

ENCOURAGING STARTUPS : Primary Education is a concept for Consideration

Startups are the backbone of innovation and economic growth, driving new ideas, job creation, and technological advancements. Encouraging startups is essential for fostering entrepreneurial spirit, boosting employment, and strengthening industries. Governments, investors, and institutions must work together to create an environment where startups thrive and contribute to economic development.

One of the biggest challenges for startups is access to funding. Governments can support startups by offering low-interest loans, grants, and tax benefits. Initiatives like the Startup India program provide crucial support in the form of funding, mentorship, and regulatory simplifications. Additionally, venture capital firms and angel investors play a critical role in nurturing early-stage businesses by providing financial backing.

To encourage entrepreneurship, the ease of starting and running a business must be improved. This includes simplifying registration processes, reducing bureaucratic hurdles, and providing a single-window clearance system for startups. Digital platforms for business compliance, like GST and MSME registration, can help new businesses operate smoothly.

Startups need a skilled workforce to succeed. Universities, incubation centers, and accelerators should offer entrepreneurship training, business management courses, and technology workshops to equip young minds with the right skills. Innovation hubs and research centers should be promoted to encourage new ideas, patents, and technological advancements.

Successful startups often benefit from strong mentorship and networking opportunities. Government agencies, industry leaders, and successful entrepreneurs can guide budding startups by sharing knowledge and insights. Startup incubators and co-working spaces also help by creating an environment where entrepreneurs collaborate, share ideas, and gain access to investors and mentors.

Governments and industries must invest in AI, blockchain, green energy, and IT startups to keep up with global trends. Initiatives promoting digital payments, e-commerce, and smart solutions can boost new business models and open more opportunities for young entrepreneurs.

■ RAKESH AATHUR

Someone has rightly claimed, "Sound mind is the sound body". As per Directive principle 45th of the constitution of India there is provision of free and primary education to the children below the age factor of (5 to 14) years of the age bar in the government schools and other educational institutes throughout the country. Though it is a non-justice-able right and but few suggestions can be entertained within the context of non-deployment of children at any business centers including hazardous and non-hazardous centers i.e. industries, shops, work-places, labor venues, etc. It is so probably the basic legislations may amend in order to garner the suitable Primary education to the every child. But here some private schools and other educational institutes, tuition centers, etc. are running freely at its own will and pattern of conduct in lieu of its fee-structure, levy, annual charges, etc. Still not any particular reshuffle has been made-up to garner the welfare of the locals/poor students of 5 to 14 years of age pyramid.

One may assess the disequilibrium or disparity in the present system of education having number of deficiencies which are rendering the educational system weak and dull throughout the nation. The government schools below middle standard are quite weak in response towards the students. Due to which the drop-out rate of students in some governmental schools and institutes are enhancing day by day on a major scale, which is not returning in its original position, causing direct effect upon the poor students' educational standard or life career!

On the other hand the structure of high charges, dues, fee, structure and extraordinary levies imposed by the private schools/institutes and tuition centers are just like burdensome to a common man. Because few schools are in consonance with book sellers for the sack of extra commission perhaps who are selling books at higher rates which can be watched in samba district vehemently.

Resultantly the people from lower strata may not afford the education to their children in such schools, academic institutes, etc whether it may be academic or professional institutes. One can face major scale of disequilibrium also in his daily life, but as far as human approach or Indian constitution aspects, there every one born free and have right to attain his/her goodwill from (Art 5 to 36, 45 & 46) included right to compulsory education, right to life, right to religion, right to wage, etc.

According to an intellectual Rossou who had acclaimed well by saying, "Man is born free but everywhere he is in the chains." Meant to say that poor people have lost their basic right in their prescribed clans with their birth, as they cannot attend these particular schools having lucrative standard and uniform-dresses including fee, dress, etc. And all such items are commissioned based because its available on the prescribed retail outlets, shops, book-centers, stationery shops, etc which may outcomes as lower participation and selection of government's elite job tests, interviews included administrative, provincial and other sub-

ordinates and white collared professions.

This huge gap has been enhancing among rural students as their shyness to stand and score for ultimate goals. It is a major cause of lagging behind of the poor students from the rich and urban guys in the state and nation. But if we can peep into the compulsory educational system among the government schools, institutes, tuition centers, so that pupils may not remain back from their basic rights.

The parents who are frail to enroll their children into well private Schools/ institutes due to cost-effective standard i.e. fee, annual charges including lab and others. It is the only and major stage which initiates the stage of disequilibrium among bourgeois and proletariat sections of the society on the one hand and rendered the compulsory and free education far from (5 to 14) years of age of students. Even though so many parents have acclaimed with such complaints that their grievances in lieu of their children enrollment in the centralized schools is not secured likely Kendriya Vidyalaya schools.

The recent ruling required in order to improve this posterity gap within the directive principle 45 indicating (5 to 14) years of age of students should have vehemence everywhere among government and private schools in order to reduce the gap of educational standard. It is strong need of the hour to care and reshuffle among the state and nation educational norms. Several of the parents including pupils are in greater fury for the admission purposes, who are facing obstacle to attain admission in the well defined educational schools whether private

or governmental.

Present season is running session of admissions in the Jammu and Kashmir and other states of the India. As we knew that the annual session of admission among private and government schools should started with the dawn of march- April every year and hoard of the parents including pupils goes multiplying at the doors of the every school and academic institute on a large-scale. And poor parents may have started to hatch-up their dreams only in their solitary eyes despite it may come true is not fortune of everyone. So we can say that on Indian soil there is poverty and epidemics emerged as high degree of discrimination which haunted many innocents to cut their coats according to their clothes wherever it may pertains to the aspect of primary and compulsory education or others.

The burden of high fee-structure and other dues, annual levies are haunting the poor parents on a larger scale in the state to which need to reshuffle within the timeframe limit so that poor children may optimize their schooling in their felicitous educational institutes with the minimum fee and other dues as per compulsory educational system (5 to 14) years of age. Therefore there is strong need to adopt good initiatives for the improvement of primary educational system and reduce the initial stage of disequilibrium for everyone likely good efforts for which the people of the area can bade good regards.

And further course of action the burden during admissions should also be reduced for the sack of common people of the state as well as of country!

Chaitra Navratri-A Timeless Spiritual Legacy in the Modern Era

■ MAHADEEP SINGH JAMWAL

"Ya Devi Sarva Bhuteshu Shakti Rupena Samsthita, Namastasyai Namastasyai Namastasyai Namamah." (Salutations to the Goddess who resides in all beings as strength and power). As the vibrant hues of spring herald new beginnings, Chaitra Navratri arrives as a divine period of devotion, self-discipline, and inner awakening. This sacred festival, dedicated to Goddess Durga, has been celebrated for centuries, marking the triumph of good over evil. While deeply rooted in religious traditions, its significance extends beyond rituals, offering profound wisdom for navigating today's fast-paced, technology-driven world.

The Divine Essence of Chaitra Navratri

Chaitra Navratri, beginning on the first day of the Hindu lunar calendar (Vikram Samvat), is a period of spiritual rejuvenation and introspection. Over nine days, devotees worship different forms of Goddess Durga, each symbolizing unique virtues that guide us in modern life: Maa Shailputri - Strength and stability. Maa Brahmacharini - Discipline and perseverance. Maa Chandraghanta - Serenity and courage. Maa Kushmanda - Creative energy and vitality. Maa Skandamata - Maternal care and protection. Maa Katyayani - Fearlessness and determination. Maa Kalaratri - Elimination of negativity and darkness. Maa Mahagauri - Purity and wisdom. Maa Siddhidatri - Supreme knowledge and spiritual fulfillment.



Navratri is not just about worship but about internal transformation. The divine energy of Durga Ma reminds us to shed negativity, embrace resilience, and cultivate devotion in our lives.

1. Relevance of Chaitra Navratri in the Modern Era: Spiritual Upliftment and Inner Peace. (Mantras chanted with devotion purify the mind and soul, just as fire purifies gold.) In an age of stress and distractions, Chaitra Navratri offers an opportunity for self-reflection. The serene ambience of temples, the vibrations of sacred chants, and the power of

collective prayers provide emotional stability, clarity of thought, and inner peace.

2. Strengthening Faith, Devotion, and Resilience: "Durgatinashini Durga"-She who destroys misfortune and grants strength. Each form of Goddess Durga symbolizes different virtues-courage, wisdom, patience, and perseverance-all essential qualities for facing modern challenges. Temple visits during Navratri reinforce faith, inspire resilience, and instill confidence to overcome life's struggles.

3. Mental and Physical Well-being through

Fasting: "When the body is cleansed, the mind is uplifted, and the soul is enlightened." Navratri fasting is not merely a religious act; it is a scientifically backed detoxification process. Abstaining from processed foods and consuming sattvic meals enhances digestion, boosts immunity, and improves mental clarity. Combined with meditation and prayers, it fosters emotional balance and well-being.

4. Encouraging Self-Discipline and Mindfulness: With digital distractions at an all-time high, Navratri promotes self-discipline. Abstaining from unhealthy habits, engaging in meditation, and focusing on personal growth instill a sense of mindfulness, making Navratri a time for self-improvement.

5. Strengthening Family and Social Bonds: In today's world of fast-paced lifestyles and social isolation, Navratri serves as a unifying force. Families and communities come together for collective prayers, cultural events, and festive celebrations, reinforcing relationships and social harmony.

6. Women Empowerment and Reverence for Feminine Energy: "Where women are honored, divinity blossoms; where they are dishonored, all actions remain fruitless." (Manusmriti) Navratri celebrates the power of Shakti, the divine feminine energy. It serves as a reminder to honor, respect, and empower women, advocating gender equality in all spheres of life.

7. Environmental and Sustainable Living Practices: Navratri subtly promotes eco-consciousness through the use of natural ingredi-

ents in food, earthen lamps for rituals, and sustainable decorations. In an era of growing environmental concerns, these practices align with sustainable living principles.

8. Spiritual Awakening and Personal Growth: Navratri is a time for introspection, eliminating negativity, and embracing positivity. It encourages a deeper connection with one's inner self, fostering spiritual enlightenment amidst worldly distractions.

9. Preserving Cultural Heritage and Traditions: Temples are not just places of worship; they are repositories of history, architecture, and cultural heritage. Visiting temples during Navratri strengthens one's cultural identity and ensures the continuity of ancient customs in the modern era.

Conclusion: A Timeless Spiritual Legacy: Chaitra Navratri is more than a festival; it is a spiritual discipline, a journey of self-discovery, and a guide to modern well-being. In an age of stress and uncertainty, its teachings of devotion, resilience, and self-discipline remain profoundly relevant. As the Bhagavad Gita states: "Whenever there is a decline in righteousness and a rise in unrighteousness, I manifest myself." Chaitra Navratri serves as a divine reminder to awaken the dormant strength within, embrace positivity, and walk the path of righteousness. Amidst the hustle of modern life, its message of faith, purity, and perseverance continues to illuminate hearts and souls, making it an enduring beacon of spiritual enlightenment.

Pandit Sant Ram Dogra: Overlooked Martyr of Geopolitical Intrigue and Courtly Machinations

■ RAJA SOURAV SINGH SARMAL

The history of Jammu and Kashmir is marked by political intrigues, imperial strategies, and internal power struggles. Among the many figures who shaped the region's legal and administrative landscape, Pandit Sant Ram Dogra remains an unsung hero—whose contributions to legal codification and governance were overshadowed by the complexities of the British Empire's strategic maneuvering in the region. His mysterious death in 1918, under circumstances that remain unresolved, adds to the intrigue surrounding his life.

Early Life and Education

The exact date of birth of Pandit Sant Ram Dogra remains uncertain, though historical accounts suggest he was born around 1877. His father, Pandit Duryodhan Dogra, hailed from Rampur Rasool near Baddu in Billawar and had a fateful encounter with Maharaja Sir Rajinder Singh GCSI of Patiala—an event that would significantly shape his family's future.

In those times, it was customary for a physically capable individual from the village to be entrusted with the sacred duty of immersing the ashes of the deceased in the Ganges at Haridwar. Given the financial and logistical constraints, it was not feasible for every bereaved family to undertake this journey personally. Recognized for his strength and endurance, Pandit Duryodhan Dogra was chosen by his community for this honorable responsibility.

On his return journey from Haridwar, he happened to be in Patiala when a large public gathering turned chaotic. Displaying remarkable leadership and physical prowess, he managed to restore order, capturing the attention of Maharaja Rajinder Singh. Impressed by his abilities, the Maharaja offered him a position in the Patiala garrison, an opportunity that would pave the way for his family's educational and social advancement.

This association with the royal court of Patiala enabled Pandit Duryodhan Dogra's sons to receive a quality educa-

tion—an opportunity that was rare in that era. Among them, Pandit Sant Ram Dogra emerged as a distinguished scholar. He pursued higher education at Mohindra College, which was then affiliated with Calcutta University. Beginning his academic journey at the School of Languages, he later went on to make history as the first Bachelor of Arts (BA) graduate from the Dogra community in Jammu and Kashmir. His academic excellence was recognized with a prestigious gold medal, marking a significant milestone for his community.

Career and Contributions

Pandit Sant Ram Dogra's career in governance saw him rise to the position of Assistant Settlement Officer under Maharaja Pratap Singh of Jammu and Kashmir. In this capacity, he played a crucial role in land settlement processes and was instrumental in the codification of tribal customs in Kashmir. His expertise in multiple languages and his deep understanding of customary laws positioned him as a key figure in the state's legal reforms.

In 1915, recognizing the need to consolidate and standardize local customs, Maharaja Pratap Singh appointed Dogra as Officer on Special Duty (OSD) to prepare a comprehensive code of tribal customs prevalent in the Kashmir Valley. His exhaustive travels and meticulous documentation resulted in the Code of Tribal Custom in Kashmir, a landmark legal document that elevated local customs to the level of formal law.

This codification process mirrored the British colonial administration's approach in Punjab, where revenue officials had been directed to document village-level customary practices. The move to consolidate tribal customs was a part of a broader effort by the Dogra state to streamline its legal system, culminating in the Sri Pratap Jammu and Kashmir Laws Consolidation Act of 1920 (1977B). This legislation granted primacy to Hindu and Muslim personal laws while recognizing the validity of customary laws in cases where they had effectively replaced religious law.

Dogra's work significantly influenced

the judicial system in Kashmir, as his code became the foundation of legal decisions in state courts. The recognition of tribal customs as formal law altered the legal landscape, creating new layers of identity based on locality, tribe, and district rather than solely on religious affiliations.

The Shadow of the Great Game

Pandit Sant Ram Dogra's untimely death at the age of 41 in Anantnag remains a mystery. His assassination coincided with a tumultuous period in Jammu and Kashmir's history, when the region was caught between the geopolitical ambitions of the British and Russian Empires—the infamous "Great Game."

During this time, Maharaja Pratap Singh faced allegations of maintaining secret communications with Russia, a charge that had severe repercussions. The British government viewed him as a potential threat, leading to his partial dispossession of power for sixteen years. The situation only changed after the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, when British and Russian interests in Persia, Afghanistan, and Tibet were formally delineated. This treaty eased tensions and allowed Pratap Singh to reclaim his rule, but not without lasting political damage.

Dogra, being a trusted official of Maharaja Pratap Singh and a key figure in the legal administration, found himself entangled in these larger power struggles. Several other court officers loyal to the Maharaja had also been mysteriously eliminated during this period. Given the political climate, it is plausible that Dogra was perceived as a threat by those who sought to control the Maharaja's influence, leading to his assassination.

The British Colonial strategy in Jammu and Kashmir

The British approach to governing Jammu and Kashmir was marked by interference and control through the appointment of Residents. The British Resident in Kashmir wielded enormous influence, reducing the Maharaja to a mere figurehead. Officials like Mortimer Durand, St. John, Plowden, and Colonel

Nisbet played active roles in undermining Pratap Singh's authority.

One of the most damning incidents was the forced removal of Maharaja Pratap Singh on the basis of forged letters that falsely implicated him in conspiracies against the British. These letters, written in Dogri, accused him of plotting with Russia and Dalip Singh to assassinate British officials. Though later proven to be forgeries, they had already served their purpose—weakening Pratap Singh's rule and solidifying British dominance over the state.

The British were also deeply resistant to Maharaja Pratap Singh's progressive policies, particularly in education and land reforms. They deliberately obstructed his efforts, fearing that an educated populace would challenge their influence. Despite these obstacles, the Maharaja implemented significant changes in revenue administration, public works, and healthcare.

Dogra's work in codifying tribal customs was part of this broader reform movement. His legal framework not only organized the complex customary practices of Kashmir but also challenged the British-imposed judicial system by legitimizing indigenous laws. This might have further antagonized British authorities, who sought to maintain control through legal and bureaucratic means.

Unfinished work and speculations

There are speculations that if Dogra had lived longer, he would have extended his codification efforts to other regions such as Jammu, Gilgit and Ladakh. However, there are no official records to confirm this. Given the colonial administration's history of suppressing initiatives that strengthened local governance, it is possible that Dogra's growing influence was seen as a threat. His sudden and mysterious death suggests that he may have been "removed" to prevent further consolidation of regional laws that could diminish British control.

Legacy and historical importance

Despite his invaluable contributions, Pandit Sant Ram Dogra remains a largely forgotten figure in history. His

legal codification efforts played a crucial role in shaping the judicial framework of Jammu and Kashmir, influencing legal interpretations for decades. His assassination, likely a result of political and imperialist intrigues, highlights the vulnerability of those who sought to bring systemic change within colonial rule.

The legacy of Maharaja Pratap Singh and his loyal officials like Dogra serves as a reminder of the resistance faced by indigenous rulers and intellectuals under British colonialism. Their efforts to modernize governance, codify laws, and establish a fair legal system were repeatedly thwarted by imperial interests.

Today, as efforts continue to reclaim and document the region's rich historical heritage, the story of Pandit Sant Ram Dogra deserves renewed attention. His contributions to legal history and his tragic demise are not just footnotes in the annals of Jammu and Kashmir but crucial elements of a larger narrative of colonial manipulation, resistance, and the struggle for self-governance.

Perspicacious revelations from the contemporary progeny

In the course of composing this article, I had the opportunity to converse with his great-granddaughter, Miss. Venus Upadhyaya, who provided invaluable insights. As she aptly stated, "Pandit Sant Ram Dogra was a distinguished intellectual of his time, embodying the refined scholarship and wisdom that defined an era. Today, many in contemporary society perceive the Dogra community as a homogeneous entity, but historical reality tells a different story. The Dogras were a diverse and multifaceted society, comprising warriors, scholars, spiritual leaders, and individuals from various walks of life. Unfortunately, much of this complexity has been overlooked or remains unexplored. It is imperative that we make a conscious effort to address misconceptions and educate people about the true nature of Dogra society in that period.

Pandit Sant Ram Dogra stands as a mark to this rich intellectual and cultural heritage. His father, rising from a

humble village background, unexpectedly became part of the Patiala garrison at a time when social mobility was severely limited. This opportunity laid the foundation for his sons to attain remarkable academic and professional achievements—an extraordinary feat for that era. While his perseverance and intellect were crucial to his journey, divine providence also played a vital role in his success and in shaping his family's future.

It is crucial to bring to light the contributions of individuals like Pandit Sant Ram Dogra and many other unsung personalities who have remained in the shadows of history. His work under Dogra ruler Maharaja Pratap Singh was particularly significant. He played a crucial role in the codification of tribal customs of Kashmir; a legal reform that proved to be a cornerstone in the legal history of Jammu and Kashmir. His contributions not only helped in structuring traditional laws but also ensured their integration into a more formalized legal framework. The legacy of such intellectuals must be recognized and celebrated.

Summative Insights

Pandit Sant Ram Dogra's life and work stand as a testament to the complex interplay of legal reform, political intrigue, and colonial oppression. His codification of tribal customs laid the foundation for the legal system in Kashmir, but his untimely death remains an unresolved mystery. Whether a victim of the Great Game, internal durbar conspiracies, or a broader colonial strategy to suppress regional governance, his legacy is one that demands recognition.

As historians and researchers delve deeper into the forgotten figures of South Asian history, it is imperative that Dogra's contributions be acknowledged and his story be told. His work, though largely overshadowed, continues to influence legal traditions in the region, making him an unsung hero of Jammu and Kashmir's legal and political history.

(The writer is a columnist and advocate of the Himalayan Renaissance and Dogra Consciousness)