

INTERNATIONAL BIG CAT ALLIANCE

Not only the people or the nation, but the present Government is eually considerate towards welfare and conservation of fauna and flora and has taken a number of in initiatives in this regard, so that even those species, which are on verge of extinction can be saved. In a mega international event held on April 9, 2023 at Mysuru, Karnataka, to commemorate 50 years of Project Tiger, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) for conservation of seven big cats namely Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar and Puma harbouring our planet. India has a long-standing experience on the tiger agenda and conservation of other big cats like lion, snow leopard, leopard, now the translocation of the Cheetah to bring an extinct big cat back to its natural habitat. The alliance aims to reach out to 97 range countries covering the natural habitats of Tiger, Lion, Snow Leopard, Puma, Jaguar, and Cheetah. IBCA would further strengthen global cooperation and efforts to conserve the wild denizens, especially the big cats. Chairing a Ministerial session on global status of big cat conservation Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav said conserving big cats and their habitats can secure some of the most important natural ecosystems on Earth leading to natural climate change adaptation, water, and food security for millions of people, and provide livelihood and sustenance to forest communities. He said that the alliance will strengthen global efforts and partnerships on big cat conservation, while evolving a platform for convergence of knowledge and best practices, supporting existing species specific inter-governmental platforms, while also providing direct support to recovery efforts in potential range habitats. Yadav said with big cats as mascots for sustainable development and livelihood security, India and the big cat range countries can usher in major efforts on environmental resilience and climate change mitigation, while paving a future where natural ecosystems continue to thrive, and gain centrality in economic and development policies in the 'Amrit Kaal'. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India remains committed to not just conserving the big cats at home but also world over by joining efforts to stop poaching and illegal wildlife trade, he tweeted. The ministers of Big Cat Range countries acknowledged and appreciated the leadership of India in big cat conservation and praised the efforts of Prime Minister, Union Minister and senior forest officials of the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate change. The Ministers of Big Cat Range Countries made the following remarks on the momentous event of launch of International Big Cat Alliance by the Prime Minister of India. The Forest Minister of Bhutan in his eloquent speech accepted the leadership of India in guiding them. His passing remarks like my Goddess Chamundi shower her blessings on all of the forest fraternity and his words SabKa Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas and Sabka Paryas reverberated around the hall. The Forest Minister of Bangladesh praised India in helping in their conservation efforts in saving their pride that is Sundermani and Chittagong tigers. His Excellency from Cambodia was enthusiastic in getting tigers from India and rehabilitating them in in their Cardamom Hills and in their Sripok Wildlife Sanctuary. He also spoke about the re-introduction plan prepared by them. The Minister, Wildlife, Tourism and Culture Govt of Kenya, through her video message lauded the help rendered by Govt of India and Indian Forest Service, in formulating the protocols, good managerial practices, in the conduct and evaluating of Census results of wild animals especially Lions in her country. Minister, Nepal, accepted the leadership of India in the field of wildlife conservation and offered all support to the alliance. Ethiopian Forest Minister without mining words expressed his greatest satisfaction in being a part of an endeavour to save big cats all around the world. His Royal Highness the Regent of Pahang was all praise for India's efforts and wanted assistance in recovery of tiger population in Malaysia. Besides this Ministers and head of delegations of Suriname, Armenia, Tanzania, Nigeria, Vietnam, Thailand and Lao also expressed their appreciation for the said initiative. Union Minister Bhupender Yadav acknowledging the overwhelming support and promised to work on modalities to take the launch of IBCA forward and thanked everyone for their participation.

Ambedkar's contributions for women and workers' rights

■ D R BHAGAT

Whenever there is any mention of Dr B R Ambedkar, a general perception is made that he was the architect of Indian constitution and a Dalit leader. His struggle of four decades has benefited each and every segments of the society. Although his work for the depressed classes is matchless and recognized world over; he contributed immensely towards welfare of the womenfolk and the labour force. He said, 'I measure the progress of a country with the degree of progress women have achieved'. He was aware that the Manusmriti in Hinduism has graded the women at the lowest level in the socio-religious, economic and cultural status. The other main religion of the country also denied the freedom and fundamental rights of the women including right to education. Her position in society was never at par with men. He fought tooth and nail for women's economic liberation and for securing their social rights. He was one of the greatest champions of gender equality in India. When he was the member of the Bombay legislature, he presented the bill for maternity benefits for the women working in the industrial sector. He said, 'it is my belief that it is in the interest of the Indian Nation that the mother ought to get a certain amount of rest during the prenatal and for some post natal period'. This act was passed in 1929 by the Bombay legislature. Under the act the women working in the factories were allowed leave with pay for a period of 8 weeks. Subsequently the Madras legislature also passed such act in 1938. As labour minister in viceroy's council from 1942 to 1946 he brought the Mines Maternity Benefits Bill to give maternity benefits to the women workers and also got the ban imposed on employment of women workers for underground work in coal mines. Taking inspiration and as a result of his struggle, common

Maternity Benefits Act was passed by the central government in 1961 for all states in India. The women workers were also not being paid the wages equal to their male counterparts for the same work. As labour minister in viceroy's executive council, the bill for payment of equal wages for equal work irrespective of the sex was got passed. He stressed for educating the women who are the backbone of the society. He said, 'Liberty of women is essential to reform our social system which is full of inequality and discrimination which conflicts with our fundamental rights.' As first law minister of India, he drafted the Hindu Code Bill to give women equal rights and status in the society as enjoyed by their male counterparts. His concern for gender equality has been reflected in the bill. Through the bill women were to be granted absolute right regarding all property being equal citizens. Through the Bill, he had granted women the right to divorce, the right to inheritance and also provided legal recognition to inter caste marriage. There were several systems regarding marriage in Hindus. He wanted to establish one common code for the same. He believed that the women have the exclusive right over their own body and conception was a choice which women should make and not the men. He opposed the child marriage and also Dasi Pratha prevailing in Hindu society. The Hindu code bill was as a result of Ambedkar's passion towards the value of liberty, equality, dignity and fraternity. The focus of the bill was to give women the absolute right over property, to eliminate endogamy and to relieve women of the threat of polygamy. Although The Bill could not withstand the Hindu orthodoxy, it helped the resurgence of feminist movement in India and later many steps were taken by the government for welfare of women. However some safeguards to the women rights have been

provided in the constitution prepared by Ambedkar under various provisions of the constitution. Article 16 provides for equality of opportunity in matters of public employment. Article 23 prohibits trafficking in human being and forced labour. Article 39(d) provides equal pay for equal work for both men and women. Article 243(d) provides that not less than one-third of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat to be reserved for women. Similar reservation has been kept for direct elections in every municipality. The provision for similar reservations in the matter of chairpersons of Panchayats and municipalities has been made in the constitution. He also enabled women for voting rights by ensuring Universal Adult Franchise which were previously reserved only for some privileged women. Dr Ambedkar was also a strong votary of the rights of the labour force. He had a major contribution in improving the condition of workers. He got the eight-hour working day bill passed for workers from the existing twelve hours. In the Round Table Conference which he attended as representative of depressed classes, he forcefully pleaded for suitable wages, better working conditions and the freedom of peasants from clutches of cruel land lords. He even formed the Independent Labour Party in 1936 with an agenda to meet the needs and solving the grievances of the poor tenants, agriculturists and workers. During the Poona session of Bombay Assembly in 1937, he introduced a bill to abolish the Khoti system of land which was prevailing in the Konkan region of Maharashtra. According to this system the tax from the farmers was being collected by the middlemen appointed by the government who were extorting much higher taxes from the poor farmers at their whims. He also opposed the introduction of Industrial

Disputes Bill 1937 which banned the workers right to strike. In 1943, he forced the employers to acknowledge trade unions through the Indian Trade Union (Amendment) Bill. He also emphasized the urgent need to bring progressive labour welfare legislation while addressing the Indian Labour conference in New Delhi in 1945. Health Insurance of workers is a big contribution of Dr Ambedkar to the workers. As a result of the same Employees State Insurance (ESI) came into being with an aim to provide the health facilities to the workers and their families. To insure the well being of the workers, he kept some provisions in the constitution under Directive Principles of State Policy and also under Fundamental Rights. Under article 42 of Directive Principles of State Policy, the government to insure just and human conditions of work and maternity leave. Under article 43 the government to insure and secure a living wage, a decent standard of living and social and cultural opportunities for all workers while section 43A urges the government to take steps to secure the participation of workers in the management of industries.

In fact it was Dr B R Ambedkar who laid the foundation of workers' rights along with the rights of the women in India. Today the women of the country are holding the top positions in all fields like politics, education, business, bureaucracy etc and contributing in the progress of the country which is as a result of the relentless efforts of Dr Ambedkar. He believed that Political democracy can't last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy. The social philosophy of Dr Ambedkar is based on liberty, equality and fraternity. In fact Dr Ambedkar was not only a Dalit leader but an outstanding national leader with his work recognized globally.

Significance of Vikrami Samvat-2080

■ PURAN CHAND SHARMA

Just because of the hard fact that we have been ruled by British after Mughal and many others, for two hundred years during which they very cleverly and clandestinely changed our cultural and educational system and the age old cultural traditions as well as the beliefs to delink us from our rich socio- cultural heritage. Interestingly they did not resort to any kind of forcible machinations but accomplished this significant feat by way of shrewd diplomacy and administrative skillfulness. They successfully overhauled the mental makeup of elite society and molded them to follow their foot prints in all matters of Governance and also distorted our socio-cultural, religious faith, traditions and moral values. They did it on the basis of a study and findings of their versatile philosopher, Lord Macaulay, who carried out exhaustive tour of our country, minutely and keenly observed the Indian way of life and returned the judgment 'It is difficult to rule India, if at all India is to be ruled, then their educational and cultural institutions need be destroyed.' British Parliament accepted the Macaulay Doctrine and implemented it in letter and spirit for ruling Bharat having the most ancient culture as well as history. Now when the Nation is in buoyant mood and celebrating Amrit Mahotsav of freedom after 75 years of Independence, it is high time to restore our old glory and national prestige. Atleast our upcoming generations must be fully aware about the achievements of our ancestors who have done prolonged

penance and painstaking research work to give their best to the world based on science and staying in harmony with the nature. However, due to colonial mindset and lack of awareness we did not replace British calendar with Indian calendar which is duly supported by scientific evidence and is in sync with the natural phenomena explored and observed by our spiritual scientists as per the calculation of Vedic mathematics which is still relevant. This is most opportune time to educate our younger generation with regard to our vital achievements and pristine glory in the field of culture and science. We always lived in harmony with the nature and did not indulge in exploitation of her vast resources. We are proud to be the first Nation created by Brahma in his endeavour and adventure of creating the whole universe on Chaitra Shukal Pratipada which is also called as Varash Pratipada in Satyuga having a span of 17,28,000 years followed by TRETAYUGA famous for incarnation of Prabhu Shri Ram with a tenure of 12, 96,000 years. The coronation of Shree Ram happened on this auspicious occasion of Varash Pratipada i.e., first day of the New Year in Tretayuga. Then follows Duapuryuga whose age is 8,64,000 years. Obviously in the present times we navigating through Kaliyuga which would last for 4,32,000 years and probably the world is passing through Infancy stage of Kaliyuga experiencing bizarre trials and tribulations.

There is no denying the fact that we remained under the yoke of foreign aggressors and invaders for a prolonged period of

time and got Independence in the year 1947 after a massive struggle of all Indians who never looked back to make the supreme sacrifices for the national cause. Unfortunately we had to accept freedom at a huge price of partition on communal basis. This division was unnatural and unscientific. The country witnessed unprecedented communal violence. Another blunder on the part of dispensation of the times was not to enforce the complete transfer of population from both sides to their respective homelands. In fact that was the most opportune time to put in place the required changes and essential reforms in the British model of administration right from day one. Some kind of concrete pre-planning and futuristic outlook on the part of Leadership of the day could have worked wonders in all walks of national life by overhauling our colonial mindset. At this crucial juncture we are fully poised to take the quantum jump in understanding and implementing all those things which belong to us and qualitatively better than the things of foreign origin based on logic, science and research. Our PANCHHANG is accurate to the dot based on Vedic Mathematics which is unique and unfailing. Once a foreigner asked Mahamana Malviya, founder of Banaras Hindu University as to how to Hindus across the world get invitation to join the Kumbh Snann or Mela in India. Malviya politely said, 'Do Aanne Ke Panchaang Se.' As of now all religious and social events, inaugural functions , marriages, Bhoomi Poojan, Upvas Vrat etc. excepting financial transactions are conducted in our country as

per Vikrami Samvat which commences on Chaitrar Shukal Pratipada every year; accordingly we are passing through first month of Vikrami Samvat 2080 which is 57 years ahead of Gregorian calendar (2023+57=2080). This Samvat was started by king Vikramaditya of Ujjain after annihilating SHAKAS from Indian soil and was bestowed the title SHAKARI which means eliminator of Shakas. Samvat is also called Panchaang e.i having five constituents: - 1 Vaar (Days) 2 Tithi (Dates) 3 Nakshatra (star) 4 Yog 5 Karan. Great Astronomer, Brahmihir was contemporary of king Vikramaditya, who diligently worked out the perfect Panchang in those critical times. All Scientists do recognize and respect the veracity of our Panchang or calendar. This is also the established and cogent evidence of our rich cultural heritage and legacy which makes us greatly proud in the comity of nations. We can understand this from statements of world famous geniuses who have spoken so high about our culture and Hinduism which is not a religion but a way of life-

1. Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), 'Hinduism and Hindus will one day rule this world because it is a mixture of Knowledge and Wisdom

2. Michael Nostradamus (1503-1566), 'Hinduism will become the ruling religion of Europe. The famous metropolis of Europe is the Hindu capital.' The loud and clear message of Vikrami Samvat 2080 is to stay connected with our roots, imbibe inspiration and enthusiasm from the deeds and exploits of our great ancestors as the 21st century belongs to Bharat.

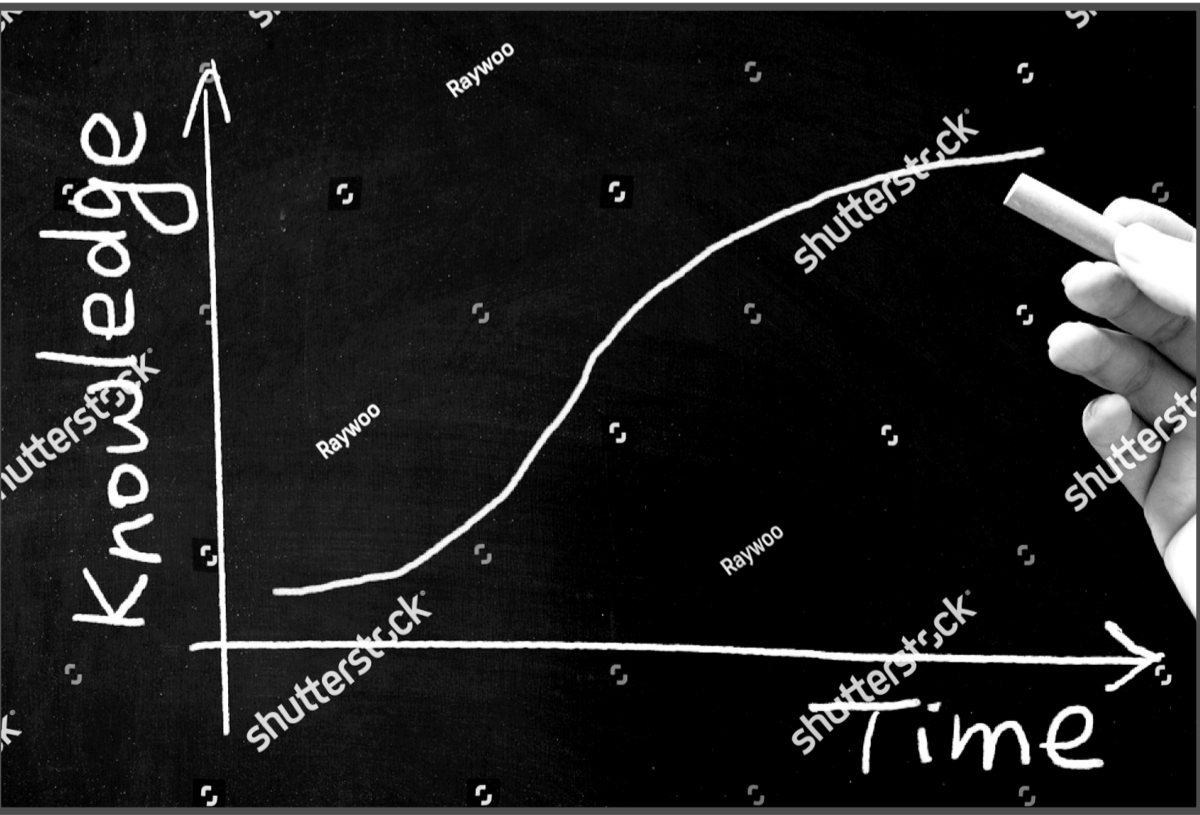
‘The LEARNER’S CURVE’

■ ASHOK SINGH

Although many books have been written by great scholars and brilliant minds with vast experience but I have honestly strived hard to present 'distilled wisdom' in a capsule to learn the mental pains and plights of my fellow beings by awakening them spiritually to alleviate their sufferings and wipe out their tears and encouraging them to tread consciously and carefully on the path of their faith. Universe is a big school, where we learn through observation step by step. Everything becomes crystal clear provided we keep our eyes clear from the dust of attachment, and remove cotton of laziness from our ears to listen carefully. What we observe through our eyes is called 'sight or scene' and what we hear through our ears is sound. Both sight or scene and sound are the objects of our knowledge and life is a book that gives us important lessons for self-improvement, self-discovery, and self-mastery.

Humanity is a school, life is a book, time is a teacher and classroom teaching or learning is important to get acquainted with the language and develop mental faculties through thinking and reasoning and learn the art of writing something on the paper. The art of reading and writing goes a long way which makes us a good citizen. We earn good respect in the society on the strength of our learning. Though classroom learning is within the four walls of the institution in a formal way under the watchful eyes of our teachers who tailors our personality and channelize our energy properly to gain positive knowledge and become better person, better breadwinner, bread earner, help us to stand on our own feet firmly. While teacher at times may reprimand and correct and castigate us to remove undesirable propensities. He admonishes us to bring us on the right path so that we may 'rise and shine 'in life and make our career bright and brilliant.

School learning only gives us direction to walk carefully in life, to meet the challenges cheerfully, to act wisely and be cool headed and patient in the unavoidable vagaries that life throws at us. Only few teachers become our role model out of majority. Reason being that to become a role model, one has two labour hard to cultivate abiding values through self-effacement. A role model teacher must possess high sense of punctuality; devote his time to self-learning, self-improvement, and high sense of responsibility. A multi coloured butterfly who is fussy of his dress, spent lavishly on his clothes cannot be a role model.



An ideal teacher gives more knowledge than a book or library. People learn more from his conduct, body language and meaningful talk and thoughts. After leaving the threshold of our educational institution and on acquiring the formal education, we enter in some profession, to earn our livelihood. This is the time when our 'taught education' or practical education begins. The taught education is acquired from the school of humanity where we roll like a pebble on the chess-board of life. Throughout life, we become a teacher and a student. Some people copy us to become our substitute and when they fail to replicate us, they turn hostile towards us out of sheer frustration, become leg pullers though flattering us at

our face, bark at our back but they cannot bite us and sometimes poison the ears of others against us. Its these worthless people who are good teachers as they teach us, how to deal with the fools. Our whole life becomes a book, opening new chapter each new day.

Time is a good teacher that opens our eyes, it helps us to diagnose the pulse of life like an experienced Doctor. It provides us medicine to heal our wounds, assuages our pain and provide us all relief and respite from our sorrows and sufferings. Many stiff-necked boastful nincompoops, who behave like a chameleon have been set right. However strong or powerful one is, none can resist the tide of time whose current

sweeps away everyone. Time dispenses equal justice to all, punishes equally both the wealthy and the pauper.

Time erodes and corrodes quietly at very slow pace, its actions are unseen imperceptible, hard to explain and unchanged. Its icy hand is placed on our head silently and keeps us in its clutches all the time. None can escape from the hawkish eyes of time. It spares none, whosoever tried to challenge the authority of time, got crushed under its cruel wheels. It has the power to iron out all pride within no time even those who walk with majestic gait.

On the road of life, like a supercilious camel, are transformed into a humble being after a little shock and stroke. The wheel of time moves very quietly and steadily. It takes no time to snatch away crowns and thrones, mighty empires get reduced to rubble, inexhaustible treasures get depleted, people become homeless, fugitives and they have to eke out their livelihood to thrive and survive in perilous situations. All bookish knowledge and wide learning fail us to solve the complicated problems, to wriggle out successfully from the predicament of domestic entanglements. We may read all the books of library but without flicking the book of our own life, good sense cannot prevail and wisdom cannot be attained. Every individual both literate and illiterate has to read the book of his own life. Our entire life depends upon the smile and frown of time. When time turns hostile, the well-knit family gets disintegrated, brothers become blood thirsty of each other over trivial matters of property disputes, the tree of family unity withers away, its roots get dry and its leaves fall off, husband and wife are forced to lead cat and dog life, neglect their children, forget their past, get separated and move in opposite directions. The ignorance does not know the power of time and gets swept away in its tide.

Time is a God, use it wisely, do not waste its golden coins in meaningless debates and discussions, avoid bad company. Do not find time to quarrel with the fools, maintain distance from those who do not understand your point of view. Time is the most precious wealth and those who fritter away time in idle pursuits, meaningless bubbling and hard headed discussions, must suffer. Loss of time cannot be compensated as the wheel of time cannot be reversed and golden moments once lost are lost forever. Time governs our entire from womb to tomb.

(The author is Divisional Sports Officer, J&K Sports Council and dedicates the article 'Learner's Curve' to his life partner who filled the house with happiness long ago which is an everlasting bridge in-between the immortal souls).