

CAG's OBJECTIONS

With the formation of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, all possible measures were out in place by the ruling dispensation to ensure a transparent and efficient working system across J&K, as earlier the erstwhile state was facing several problems on numerous fronts, especially in respect of the official system. As due to presence of Articles 370 and 35A, the then Central Governments were unable to interfere in the internal affairs of J&K, the then Governments of the erstwhile state used to work arbitrarily without any check or following rules and regulations as their only motive was to fill up their pockets by the money meant for the development of common masses. This malpractice, continuing across J&K from past several decades, came to an halt when the affairs of the Union Territory were taken into control by the Central Government by declaring its as Union Territory as per a significant decision taken on August 5, 2019. Soon after that, all corrective measures were put in place to plug all the loopholes existing in the system, besides introducing several new out of the box initiatives, with a single aim to ensure overall development of J&K. Besides focusing on the present system, a proper check was also ensured on the wrongs and misdeeds of previous Governments to book the guilty who misused the Government exchequer, meant for welfare of people for their own benefits. This corrective exercise is still going on with full pace, as every other day, we receive news regarding unearthing of some old scam or action against the erring officials and politicians. In this sequence, a latest development was witnessed when, in the recently submitted report on State Finance by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India, for the period April 1, 2019 to October 30, 2019, it was highlighted that previous Governments in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir were not adhering to the financial code, thereby resulting in outstanding of Utilization Certificate amounting to Rs 9354.49 crore till October 2019. Highlighting majority discrepancies from departments like Education, H&UD, Agriculture, H&FW, Tourism etc the CAG has also highlighted major slackness in furnishing DC bills of huge amounts. It is expected that necessary corrective measure would soon be taken to rectify all these mistakes done in past besides booking the guilty as per the law of land.

KEEP IT UP

It is true to the hilt that narcotics smugglers are ruling the roost in J&K with no place of the UT remaining free from this scourge though police and other law implementing agencies are leaving no stone unturned to root this menace out from the region. In this context, a drug peddler has been arrested along with 1.3 kg of Charas worth lakhs of rupees in Poonch district. Beyond any doubt the consignments of drugs invariably come from across the border as Pakistan has been abetting this illegal trade since long to destabilize India on various fronts including economic, youth's mental and physical degradation, inciting separatism, terrorism, etc. It has been known to one and all that smuggling of drugs is part of Pakistan's promotion of narco-terrorism in India and the way such a huge consignment has been recovered from Mendhar area, one can gauge well that the situation is alarming and whatever steps the Indian agencies are taking are not sufficient though off and on cops caught hold of drug peddlers. In the instant case, Mohd Alyas, a resident of village Ari, was intercepted and subjected to frisking by a police party during patrolling in Mendhar. He was moving suspiciously and his search led to the recovery of a huge quantity of contraband substance. Lately, one thing is giving sleepless nights to security men including police that Pakistan is extensively using drones to smuggle arms and narcotics and as per this new kind of modus operandi the consignments are picked up by the conduits of big cartels operating in Pakistan and India, and later the drugs were supplied to youths across the UT of J&K, Punjab and even beyond. It is good that cops have nailed down the drug peddler in the aforesaid case but one cannot deny that many others have successfully dodged the police and slipped away thus making it significant for the police to keep up the pressure by going for zero tolerance against smuggling of drugs whether from Pakistan side or in hinterland as both are equally detrimental for the country especially the youths as their future can be spoiled by this most dangerous 'weapon' of the modern world which Pakistan is using against the country.

Never Allow Circumstances Break You

When you're going through a difficult phase in your life you might feel like things won't change now, or be pondering what you did to deserve such bad circumstances.

However, a helpful way to deal with bad phases that are out of your control is to practise gratitude and fight bravely with a positive attitude. So, instead of seeing yourself as a victim of your situation as negative, stay optimistic. Positivity and God's blessings make you feel empowered about the things you can do to come out of any bad phase in life.

Everyone Faces Tough Circumstances

Tough circumstances may appear in anybody's life at any age. You just have to be courageous if you are facing any such circumstance. And no matter what is your age, you can turn the situation in your favour with courage. Without willpower and audacity, however, you cannot do anything- it doesn't matter whether you are young or old. You'll keep making excuses: if I were young, I would do; if I had support, I would do; if I had resources, I would do, and many such excuses.

So, no matter what you are facing right now; be strong and take decisions for a new beginning. Keep patience and stay enthusiastic. Never

Every child comes with the message that God is not yet discouraged of man.

-Rabindranath Tagore

EDITORIAL

Sanskrit & its fading prestige

■ M R LALU

The Union Government's push for 'more focus' on Hindi in the country has created much uproar as various opposition parties came out with their disagreements. The linguistic diversity that India is known for was feared to be in danger with the government's move. The push for Hindi being used as a link language was termed as 'Hindi imperialism' by the opposition. This move, according to them, would create an emotional divide between the Hindi region and the non-Hindi speaking areas. Linguistic Diversity has the beauty and power to essentially strengthen the area of communication and education that people from different backgrounds can conveniently choose from. Languages go back to the origin of civilizations. Existing in various forms, communication came to the collective consciousness of people and languages became the attire of thoughts and flourished across the globe. Traditions and practices are preserved in every society in their originality mostly encrypted in the language or dialect that they used for communication. Existence of ethnic societies was mainly based on the existence of their languages and with the death of the language, any society for that matter, falls into a state of oblivion, totally forgetful of their past. Many languages and dialects became extinct mainly due to their unjustifiably perceived notion of incompatibility in the eye of modern discourse. Colonial onslaughts on cultures were brutal by dominating the spirit of cultural vitality of societies and dismantling their ethnic essence, invalidating and demonizing their power to fight and survive in a multilingual setup. India's situation was not different. Though the country is witnessing a serious debate on Hindi being moved into a national framework of importance; the merit of the oldest language Sanskrit is almost a lost and forgotten affair. On a multidimensional analysis, Sanskrit is one of the languages that lost its credit and stature beyond imagination in its birthplace. Diversity being the essence of every society, multilingual and multicultural acceptance among societies strengthened them perceptively articulate on every difference that came on their way of congenial coexistence. Languages played their role to stitch differences into acceptance while finding common cause for shared interests to flourish. Sanskrit is known to be the mother of all languages. Despite its being the most communicated language of the ancient times, in India it lost its glow as a language in a post independent establishment. When languages united people across the globe, Sanskrit for various reasons could not flourish in India. With a large number of people choosing English as their spoken tongue, Indians have as much claim on it as any native speaker in America or England. The reach of Sanskrit as a medium of communication got limited among a handful of elite people in India, probably giving it the recognition of the language of the spiritual elite, the pundits. Away from the reach of the common man, Sanskrit is dying in India. There should not be boundaries in embracing languages as they are meant to break boundaries naturally and bring people closer. Interestingly, many books which are known to be not available in their original Sanskrit manuscripts are now available in Persian and many other European languages. Many vernaculars grew from the linguistic expression of Sanskrit and flourished gaining popularity, while Sanskrit depleted to the level of insignificance. Spirituality in India was defined and propagated in it but subsequently got sidelined as the essence of Bhakti or devotion got disseminated to the populace in local languages too. With its treasure of knowledge remained heavy and probably inaccessible to the common man, spiritual texts from Sanskrit got translated into vernaculars helping the common man to delve deeper into them without being dependent on Sanskrit. Research reveals the geographical influence of Sanskrit

in various global languages. Most of the Asian languages are seen to be impacted by the influence of Sanskrit. Interestingly, countries like Germany have understood the intellectual and linguistic depth that Sanskrit holds and began to popularize the language in their universities. Iranians, Arabs and even the British found merit and power in Sanskrit and translated great classics into their languages. Governments in India kept away from initiatives to strengthen the mother of all languages for the fear that such a decision might topple India's secular social engineering and invite the wrath of some sections. Schools adopting a three-language formula in their curriculum can teach Hindi, English and an Indian language to the students. Many universities in the US teach Sanskrit as an Indo-European language. Interestingly, there is no language which has a vocabulary as abundant as that of Sanskrit. To present an example, the English word 'sun' has 12 equivalents in Sanskrit. But English does not possess this vocabulary power and to fix this lacuna, it borrows new words from other languages including Sanskrit. An estimate says that of an approximate 6800 languages, about 200 languages in the world enjoy speakers more than a million each. Remaining languages have a meager number of speakers. With a huge number of people speaking it, Tamil enjoys a large acceptance in India and some other Asian countries. With the National Education Policy coming into force, as part of its trilingual policy, states are authorized to take Sanskrit as a language through primary and secondary education. The policy is expected to bring a revamp in the education sector. India, a cultural diversity, despite its being a geographical unity, remained a single spiritual entity for ages as the language Sanskrit could bind the landscape through the spiritual aphorisms in texts that even today are monumental evidence of references that the world is appreciative about. The laxity with which the post independent India treated Sanskrit was ruthless. To pursue Macaulayism, the idea of the English education system, we committed the biggest sin by burying the significance of the language of all languages. It was also due to the hypocritical secular track the country constitutionally decided to travel on, finding reasons to give Sanskrit a back seat. The fear of a probable backlash from the minority vote bank, if Sanskrit was favored, was the main reason for the denial. Societies with genetic, social and linguistic diversities survive and flourish to their fullest potential, making intercultural assimilation of humanity, proclaiming the essential Indian Vedic idea of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', which means world is one family. Indeed, Sanskrit is the only language in which we can find such thoughts of unparalleled ancient wisdom on universal brotherhood. Hypocrisy is what the gesture of the Indian conscience is these days. We carefully, in a surreptitious manner, killed a language that our ancestors cherished, nourished and flourished with for generations. All credit as to why it is going to be extinct in this large subcontinent will come to us. Boundless knowledge is confined in books, unable to be perceived in its real sense as translations fail to give the real joy of reading the original texts. Cities like Haridwar and Rishikesh are known to be the seats of Sanskrit learning and research. Aspirants from across the globe flock to these cities to learn Sanskrit. Mattur village of Shimoga in Karnataka is famous for its Sanskrit speaking families. About 5000 residents of this village communicate in Sanskrit. More conscious efforts from various corners should be taken in the direction of reviving Sanskrit. The government has reasons to justify its move to lift Hindi to an elevated platform. But does it have reasons to not support a language that housed great cultural treasures for long. India should continue to survive as a multilingual entity with Sanskrit also finding a place to progress.

The Mirpur Files

■ DR NUTAN K RESUTRA



W e are all very much familiar with the much talked about Vivek Agnihotri's movie The Kashmir Files. One may wonder; now what is The Mirpur Files? Never heard of it. Yes, never heard of it because this is no movie; but a tragedy of such magnitude that perhaps none can be able to sum it up in a movie. The Mirpur Files is the greatest wound in the heart of India and all the displaced people of Mirpur Kotli. A lot of discussions are taking place on various platforms, ranging from print media to electronic to social media about The Kashmir Files. At least for once, the genocide and exodus undertaken by Kashmiri Pandits in 1990 has made everyone think about the darkest chapter called Militancy in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Different reactions have come to the said movie ranging from raising voices against genocide of Pandits to criticizing the movie for not showing the atrocities committed upon other persons including Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus. But I shall not go to making comments upon these controversies.

I am reminded of the statement of Prime Minister Narendra Modi when he called upon everyone to observe August 14 as the Partition Horrors Remembrance Day! He said that displacement of millions, killings and rapes during the Partition are still vivid and observing this day is recognition of their sacrifices. What a great gesture! I would again say why any other Prime Minister of India did not think of such a thing about Partition; least of all the First Prime Minister who had himself been a witness to this holocaust. My simple plea is Let another 'Agnihotri' come forward who says something about this Horror Day; brings out a movie called the Mirpur Files. Although the wounds of Partition spread to many areas; most of all Punjab, but I shall try to contain myself only to Mirpur the erstwhile District of Muzaffarabad now submerged in Pakistan's Mangla Dam. We do find many books written about those days of Partition regarding Mirpur Kotli and adjoining areas; but these works are too insufficient to express the real magnitude of the tragedy and sum up feelings of people. Vijay Kumar Gupta wrote about Kotli in his book 'Khoya Hua Kashmiri' and who is now settled in Delhi; Amravati Devi a former Government teacher wrote how she had slapped the then Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir in her book, settled and ultimately left her mortal remains in England; the local newspaper articles of Yuv Raj Gupta the first Railway Station Superintendent of Jammu railway station giving a graphical account of Battle of Kotli and those unforgettable days; and the web articles titled Archives of 1947. Even young scholars of third generation of Mirpuris settled or studying in England are conducting empirical and authentic research on the Fall of Mirpur. The latest in the series is much talked about book titled Embers the Beginning and Embers the End of Mirpur by a former Indian Army Officer Captain (Dr) Kulvir Gupta. I want to quote certain incidents from his book just to reignite hurting memories of those who suffered and are trying in vain to forget! The residents of Mirpur who somehow survived massacre sought shelter in the famous Alibegh Gurdwara, but were surrounded by the Pakistani soldiers who became their so-called guards. In fact the invaders were there to kill, torture, rape and commit unimaginable atrocities upon them. Dr Kulvir was a small boy at that time. On second day of their captivity, those soldiers collected forty odd healthy males from the Gurdwara and took them out. When others started protesting the soldiers said that those males were deputed to bring ration for inmates. Dr Kulvir's father was also one of them. This whole group left with soldiers but none of them returned. And nobody knew what happened to them. It was much later that the others came to know of the horrific fate of those unfortunate forty. And this was told by one survivor who had luckily escaped death that day; his name was Master Harbans Lal. Master Harbans Lal while giving detailed account of what had happened on that unfortunate day said that all those persons were asked to disrobe and stand naked on the bank of Mangla Canal. Some of the soldiers took to guarding those hapless sheep of men and a small group of four to five soldiers picked up one victim after the other,

beating him with their gun butts and army boots. Butts landed on heads and kicks rained on hunger starved stomachs, faces, legs, rather any and every body part! Harbans Lal begged them to shoot him, but the soldiers laughed and scornfully retorted: Hamara Pas Kafiron Par Zaya Karney Ke Liye Aathaaney Ki Goli Nahin Ha! (We do not have eight anna bullet to waste upon a Kafir). Risking life and finding space in legs of guarding soldiers, Harbans Lal suddenly ran and jumped in the icy waters of Mangla Canal. The soldiers ran firing at him, but by luck he survived to tell this horrific tale to all. The former Army Captain Dr Kulvir also narrates in that book how the womenfolk were brutally gang raped in that house of God! I have dared to quote just one incident. Each and every house of a Mirpuri now has tales to tell: tales that are filled with unimaginable brutalities and atrocities committed by none other but those who once had been friends, colleagues, neighbors and even servants; tales that rip open the wounds that have been stitched painfully with threads of time and yet keep on oozing blood in the form of tears from eyes. Each Mirpuri is a living book of horror stories asking only one simple, but unanswerable question: Hamarayka Dosh Tha? Now people also say Mirpur was a flourishing town, a center of trade in whole of the erstwhile State with Biblical land of milk and honey. Was there no fauj to protect them when this genocide started? Yes, there was Maharaja's fauj comprising mostly of the Muslims who themselves turned upon their comrades; slaughtered them and joined the Pakistani attackers. The brave Mirpuris did fight for some time, but it was the proverbial fight of the Light Brigade. Being faced with Hobson's choice, with nothing upon them, they tried to move to safety for their lives and the lives of their family members, only to jump from frying pan into the fire. There are endless tales and an unfathomable sea of blood and tears. It is just not possible for me to narrate all these. That is why I say Let there be The Mirpur Files also! Why? So that at least some one can try to find the answer to Hamarayka Dosh Tha. My contention in writing this piece is that let us rewrite history and bring the truth to light. Truth has been wrapped under many layers of lies and deception. Let it also come out and feel a breath of fresh air. Dear readers, I am not a politician nor I intend to create any niche for myself; but lakhs and lakhs of people who have undergone this unimaginable tragedy and their future generations like me do at least deserve this much to know that what was our fault? What for were we punished? Whose lust for power it was that separated millions and stabbed a permanent wound in the heart of this country? Who we lost everything, and I say everything, must know the one-word truth: Why? I want to add just one thing here. A contingent of Indian Army was posted near Kotli that was headed by the then young Major S K Sinha who ultimately became Lt General S K Sinha, former Governor of Jammu and Kashmir. Yuv Raj Gupta, in a meeting with the former asked him why he did not make any effort to save the civilian population from massacre and not let Kotli fall. Sinha answered most honestly, Hamey Hukam Nahin Tha!! The thing is, Kis Ka Hukam Nahin Tha? Why were Mirpur and Kotli left to fall for the mercy of most unmerciful invaders and ultimately God-for-saken to be made part of Pakistan? Kis Ka Hukam Tha? And why Rajouri and Poonch that had been captured by Pakistani forces and remained with Pakistan from November 1947 to April 1948 were easily retrieved by the Indian Army, but Mirpur-Kotli were handed over on a plate to Pakistan? Yeh Bhi Kisi Ka Hukam Tha Ya Phir Kis Ka Hukam Nahin Tha? We the Mirpuris want to know the answers to these questions. I know, if truth is brought to light, the answers will surely make many ecosystem politicians very uneasy and the dead ones wriggle in their ultimate resting places, where ever that be. But these answers will surely try to bring at least some solace to those generations who have suffered and are still agonized and are searching for the truth. If truth about Kashmiri Pandit genocide can be brought to light after thirty-two years, why not about the Mirpuris. Why we have to constantly bear the cross of lies of some ones who were in power at that time, acted God and played with lives, dignity, respect, property, everything those happy, peaceful folk had. That is why I say, we must also have The Mirpur Files!

Ayushman Bharat

PM-JAY: Transforming India's healthcare story

■ DR R S SHARMA

The National Health Policy (NHP) of 2017 had listed among its foremost objectives, the achievement of Universal Health Coverage. Achieving a significant reduction in out of pocket expenditure due to health care costs was one of another key objective. Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri - Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) was conceived out of this vision to move towards a more holistic approach to healthcare service delivery.

Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY was not the nation's first tryst with healthcare insurance. Due credit must be given to predecessor schemes such as Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY), States schemes like Aarogyasri in Andhra Pradesh, Jeevandayee Yojana in Maharashtra. However, in terms of scope and scale, AB PM-JAY simply dwarfed all existing healthcare insurance interventions. It is for the first time that we now have a health insurance scheme with a pan-India presence being implemented almost everywhere in the country. As of April 1, 2022, Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY in alliance with State health schemes covers a beneficiary base of more than 14 crore families (70 crore individuals). Almost 18 crore individuals were identified under the scheme and provided with an Ayushman card. AB PM-JAY has facilitated almost 3.28 crore hospitalizations providing treatment worth over Rs. 37,600 crore. All this has been achieved in a little over 3.5 years and amidst the greatest global pandemic in recent times.

As I reflect on the trajectory of Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY, the scheme's success is mounted on the vision of the Prime Minister and the versatile policy framework conceptualized by the Cabinet. This policy framework crystallized the guiding principles behind Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY which are as follows:

Comprehensive healthcare benefits: AB PM-JAY was launched with 1,393 treatment packages covering treatment for various medical specialties like oncology, neurosurgery, cardiovascular surgery etc up to Rs 5 lakh per beneficiary family. This was subsequently increased to 1,670 treatment packages. The benefits package under AB PM-JAY was comprehensive covering pre and post hospitalisation expenses. Additionally, all pre-existing conditions were covered from day one of the policy period. The portability feature-empowered beneficiaries from the remotest villages to seek treatment at the most advanced healthcare facilities.

Converged and integrated within the healthcare ecosystem: Under AB PM-JAY considerable flexibility was provided to the States and Union Territories (UTs) in choosing their mode of implementation, beneficiary database and creating the network of hospitals. Further, NHA diligently pursued convergence with the existing State based schemes. Currently, AB PM-JAY is implemented in alliance with more than 25 State-specific health schemes. Additionally, District Implementation Units were setup in over 600 districts across the country to ensure that the administrative reach of AB PM-JAY to the beneficiary's doorstep.

Ensuring equity in access to healthcare services: Renewed impetus has been given to extending the scheme benefits to the marginalized sections of society covered under the Socio-Economic Caste Census database. Likewise, AB PM-JAY has adopted an enlightened approach towards ensuring gender-specific equity. The erstwhile RSBY scheme had mandated a limit of adding up to 5 family members. Unfortunately, this led to the exclusion of female members of the household, especially the girl child. However, under AB PM-JAY, this capping was done away with. Women account for approximately 50 per cent of Ayushman cards generated using NHA IT platform and 47 per cent of authorized hospital admissions.

Robust, scalable, and inter-operable technology platforms: One of the problems that afflicted in the past was fragmented IT systems for the schemes like Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY. Therefore, under AB PM-JAY, a highly versatile technology platform was developed to aid in beneficiary identification, transaction management and hospital empanelment. This award-winning IT platform is now active across 26 States and UTs. As a result, SHAs and NHA have gained granular insights into the scheme to aid in evidence-based policymaking and necessary course correction, where required.

Public and private partnership: Under Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY both public and private hospitals have been empanelled for providing healthcare services to the scheme beneficiaries. The participation of the private sector has increased avenues for the scheme's beneficiaries to seek treatment and concurrently reduced the burden on tertiary care facilities in the public sector. Under AB PM-JAY, it was ensured that public hospitals would be equally reimbursed for their services and at the same rates as that of private hospitals. This has also supported public sector hospitals to create a pool of untied funds that could be sustainably invested in infrastructure and human resources. The complementary role of the public and private sector hospitals has been vital in ensuring that the scheme implementation proceeded seamlessly.

Aapke Dwar Ayushman: One of the key activities that I green-lighted upon assuming charge of NHA was the 'Aapke Dwar Ayushman'. Under Aapke Dwar Ayushman, a grassroots network of frontline healthcare workers, Gram Panchayat officials and village-based digital entrepreneurs were used to undertake door-to-door mobilization of beneficiaries across communities. Special night camps were setup for daily wagers.

These efforts translated into the creation of more than 4.7 crore Ayushman cards since January 2021, an increase of 55 per cent in the Ayushman cards generated by NHA IT system. NHA is launching Aapke Dwar Ayushman with renewed vigour. This time we are focusing on States such as Assam, Bihar, Gujarat and Uttarakhand.

Aside from this, I would also like to take this opportunity to give credit to the entire Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY ecosystem consisting of NHA, SHAs, DIUs, Implementation support agencies, Pradhan Mantri Arogya Mitras, frontline healthcare workers, Ayushman card creators from partner agencies such as CSC / UTIITSLS for their tireless support in making AB PM-JAY such a grand success. However, going forward much more needs to be done to help the scheme realize its full potential.

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