

WELCOME STEP

The Khelo India Winter Games in Jammu and Kashmir have emerged as a groundbreaking initiative aimed at promoting winter sports, tourism, and youth engagement in the region. Organized under the Khelo India program, these games are a testament to the government's commitment to developing sports infrastructure and encouraging athletic talent from the Union Territory (UT) and beyond. The event has not only provided a platform for young athletes but has also boosted tourism, created employment opportunities, and enhanced J&K's global sporting reputation.

India has long been known for its prowess in cricket, hockey, and wrestling, but winter sports have remained largely unexplored. With its snow-covered peaks and favorable weather conditions, Jammu and Kashmir has the potential to become India's winter sports hub. The Khelo India Winter Games, held in Gulmarg, mark a significant step in tapping into this potential. Events like skiing, snowboarding, ice hockey, and figure skating have brought new energy to India's sporting landscape and encouraged more athletes to take up winter sports as a professional career.

Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports, Anurag Thakur, has emphasized that the Winter Games are an important step in India's journey to becoming a dominant force in international winter sports. The government is investing in world-class infrastructure, training facilities, and coaching programs to prepare athletes for global competitions like the Winter Olympics.

Tourism is the lifeline of J&K's economy, and events like the Khelo India Winter Games significantly contribute to its growth. Gulmarg, already known as the "Switzerland of India," has seen a surge in domestic and international tourists due to these games. The arrival of athletes, officials, spectators, and media personnel has led to increased demand for hotels, restaurants, and local businesses, generating economic benefits for local communities.

Moreover, the games have helped project a positive image of Kashmir to the rest of the world. The picturesque snow-clad mountains, well-organized sporting facilities, and enthusiastic participation of young athletes showcase the region's potential as a safe and vibrant tourist destination. This, in turn, strengthens the narrative of peace, progress, and development in J&K.

The Khelo India Winter Games have also provided new career opportunities for the youth of J&K. The event has encouraged local students and young sports enthusiasts to take an interest in skiing, ice hockey, and snowboarding, thereby expanding the scope of professional sports careers.

In addition to athletes, these games have generated employment for coaches, trainers, event organizers, and technical support staff. The need for trained snow patrol teams, sports medicine experts, and equipment suppliers has also grown, leading to a positive socio-economic impact on the region.

Furthermore, the games have inspired young girls to take up winter sports, fostering a culture of gender equality in sports. The participation of female athletes in competitive winter sports is a progressive step towards women's empowerment in J&K.

The success of the Khelo India Winter Games reflects the government's determination to make J&K a leading sports destination.

Indian Higher Education in 2035: Crossing swords on human resources management

■ PROF. K.S CHANDRASEKAR

Indian higher education is one of the fastest growing sector in the World. The demand for higher education is constantly rising, likely to be 160 million by 2025, the state support in terms of funding per student as unit, is declining. India and China will be the two biggest countries seeking higher education. Demand is growing at the rate of 20 per cent per annum in India. India has over 56,000 institutions that cater to 40 million students, supported by 16 lakh teachers. Majority (68%) being Lecturers/Assistant Professors. Readers/Associate Professors represent around 10% of the total faculty, followed by Professors & equivalent at 9.5%, Demonstrators/Tutors at 6%, Temporary Teachers at 5.7%, and Visiting Teachers at 0.8%. The number of Professors has marginally increased over the years. India aims to add 26 million enrolments by 2035, which requires increased investments in staff, technology and infrastructure in order to reach the GER of 50%. It is pertinent to note that no Indian elite universities/ institutions is in the top 10 in Asia as per Times Higher Education World university rankings 2024. This has been highlighted by the Hon'ble PM, Education Minister time and again. If we look at the French University, PSL, in their vision for 2035 have mentioned that they would like to position it among the top 10 universities in the world by 2035, while developing an inclusive policy and asserting its role at the forefront of change. This will be achieved by four cardinal principles like Open excellence, collegial governance: 15 establishments of PSL University to be given autonomy, Institutional consolidation and budgetary sustainability, Strengthening academic excellence and international attractiveness and recruiting and retaining talent.

Oxford University has mentioned that by 2035, their focus will rely primarily on the people as the foundation and hence to attract, recruit and retain the highest calibre diverse profile of staff with appropriate work life balance is going to be the major focus. They intend to provide childcare provision and flexible working policies, and enabling academic staff to vary their duties over the course of their career. They want to sup-

port staff in personal and professional development and review and improve their current arrangements to support the personal and career development of all staff. Cambridge University in their statement mentioned that they would implement Staff Review and Development (SRD) for University employees, across all grades and areas of work in the University. Its key purpose is to enhance work effectiveness and support professional development. SRD enables conversations that support increased satisfaction, motivation, well-being, and contribute to building strong and effective working relationships. Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität (LMU) München in Germany which was founded in 1472 in their plan for 2035 mentioned implementing LMU Academic Career Program for all those who are serving and planning a career in LMU, providing Junior Researcher Fund & Knowledge Transfer Fund through the Young Center of the Center for Advanced Studies (CAS) & LMU Research Fellows. In order to ensure continuity of faculty, post doc support has been provided to all. By 2035, there will be tenure track academic and research faculty positions opened globally to attract students from all regions.

Harvard University, one of the oldest universities in the World has quoted that by 2035, focuses on workload management, increase compensation, funding opportunities, celebrating and rewarding faculty and staff productivity, achievements, and milestones, level up skills and knowledge through enhanced training and professional development programs and update, maintain processes to ensure activities are maximally streamlined. Even the Russian universities have created Individual Educational Trajectory (IET 3.0.) for the purpose of reskill and up skill training.

Waseda University of Japan has been doing assessment of needs in 2035 with their Vision 150 which is now in its fourth stage. "Transform Waseda from a Domestic Japanese University to a Global University." Its goal is to become a global university by adopting the four courses of action including building a foundation for knowledge in a global society of multicultural coexistence and integration, promoting interdisciplinary

research by leveraging Waseda's strengths, making every corner of the world a place of learning while nurturing global community leaders and establishing an international research center for Japanese and Asian cultures. In terms of its human resources, project to define the roles of Waseda faculty and staff, clarify the evaluation criteria for faculty, and reform the related rules and regulations, project to develop human resources and project to build excellence in administrative operations to achieve its objective by 2035.

In India one of top engineering institution, IIT Delhi outlined its vision for 2030 and mentioned that they will consult with the institute's leadership and faculty Input from donors to the Endowment Fund Research on leading global technical universities,

obtaining feedback from the institute's students and alumni, interviews with Deans and Associate Deans, working sessions with the faculty committee led by the Deputy Director of Strategy and Planning , feedback from the entire 600+ member institute faculty and senate, conducting interviews with founding donors of the Endowment Fund, Futuristic requirement interviews with board members of the endowment fund, case studies of global and Indian academic institutions and conducting interviews with select officials and alumni of these institutes to ensure IIT Delhi is truly a world class player encompassing all the multi-disciplinary aspects that are needed to be a top institution. They have also ensured in the plan to enable departments to hire flexibly (e.g., joint positions with private sector, joint positions with global universities) to build expertise in new areas in a more agile manner. Simplifying administrative processes for faculty and invest in building a cadre of administrative support staff to free-up faculty time for core teaching, research and technology development. Students and faculty will be encouraged to dream big and to actively start thinking about the role they can play in taking IIT Delhi to new heights.

In the case of IISc, their plan for human resources include having multi-disciplinary research faculty, Encouraging faculty to publish in peer-reviewed journals, Encouraging faculty

to present at national and international conferences, Foster partnerships with industry and other academic institutions, Expediting faculty recruitment and conduct faculty performance analysis and regular training. India marching towards \$5 trillion economy needs support from Universities and institutions that the faculty are becoming a pivotal role as such.

The impediments in India is that there is acute faculty shortage for postgraduate programs, rigid faculty recruitment process, heavy reliance on contractual positions and there is inadequate uptake of professor of practice positions by high quality industry professionals and practitioners. Tenure tracks have been discussed but is yet to be implemented. By 2035, there is a need for the participation of industry partners in curriculum and pedagogical development and revision is limited, which impedes the relevance of the content and pedagogical methods. There is a need to enable international capacity-building for faculty thereby contributing to overall academic improvement. UGC now has an online recruitment process for VCs of central universities and then to the state universities in association with respective states. There is a need to develop workload management policies that prioritize a healthy work-life balance for faculty. There is an impending impact of artificial intelligence on the faculty in higher education but with the data available from all universities across the globe, it is clear that human resources are very much essential for the overall development of people at large and there must be restraint on the use of artificial intelligence. What is more important is the extent to which they are skilled to provide the employability skills of the students at that point of time. As mentioned in the Upanishads, education is not about giving academic degrees to students but building excellent human character. Hence it is important that we have appropriate faculty who could guide them to be a great personality in order to achieve Vikasit Bharat in 2047.

(The author is Vice Chancellor, Cluster University of Jammu)

Holi: Festival of Colours

■ RAVI ROHMETRA

Every spring, people across India and around the world celebrate the Hindu festival Holi, throwing colored water and powders on one another in joyous celebration. On this one-day-the full-moon day of the Hindu month of Phalguna-societal rankings such as caste, gender, age, and status are eschewed in the spirit of making merry together, and everyone is fair game to be doused with color.

Holi's traditions vary throughout the country and have their roots in Indian mythology. In many places the festival is associated with the legend of Hiranyakashipu, a demon king in ancient India. Hiranyakashipu enlisted the help of his sister, Holika, to kill his son, Prahlada, a devoted worshipper of Vishnu. In an attempt to burn Prahlada, Holika sat with him on a pyre while wearing a cloak that protected her from the fire. But the cloak protected Prahlada instead, and Holika burned. Later that night Vishnu succeeded in killing Hiranyakashipu, and the episode was heralded as a triumph of good over evil. In many places in India, a large pyre is lit on the night before Holi to celebrate this occasion.

In other places, the story of Krishna and Radha is central. The story goes that Krishna, a Hindu deity who is considered a manifestation of Vishnu, fell in love with the milkmaid Radha, but he was embarrassed that his skin was dark blue and hers fair. In order to rectify this, he playfully colored her face during a game with her and the other milkmaids. This is thought to be an origin of the colored water and powder throwing. The general merrymaking is also seen as characteristic of Krishna, who is known for his pranks and play.

History

The Holi festival is an ancient Hindu festival with its own cultural rituals which emerged before the Gupta period. The festival of colours finds mentioned in numerous scriptures, such as in works like Jaimini's Purva Mimamsa Sutras and Kathaka-Grhya-Sutras with even more detailed descriptions in ancient texts like the Narada Purana and Bhavishya Purana. The festival of "holikotsav" was also mentioned in the 7th century work,



Ratnavali, by King Harsha. It is mentioned in the Puranas, Dasakumara Charita by Da??in, and by the poet K?lid?sa during the 4th century reign of Chandragupta II.

The celebration of Holi is also mentioned in the 7th-century Sanskrit drama Ratnavali. The festival of Holi caught the fascination of European traders and British colonial staff by the 17th century. Various old editions of the Oxford English Dictionary mention it, but with varying, phonetically derived spellings: Houly (1687), Hooly (1698), Holi (1789), Hohlee (1809), Hoollee (1825), and Holi in editions published after 1910.

Cultural significance

The Holi festival has a cultural significance among various Hindu traditions of the Indian subcontinent. It is the festive day to end and rid oneself of past errors, to end conflicts by meeting others, a day to forget and forgive. People pay or forgive debts, as well as deal anew with those in their lives. Holi also

marks the start of spring, an occasion for people to enjoy the changing seasons and make new friends.

Holi is of particular significance in the Braj region, which includes locations traditionally associated with Radha Krishna: Mathura, Vrindavan, Nandgaon, Barsana, and Gokula. These places are popular tourist attractions during Holi.

Outside India, Holi is observed by Hindus in Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan as well as in countries with large diaspora populations from India around the world. The Holi rituals and customs can vary with local adaptations

Celebrations

Holi is known as Phaguwa or Fagua in the Bhojpuri language. In this region as well, the legend of Holika is prevalent. On the eve of Phalgun Poonmima, people light bonfires. They put dried cow dung cakes, wood of the Araad or Redi tree and Holika tree, grains from the fresh harvest and unwanted wood leaves in the bonfire. At the

time of Holika people assemble near the pyre. The eldest member of the gathering or a purohit initiates the lighting. He then smears others with colour as a mark of greeting. Next day the festival is celebrated with colours and much frolic. Traditionally, people also clean their houses to mark the festival.

Holi Milan is also observed in Bihar, where family members and well-wishers visit each other's family, apply colours (abeer) on each other's faces, and on feet, if elderly. Usually, this takes place on the evening of Holi, day after Holi with wet colours is played in the morning through the afternoon. Due to large-scale internal migration issues faced by the people, recently, this tradition has slowly begun to transform, and it is common to have Holi Milan on an entirely different day either before or after the actual day of Holi.

Children and youths take extreme delight in the festival. Though the festival is usually celebrated with colours, in some

places, people also enjoy celebrating Holi with water solutions of mud or clay. Folk songs are sung at high pitch and people dance to the sound of the dholak (a two-headed hand-drum) and the spirit of Holi. Intoxicating bhang, made from cannabis, milk and spices, is consumed with a variety of mouth-watering delicacies, such as pakoras and thandai, to enhance the mood of the festival.

In the Kanpur, Holi lasts for seven days. On the last day, a fair called Ganga Mela or the Holi Mela is celebrated. The fair was started by freedom fighters who fought British rule.

In Gorakhpur district of Uttar Pradesh, a special event called "Holi Milan" is celebrated.

In Jammu and Kashmir, Holi celebrations are much in line with the general definition of Holi celebrations: a high-spirited festival to mark the beginning of the harvesting of the summer crop, with the throwing of coloured water and powder and singing and dancing.

(The writer is Social Worker & Activist)

Only way to regularise all contractual and daily wagers

■ SUNAINA MIR

The only aspiration of a common middle class man is the attainment of a government job, irrespective of department he would join because government jobs have become the only parameter of success in our Indian society. It would not be wrong, if I say, education institutions in India are seen only as the way of getting jobs rather than the sites of spiritual enlightenment and salvation.

Day by day increasing poverty, starvation, misery and unemployment is pushing our literate youth towards the dark and gloomy world of depression. In order to kill that grave depression, our highly qualified youth is joining government offices instead of knowing that the wages are very low, with only one dream in their eyes that one day they would get permanent status and nominal salary at par their work. No doubt, government has regularized many contractual employees. A welcome step was taken by the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir Manoj Sinha, in which he ordered regularisation of 12000 contractual employees of PDD department in the year 2022. That step has again filled the eyes of our left over 100000 contractual employees like NYC in education, sports, rural development departments, Rehbar jagalat in forest department and Rehbar-e-Sehat in Medical Department of Jammu and Kashmir with innumerable dreams of regularization.

There is nothing hidden in this fact that it is very difficult to carry out home expenses in a feeble salary of Rs 1500 or Rs 1300. The pain full story of low wagers does not even end here. Some of them have turned overage, some of them have even attained superannuation, a lot of them even lost their lives while working. In addition to this contractual employees are even unable to enter in matrimonial relationships because parents do not prefer to give their daughter in marriage to a contractual employee. Saturation has reached to such an extent that our PHD degree holder scholars are joining contractual services.

Here I want to ask a question to all of you people, what does a mother do in a situation where she has only one Rooti and four kids to feed? She would definitely divide the Rooti in four equal halves and distribute them equally amid her children. Similar is the case with our state of Jammu and Kashmir. Our state also has limited jobs and limited avenues. The state should implement a fixed salary law because there is no need to credit accounts of professors, lecturers, principals, Masters, MLAs, KAS, commissioners and other high officials Rs 100000+ as monthly salary and on the other hand our contractual with equal qualifications are getting only Rs 1300 as their monthly wage. The state government should fix all state employee's salary to Rs 30000 because this much amount is more than enough to carry a comfortable life and more over every profession is equally important and significant for smooth functioning of any society. Fix and equal salary will further establish the example of dignity of every labour or profession for generations to come. This historic move by state will save huge amount of money which would be used to give normal salary to low wagers and also help to generate more jobs.

In the end, I want to say that it can never be humane to over feed some and leave many others to die out of starvation.

(The writer belongs to district Rajouri)