

STOP WASTING FOOD Delimitation Commission & challenges ahead in J&K

Food wastage is a major problem in India. Weddings, canteens, hotels and households spew out so-much waste food. To see the extent of damage, all you have to do is peek into a street-corner garbage bin. Today, most of us don't even spare a thought for the time, energy, and resources it takes to produce our food. Moreover, food that is produced, but not eaten, occupies close to 30 per cent of the world's agri-cultural land.

It is estimated that one out of every seven people in the world went to bed hungry and more than 20,000 children under the age of five die from hunger. To be fair, food wastage is indeed a major worry for India. A government study had found that the country wastes Rs 92,651 crore worth or 67 million tonnes of food in a year.

Efforts need to be taken to protect and preserve food-grain for the benefit of the large number of poor in our society who are struggling to survive on single meal a day.

Though people rarely waste much food in restaurants, we as a nation waste a lot of food during marriages, festivals and other occasions without caring about large percentage of our people that go hungry each day.

The levels of poverty, hunger and deprivation are so high in our country and little attention is paid to this by the well-to-do citizens and the politicians of our country.

The condition of the godowns in the country is not good, resulting in the rotting of food-grain. If only the food-grain wasted in the country due to lack of storage facilities was saved, the burden of subsidy would have come down to that extent and thus saved the tax-payers' money.

It is time to take note of the obligation of every citizen of this country to ensure that food wastage is totally avoided. The untouched food left in the mess is eaten by people of mess but the food left in the plates goes wasted and is served to cattle.

Wastage of food is a cause of serious concern in a country like India where 37 per cent of the population lives below poverty line. Food wastage is a major problem in India.

Weddings, canteens, hotels and households spew out so much food. Each morsel thus wasted, in a way, contributes towards hunger. Today, most of us don't even spare a thought for the time, energy, and resources it takes to produce our food. We generate mammoth amounts of food waste.

The causes of food waste or loss are numerous, and occur at stages of production, processing, retailing and consumption.

Huge amounts of food is getting wasted by the people belonging to upper strata of economy as there is no proper channel to utilise un-used food. Apart from this, wasteful food-consumption is also leading to unsustainable demand for natural resources.

Assessing food loss and waste and developing effective policies along value chain can help solve the food waste problem and thus contribute towards food security and sustainability. Don't we think a thought for our choice of food will save our natural resources and can keep us healthy?

Vinod Chandrashekhkar Dixit

OFF 'D' CUFF

Live peacefully amid chaos

Our happiness is put to a tough test when we are dealing with uncertainties, insecurities, and chaos. Whether you are stuck in a noisy surrounding and cannot sleep or you are unable to deal with a situation and your mind is disturbed- chaos in life is inevitable and sometimes, getting happiness seems impossible.

But happiness is very important for a peaceful life and that's why the world celebrates International Day of Happiness.

Every year, 20 March is dedicated to happiness. Since 2013, the United Nations has celebrated the International Day of Happiness on this day as a way to recognise the importance of happiness in the lives of people around the world.

Of course, we can. For living peacefully and happily amid chaos (both inner and outer) you need to adapt to change and that requires the mental preparedness. For that, you need a tranquil mind. But, how? Here's what you can do to live peacefully despite chaos around you.

In real life, things may not happen as you want them to happen all the time. A wishful thought is often not enough to override a challenging situation. You must face the situation. Even though you cannot outdo it, but you can use the power of affirmation to gain the wisdom and ideas to deal with the situation.

Try to stop thinking persistently about a problem and adopt a different thought-process by introspecting deeper in your mind throughout the day. In a few days you will find that your fresh viewpoint has become an inner truth and turned into a strong belief system.

Repeat these mantras, or any of your own choice, throughout the day like an affirmation. It will instantly pull you back into a controlled state of mind where you will find calm.

Dr Archika Didi

What is your Dharma, or purpose in life, your unique mission in life? Your purpose is scripted beautifully on your soul. Search for it and in moments of chaos, adhere to this purpose.

Stick to the ultimate truth of your life, your purpose. No matter what is going on in your surroundings or in your life, your focus should be on your life's purpose until it becomes an inseparable part of your personality.

So, in disturbing moments of confusion and panic, do not impel your brain for instant relief, rather learn to focus on your purpose.

Understand that the outer world reflects your inner world. Control the inner world, the chaos in your outer world will wane automatically.

To rise above any chaotic situation and bring peace in life, you must develop faith in God or The Supreme Universal Power. With that you will have conviction that everything will be alright, even if you are unable to see exactly how and when.

As you connect with the universal energy, you empower your inner core, gain courage and wisdom to overcome any challenges. Nothing can disturb such a focused and empowered mind.

No matter what disturbing circumstances you are dealing with, always have a secret den of serenity that can give you instant restoration. It will help you find a peaceful state of mind whenever the need arises. It could be a hobby, music, meditation, a nature walk, a spiritual text or just talking to a close friend. You can deal with chaos with such a light-hearted approach as well and attain a tranquil mind.

So, try these steps to find inner peace amid chaos. Never let your troubles take control of your naturally tranquil mind. Just take charge of the circumstances, act and believe that everything will be alright by the Grace of God.

SANJAY SAPRU

Jammu and Kashmir, for long has been the site of contestation for all federalists, the ruling party, opposition and voices from civil society, alike. As we await the redrawing of constituencies by Delimitation Commission, constituted this year (2021) to redraw the Assembly constituencies of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir; it is useful to first analyse the history and need to take stock of indicators beyond the population numbers while committing to this action in Jammu and Kashmir.

Based on 2011 Census, the Commission is supposed to determine the number and boundaries of constituencies in such a way that the population of all seats, as far as practicable, is the same. The Commission is also tasked with identifying seats reserved for Woman, Minorities, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (regions where their population is relatively large). This basic norm/guideline was never respected in J&K for Last 70 years.

According to the census of 1971 and 1981 (even if we forget the earlier period) population percentage of different divisions of Jammu and Kashmir was, Jammu around 45 per cent of state population, Kashmir 52 per cent and Ladakh around 2.5 per cent and yet the distribution of seats of state legislature was done in a manner that Kashmir got the lion's share of seats- more than 55 per cent, Jammu division got only 42 per cent seats and Ladakh 2.6 per cent. In case of parliamentary seats Kashmir took away 50 per cent and remaining 50 per cent got distributed between Ladakh and Jammu in the ratio of 16.6 per cent and 33.3 per cent respectively. This distribution of seats was solely based on the population figures with no regard to the area. The discrimination is visible within Kashmir province as well.

Historically Kashmir is divided into 3 Regions, namely Kamraz (North Kashmir) Yarnraz (Central Kashmir) & Maraz (South Kashmir). Kamraz / North Kashmir/ (Baramulla District prior to 1979) with an area of 6967 Sq Km is 42.60 per cent of whole Kashmir valley area. Maraz/ South Kashmir/Anantnag District with 5382 Sq Km area is only 34 per cent of Kashmir valley and yet when it comes to representation in the Assembly, Kamraz has only 15 seats and Maraz 16, while Kamraz has only three districts in comparison to Maraz which has four. Generally, the public spending and development of a region or area is based on the number of legislative seats it has. However, one sees that Kamraz or the North Kashmir in present day parlance is the most discriminated region in every respect including the representation of people in elected forum. Kamraz had equal, if not less share of population within Kashmir Division yet its share of seats in state Legislature was less. (This is without taking into account the area and other aspects into consideration).

It becomes distinctly visible that the 'democratic setup' in Jammu and Kashmir was used as a cover up to achieve narrow self-interests by the Vocal Kashmir-Centric leadership. They had no regard for fairness, transparency and accountability. The other parties/regions were marginalized on one pretext or the



other. Jammu region was treated unfairly because it has different ethnicity and religion. Within Kashmir religious minorities, Hindus in particular were targeted and marginalised again on basis of religion. Kamraz was also treated shabbily because people there were poor and under privileged-hence voiceless. Furthermore, no other political party was allowed to function as that would mean competition.

In 2002, the numbers of voters in Jammu were more than Kashmir by 1.41 lakh. In 2014, Kashmir voters exceeded Jammu voters by 4.21 lakh - a swing of 5.67 lakh. It is surprising as to how Kashmir's population increased by 14,11,000 in 10 years from 2001 to 2011. According to the 2011 Census, the average population growth of Jammu province which was 31 per cent between 1971-2001 and dropped to 21 per cent in 2011. A decrease of 10 per cent population of Jammu proves that 2011 census amounted to migration of 10 per cent Jammu population on paper. Due to 1990 migration of Hindus and Sikhs from Kashmir to Jammu and to outside the State the percentage growth in Kashmir's population should have been lower than that of Jammu, but it instead it is shown to grow by 26 per cent from that of census figures of 1991. It puts a big question mark on the Census figures of 2011.

Religious minorities of Kashmir valley were in a position to elect four members to the first Legislative/Constituent assembly of Jammu and Kashmir. Even this was not acceptable to the political leadership and the constituencies in which these minorities were in a position to influence electoral outcome were redrawn in a manner that by 1990 it was impossible for them to send even one representative to the state legislature. This was a design to marginalise, exclude and eliminate their presence from every aspect of Kashmir Life, be it the land, economy or political empowerment. One can say that the mass Displacement of Hindus and Sikhs from Kashmir in 1989-90 was the logical culmination of this policy.

Up to 1.5 million Gujjars and Bakarwals live in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh - around 11.9 per cent of the region's total population as per the 2011 Census. Gujjars-Bakarwals of Jammu and Kashmir have been urging for correction. Census 2011, National Population Register as first phase was held between June and September 2010 in the state when migratory tribes were under migration to upper reaches of Himalayas at that point of time.

West Pakistan refugees, Balmiki Samaj members, and Gorkhas were denied any representation in the Assembly. By some estimate this population approx accounted for 0.4-.05 Million.

Jammu and Kashmir has population of 1.25 Crores, an increase from a figure of 1.01 Crore in 2001 census estimated to be 1.50 Crore today. Total population of Jammu and Kashmir as per 2011 census is 1.25 Crores of which male and female are 66 Lakhs and 60 Lakhs respectively. In 2011, total population was 1.01 Crores in which males were 53 Lakhs while females were 48 Lakhs. The total population growth in this decade was 23.64 per cent while in previous decade it was 29.04 per cent.

In the 2011 Census, no door to door survey was conducted, however the records reveal that the population of Hindus in Kashmir

Attracting and Retaining Youth in Agriculture

DR BANARSI LAL & DR PAWAN SHARMA

India is a land of the youth, which are our greatest asset. Youth have creative minds and are capable of achieving seemingly impossible tasks such as monsoon management, climate change adaptation, mitigation and enduring malnutrition. Average size of land holding in our country is small. Hence, group cooperation is important to harness value of scale both in the production and post-harvest phases of farming. Rural youth can play a significance role in shaping the future of agriculture in India. There is dire need of agri-business centres and agri-clinics centres on a big scale. Farm schools need to be established in the fields of young farmers so as to promote the farmer- to-farmer learning. Value addition in agriculture is needed in order to increase the income and employment. New agricultural technologies need to be introduced after careful consideration of risks and benefits so that their adoption rate can be enhanced. Youth are the primarily productive human resource for socio-economic development of the nation. Thus, there is need to divert their role in mainstream development. The Indian youth is diverse in ethnicity, religion and socio-economic backgrounds. Such diversity necessitates customized initiatives to meet the needs and activate their untapped potential. There is need to work on biotechnology, biodiversity, ecotechnology, food security, education and information and communication technologies. The strategic and participatory research, capacity building, networking and partnership building should be adopted including the principle of social inclusion in access to technologies which further can enhance the income and conserve natural resources. The research and outreach strategies need to be devised to bridge the rich-poor and gender divides in the areas of information, knowledge and skill empowerment. There is dire need to make agriculture more attractive and rewarding for the younger generation.

Agriculture is the backbone of India. Till now agriculture continues to be at the mercy of the monsoon and the markets in our country. It is imperative for the nation to produce food not only to feed its 1.32 billion population but also for an equal number of livestock. It is fact that if farmers work in the field, the non-farmers are able to eat. It is expected that for the next two decades the agriculture sector in India will undergo significant transformation which will result in both challenges and opportunities for the youth. In order to achieve food security, India must change from extensive production systems, characterized by minimal inputs and low yields to intensive systems which require greater investments in external inputs and labour saving technologies, but hold the potential to greatly increase yields and provide decent incomes and employment

for the rural youth now and in future. The agriculture sector has the potential to provide numerous employment opportunities in food production, marketing, processing, retail, input sales, research and extension etc. In order to attract youth in agriculture, Govt has launched a project namely 'Attracting and Retaining Youth in Agriculture' (ARIYA). In Reasi and Kathua districts of J&K, this project is being run by respective KVKs in Reasi and Kathua districts. There is need to work towards the goal of sustaining and aiding youth engaged in agriculture.

Now-a-days rural areas in India today are undergoing a phenomenal transformation. In place of individual effort, machines are taking over the hard labour and the government subsidies for mechanization of agricultural fields have brought on a renaissance, changing the face of Indian villages and farmers. Recently grain production in India has jumped highs. Many villages in India are endowed with rich resources to cultivate cereals, vegetables, fruits and grain. Individual per capita income must be raised through development of grain production aligned with information technology. So agriculture and allied sectors must work together to accomplish this feat. Presently, youngsters constitute only 13-19 per cent of farmers. It is imperative to make agriculture a lucrative and profitable occupation in order to increase that number. Income and employment among the rural youth can be increased by combining hard work with modern technologies. Youngsters play a major role and duty in conserving the natural resources. The day is not far when we shall have to pay for oxygen, when water will be rationed and grave bodily disorders will be rampant. Climate change is the burning issue and avertable disasters will create havoc everywhere. According to Dr A P J Abdul Kalam, "The duty to protect natural resources begins from oneself, then family, society and to the country". Technology needs to be technically accessible, culturally acceptable and environmentally feasible. There is need to create opportunities in seed industry for the young generation. We need to have a high-yielding/hybrid seeds and proper seed inputs for another Green Revolution. Availability of seeds must be ensured for seasonal crops. In India, we require 86 lakh quintal seeds every year. We meet only 30 per cent of this requirement through Central Seed Forum and Seed Production Forum. In abroad seed related technologies are given more importance. Rural youth should possess honesty, talent, value added technologies, warehousing and storage facilities. It is predicted that by 2050, we have to produce at least double to our productivity.

Currently, climate has become highly unpredictable. Hence we need to consider these facts while we plan to improve agricultural

stood at 1.64 lakhs, with a sex ratio as 10:1. This sex ratio, compared to national figure of 1000:940, is a complete farce. According to 2001 census, Kashmir Hindus formed 1.84 per cent of Kashmir population. It further states that 1.5 lakh to 3 lakhs Kashmiri Pandits were displaced to Jammu and other parts of India due to terrorism. It is pertinent to mention that after Hindu exodus in 1989-90, two censuses were conducted, i.e., in 2001 and 2011 both have been Eye-wash & pure fabrication.

Census figures show that the difference between the population of Jammu and Kashmir increased by 44 per cent between 2001 and 2011 i.e., post outbreak of insurgency in 1989 as compared to 16 per cent between 1971 and 1981, which again supports that 2011 census was a fraud. Between 1981 and 2011, population of Muslims as a percentage of total population increased by 4.12 per cent and those of Hindus & Sikhs fell by 4.27 per cent. This can be explained by only two ways - either the Census was fabricated or the Hindus disappeared in Lakhs. If only mathematical calculations are considered, by the present delimitation commission, as the basis for seats distribution/enhancement, then the seat distribution would be as given below in table 3. This distribution would be unjust and pop up a wrong outcome as not only the 2011 census figures seem to be fabricated but other aspects of delimitation like, land area, economic and political empowerment would be casualties.

It is right time to put an end to the decades of discrimination, manipulation and exclusion. If Democracy has to flourish now in the reorganized Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir; The Delimitation Commission will have to work hard. Population alone is not the criterion for delimitation of territorial Constituencies. Geographical compactness, facilities of communication and conveniences to the public are equally important considerations. Above all Delimitation Commission has to take into consideration, anomalies of the past and population increase since the last Census which is estimated at 1.50 Cr at present.

Delimitation Commission has to provide proper representation to different sections of the population i.e., Gujjars , Bakarwals, West Pakistan refugees, Balmiki Samaj members, and Gorkhas who have been denied the same since last 70 years .

Furthermore, Minority Communities in Kashmir valley who had to undergo migration must be guaranteed adequate representation. It can be achieved in numerous diverse ways. The seats from which Minority candidates were elected in 1952 could be reserved for them. Our Constitution has enough room and precedence to ensure such a reservation. Even in Jammu and Kashmir there was a provision to nominate two members to the Legislative Assembly to give representation to women, if the women are not adequately represented in the Legislative Assembly. This provision has been retained in The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019. Same is the case with SCs/STs and other hitherto unrepresented sections of society. While we look at this exercise more closely, the effort should be to bring to the attention of the authorities, these salient needs of the time so that one can effectively bring in democratically devised provisions and ensure adequate representation and remedy historical shortsightedness.

productivity. There is need to develop new resistant drought varieties of different crops. Farmers must cooperate by rotating crops to achieve the best results. Alternate Cropping Pattern based on water and rainfall availability must be focussed under watershed management programmes. Integrated Pest Management(IPM), Green Manure usage, cow urine, Panchgavya ,bejanmiri, fermented butter milk etc. can be practiced by farmers. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) forecasting mark situations can also help farmers tremendously. Rural youth of the country can play the significant role in the second Green Revolution brought about by the youth of this country with the new technologies and innovations. All the fallow and barren land in villages can be leased and put into good use too. In present era, youth of the country are coming to farming only for two reasons- either they don't get any better job or because they are genuinely interested in making a profitable affair out of it.

Farming requires full commitment and dedication. Adoption of micro- irrigation methods can significantly solve water issues. There is strong link between industry and agriculture. There must also be a marketing interface between agriculture and industry. This can be facilitated by eliminating middle-men in every village. Policy changes need to be put in place to curb the rampant indiscriminate sale of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes. Farmers need to be educated on export chances and Farmers Producers Organizations (FPOs) need to be formed for this purpose. But this can be possible only by institutionalizing good cold storage and warehousing facilities for the agricultural produce. Agricultural colleges must also include life sciences and cultivation practices in their syllabus. Kitchen-gardening practices need to be encouraged. Vaccination of goats and sheep by government veterinary hospitals should be instituted and the veterinary doctor need to visit the goat and sheep farms. Devorming medicine should also be provided to the dairy farmers. Rain guns and sprinkler equipments should be provided to the farmers at the subsidized rates. Integrated farming, including poultry farming, dairy farming and organic farming will prove to be resource-effective and environmentally viable. Vermi-composting and soil-testing at appropriate intervals must be done for the soil health management. The best agricultural practices can be combined with the traditional agricultural methods reinforced by modern technology and innovations. There is need to sow the seeds of creativity and enthusiasm among the youth.

(The writers are Head KVK, Reasi & Scientist KVK Kathua, SKUAST-J).

YOUR COLUMN

Plant trees for posterity

Dear Editor,

From the very beginning, plants & trees have given us food and oxygen, the essential things in life. Not only these two things, but because of trees, we get home, medicines, food, and many other essentials to live on this earth.

Today, due to the growing population and rapid cutting of trees by people, the requirement of trees is increasing. In this modern era, humans are cutting trees in a rapid speed, due to which man may have to undergo many difficulties in coming years. We are continuously converting land into concrete jungles with no greenery at all. We must not forget that plants are an essential part of our society. In our nearby places like streets, parks, playgrounds, trees & plants provide us clean & fresh air besides keeping the environment green & calm. We also get fruits, almonds, which are an essential part of our life.

The atmosphere around trees remains beautiful and clean by which the level of living increases. There is altogether a different enjoyment feeling of spending time under trees with family around them.

During summers, the tall trees prevent sun-rays from reaching earth, thereby reducing temperature of

Mother Earth.

In the month of the rain, the roots of the tree plant firmly hold the soil, and it does not cause soil erosion. Also, the trees hold their root, which helps in avoiding a natural disaster like a flood. Every year tons of leaves fall from the trees and get convert into natural manure, thereby increasing strength of soil. Many organisms like goats, elephants, koala, monkeys, giraffes, etc are completely dependents on trees for their food. Trees and plants provide safe and natural habitat to numerous species of birds, which spend all their lives on the strong branches of these trees.

Everyone likes trees, plants because they are gorgeous and wonderful to see. All trees are beautiful in looking and consist of different colours and shapes. In our country, we even worship trees thereby giving them the status of God.

Trees such as Banyan, Peepal, Mango, Bella, Banana etc are some examples that have very high spiritual value in our country. Trees maintain a peaceful and comfortable environment in our life and environment.

In today's modern era, when new cities are building everywhere, the commercial value of trees has become very high. Even today, in many parts of the world, wood is considered the first fuel in cooking. People make houses, furniture and many types of tools from wood. Millions of small, useful household items are also made of wood. Latex collected from inner part of some trees is used for making rubber. It has millions of critical daily-tasks, which seems impossible without trees and

plants.

It is ironic that we need fruits, we need oxygen, we need wood but we do not want to plant trees or value them. Today, the man is moving fast towards self-destruction. Due to excessive tree cutting, we are facing difficulties such as global warming, acid rain, greenhouse effect etc.

For balancing our environment, it is vital to save trees and plants. Gradually population of the whole world is growing, due to which people want to build new homes to live, and this is why trees are being cut at a rapid speed. In many places, big dense forests were cleaned for making big factories which can be cause of many kinds of natural calamities in coming time.

Due to the lack of trees in urban areas, polluted air emanating from trains hover in the sky. The point to ponder here is that if situation remains the same one day there will be no tree and consequently, there will be lack of oxygen, as atmosphere will become deficient of oxygen. Plants convert Carbon dioxide into Oxygen, thereby maintaining a proper balance, and if there would be no tree, how this natural process can be maintained?

Let's pledge that we will not let anyone cut trees and plants. And we will do plantation every month in our neighbourhood. It is high time that we should plant trees if we want our next generation to have natural oxygen and other things, we get from trees.

Som Nath Sharma, Kathua.