marsh, also dying on the same day having suffered a major heart attack last week. Even just hours before his death was made public, Warne tweeted his sadness over the death of Marsh who was one of his cricket idols. Alas, few hours later icon Warne was found unresponsive by friends in a villa he was staying at in Koh Samui, Thailand, and despite the best efforts of medical staff, he could not be revived,

Warne the larger than life leg-spinner who bamboozled batsmen, enthralled fans, and constantly not only

provided fodder to tabloids, but dominated world cricket for one and half decades. One of Wisden's five greatest cricketers (alongside Donald Bradman, Garfield Sobers, Jack Hobbs and Viv Richards) of the 20th century (the only one without a knighthood), whose dismissal of England's Mike Gatting (1993) is regarded as the Ball of the Century (Warne managed to get a ball to pitch outside the leg stump, and the vicious turn on the cherry took it past Gatting's bat and clipped the top of the off stump). How he revived the area of leg-spin, combining prodigious spin and drift with unnerving accuracy and subtle variations remains a mystery to the world of cricket.

Warne's statistics: 708 Test wickets from 145 Test matches, with an assortment of leg-breaks, googlies, flippers and his own 'zooters'. 17 man-of-the-match awards winners, was also a useful lower-order batsman, with a highest Test score of 99. Shane Warne played in 8 Ashes. The only one he lost was in 2005 - it was his greatest series. Warne retired from Australia duty in 2007 following a 5-0 series win at home to

arch-rivals England.

Interestingly, in the 194 matches, 293 ODI wickets took Warne and Australia's dominance reached its crescendo in the 1999 ICC World Cup as he picked up 4 wickets each in the semi-final and final to guide the Steve Waugh-led team to the world title, which was Australia's second. But his life off the field also kept attracting the headlines for all the wrong reasons. From being accused of revealing pitch details to a bookie, to missing the 2003 ICC World Cup after testing positive for a banned substance, to several reports of his cavalier lifestyle, Warne was controversy's favourite child.

Though he was not in the T20 cricket, he showed his leadership credentials in the Indian Premier League, guiding rank outsiders Rajasthan Royals to the title in the inaugural season in 2008. Legend Warne's demise has brought upon a dark day in the cricket world. He'll forever be treasured in the hearts of his followers. May his soul rest in peace.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee.