

YOUTH TOWARDS WATER CONSERVATION

Universities Connect event 'Namami Gange', presided over by the Union Minister for Jal Shakti, Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, where an agreement was signed with 49 universities to foster awareness among youth on water conservation in general and river rejuvenation in particular, held recently. The MoU aims to bring student community to the forefront of the mass movement for creating a sustainable ecosystem of our rivers. Apart from seeking active public participation, the event will also be historical towards creating knowledge-based short-term programmes, training sessions, and fostering more research on the water sector. Through the NMCG initiative, many higher educational institutions pledged their support towards the cause of river rejuvenation and water conservation and create holistic platforms for younger generations to become conscious participants towards a sustainable ecosystem. The theme of the event was 'Igniting Young Minds, Rejuvenating Rivers'. Addressing the gathering, Union Minister for Jal Shakti, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat asserted, "Water is not just an important factor or commodity but no life can be imagined without water and that makes effective water management absolutely essential." He stated that ensuring cleanliness and purity of River Ganga with the rejuvenation of rivers are the prime objectives of the Namami Gange Mission. Water is a crucial factor to sustain life. India's cultural history saw water as the holiest source that sustains life in all forms, and over time that culture has eroded. We as a society have immense responsibility to revive that culture.

The Union Minister pointed out certain impacting factors on the development of children including parents, who, in the Indian tradition, used to talk about various aspects of life including nature, culture, country, duties etc. Teachers, he said, also play an important role in creating an impact on the children and, therefore, it becomes, imperative for the teachers to inculcate respect towards natural resources as per our traditional wisdom and practices through educational frameworks. The Union Minister said, likewise, celebrities, media, judiciary and other members of the civil society must come together and start discussing and debating issues related to our natural resources, especially water, to make India a water wise country. He suggested organising debates and other competitions in the universities to spread awareness on importance of water conservation and river rejuvenation and urged the leading educators to strive to make their campuses green and water efficient. Shedding light on the fact that agriculture sector uses the bulk of India's water resources, he said that demand side management is the need-of-the-hour. "The world is appreciating us and India has invested more than 240 billion dollars in the water sector but the challenge in front of us is also enormous and we must all play our part in contributing to conserve water and increase water use efficiency," he said, adding, "We are not the owners of our natural resources but only custodians and it is everyone's duty to return to the future generation as we inherited from our forefathers." He reiterated the importance of the 5Ps espoused by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to make such programmes successful including political will, public spending, partnership public participation and persuasion. He said that today nearly 50 universities are signing the MoU and it is not just 50 people joining hands but thousands who would eventually become part of this movement.

Delivering the keynote address, G Asok Kumar said that everyone knows the importance of water and what we are looking for with various collaborations is to spread the net far and wide to catch as many ambassadors of water and rivers as we can. "Water sector was not given the attention it deserves and viewed as just a water resource. This has changed with the vision of the Prime Minister, who has given a clarion call to make Jal Andolan a Jan Andolan," DG, NMCG said, adding, "It is the younger generations that will be bearing the brunt of the water scarcity and therefore it is most necessary to ignite them to start respecting water, which was ingrained in our traditional values. We have to bring back the respect towards water and rivers, which is there in our Puranas and our traditional wisdom."

Basohli Painting: GI-tag recognizes unique culture & artistic heritage of region

Prevents unauthorized use by third parties, boosts exports & promotes Basohli paintings at International level

■ ABHISHEK PADHA & MANISH KUMAR

When it comes to art, two things come to our mind. First is any artifact and second any musical instrument. Talking about musical instruments, the vibrations emanating from the instrument brings immense peace to our mind and soul. Whereas, if we talk about the artifacts, our mind is made to think about the artist who created that masterpiece and we are mesmerized by the beauty of that creation. The magic of that artist's hand takes the beholder to the supernatural world. This art of making paintings has been going on since time immemorial. Our ancestors have been making artifacts in different ways, be it the cave paintings made by early man during stone-age or much evolved schools of paintings as we see now. The paintings on the walls of the caves changed and so did the tools and the surface on which paintings were painted, from walls to paper or cloth. Through the stories of imagination, the artists tried to take the artwork to a new level. Art flourished everywhere, be it in hilly areas or be it in plains. Due to its unique style, Pahari paintings belonging to the area 'Vishwasthali' which was an ancient state situated on the bank of River Ravi in the present Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, became popular among the people.

Basohli Painting has rich history that dates back to the 17th century. It was during this time that Raja Kripal Pal commissioned a group of painters to create a series of paintings that depicted scenes from the Ramayana and Mahabharata.

The art form emerged as a fusion of Mughal miniature paintings and local traditions. Nainsukh, Manaku, and Guleri were the famous artists of this school of art. Basohli Painting form of miniature painting is known for its vibrant colors and intricate detailing. It is characterized by its use of bright, bold colors including Red, Green, Silver and Gold.

The painting depicts the scenes from Hindu mythology particularly the stories of Krishna and Radha and is known for their intricate detailing and fine brush work.

The great artists who have been associated with the miniature painting are highly skilled and often spend years and years for art. The artists use natural dyes that are made from flowers, leaves and other plant materials to create a vivid palette of colors. The colors are than applied in multiple layers to create a rich art work. Basohli Painting style is known for its peculiar facial features and energetic lines. Painting is highly

This power of democracy is a matter of pride for our country, something which we must always cherish, preserve and further strengthen.

-Atal Bihari Vajpayee

Bharat Ratna Dr B R Ambedkar-a crusader and unforgettable Massiah for downtrodden

■ TARA CHAND BHAGAT

There is a wise saying that Great men are born after centuries. By virtue of his abilities and extraordinary intelligence; he was inducted as minister of the Interim Govt. for the years from 1942-46. Thereafter he was chosen as a chairman of the Drafting Committee to draft Indian Constitution. He took 2 years ,11 months and 20 days to complete this work.

Baba Sahib Dr. B.R. Ambedkar is held in high esteem by all Indians, as an intellectual luminary, a great crusader for social justice and the chief architect of our constitution. He will also be remembered as 'a symbol of revolt against all oppressive features of Hindu society' as aptly described by Pandit J L Nehru.

Dr Ambedkar was a super-soul who lived for others. He sacrificed his personal life comforts for the just cause of poverty, illiteracy and suffering brethren because he had seen poverty and ill-effects from a very close angle. He felt the stigma of untouchability in his childhood personally as well as with his downtrodden people. For changing the plight of the people he left no stone unturned as a chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution. He inserted Article 17 for the abolition of untouchability from the modern Indian society which is still a blot on the face of progress of the country. He also made provisions for punishment to anybody whosever practice untouchability, declaring it as an offence under law of the land. 'Jab Tak Suraj Chand Rahega Baba Sahib 'Tera Naam Rahega'. The above golden words sit well in respect of his towering personality as these will ever be remembered by the people for whom he had done commendable work for not only making provisions of

political reservation of seats for MPs/MLAs proportionate to their population but also made provisions for job reservation for which lakh of people having been benefitted surely might have forgotten his great sacrifice he made for amelioration of their plight and he also initiated so many welfare schemes for the labour class who do risky and dangerous jobs underground in the coal mines. He brought about great changes from 12 hours duration to 8 hours in a day and raised genuine equal wages thereof. With the benefit of political as well as job reservation the economic conditions and standard of living and social status of the downtrodden people did improved. All over the country there are now thousands of IAS Officers, Doctors, Advocates, lawyers, Scientists, DCs, DGs, judges and so on. Despite of all higher ranks they feel hitch to remember his marvelous and extraordinary work the great man had done for them. The previous Govt from time to time and the present Govt. is as well making amendments according to the demand of the time whereas the fundamental structure of laws can never be changed the Drafting Committee members' wise suggestions as well as the farsightedness of the positive thinking of Baba Sahib Dr. B.R. Ambedkar cannot be ruled out in every aspects of the Constitution he touched in its real sense. Even the women have not been lagged behind from the men. You just see the glaring and classic examples of the present Tribal Woman President of India and former President of India Ram Nath Kovind. Had Baba Sahib not been there, the so-called downtrodden people would not have enjoyed such facilities. Baba Sahib was a crusader for Equality. He was stung by inequality-human, social and economic that made him

bitter and impatient. He wanted that the depressed should rise and get better opportunities for their socio-economic uplift. He wanted to see them at par with other citizens of this country. Even more, he better sense to prevail upon those who were responsible for their backwardness.

Dr B R Ambedkar was a personality of super-human qualities. Gilding gold or painting a lily would be easier than to catch the Kaleidoscopic personality like that of Dr B R Ambedkar in the frail framework of words. A great scholar, law professor, lawyer, social reformer, political leader, statesman, economist, a religious epoch-maker are some of the facets of the galaxy of his personality. He was indeed a genius and a giant. He was a political leader in the true Indian tradition combining political acumen, with deep scholarship like Lokmanya Tilak and Veer Savarkar. The great Lokmanya used to say that if he were not plunge into politics he would have preferred to be a professor of Mathematics.

Dr B.R. Ambedkar was an ideal student. Being an ideal Student he had passion for books. He bought as many books as he could and preserved them in his library. While he was abroad for his studies, he saved as much money as he could and spent it on buying old books. As a result of his hobby his book collection swelled. We rarely find such a huge collection with a single individual. This habit of book collection is associated with scholars in Europe. It has not become common in our country. 'Why we call Baba Sahib as Chief Draftsman ?Because as the chief draftsman of the Constitution his contribution was unparalleled. He not only drafted the constitution in a superb manner; but ably defended the draft of the Constituent Assembly. Ambedkar's contribution

lay in so far as he expressed the ideas and directives that emanated from different agencies in a coherent fashion using his unsurpassed constitutional skill and legal acumen. The Constitution would not have been so explicit and clear; its length and bulk notwithstanding, but for his skill and industry. Further he alone could be counted upon to give the House a clear picture of the proposals contained in the draft in a way that was characteristic of the man. His speech introducing the draft, drew uniform applause and praise from members for its lucidity and symmetrical analysis.

T T Krishnamachari, a member of the Drafting Committee itself, while congratulating Dr B R Ambedkar on the enormous amount of work and enthusiasm he brought to bear on the drafting work confessed of the seven members nominated (to the Drafting Committee) one has resigned from the House and was replaced. One died and was not replaced. One was away in America and was not filled up and another person was engaged in state affairs and there was a void to that extent. One or two people were far away from Delhi and perhaps reasons of health did not permit them to attend. So it happened ultimately that the burden of the drafting this Constitution fell on Dr B R Ambedkar and I have no doubt that we are grateful to him for having achieved this task in a manner which is undoubtedly commendable. In the words of Dr M V Pylee with a rich fund of knowledge of Constitutional principles and practices in most of the leading countries and his thorough and intimate understanding of the Government of India Act of 1935.

'Jiski Hui Hai Duniya Me Pahchaan Vo Hi Hai Hamara Samvidhan'.

Feigning one's performance and capability through social media

■ SHIV KUMAR PADHA

There is an old proverb 'Handsome is he who handsome does'. There is no dearth of sermons available in the scriptures of all the religions where work is given more importance than pretence. Our elders are always heard saying 'where words fail the work speaks', but hats-off to the present social media which, many times, impress the viewers with the fabricated information and concocted stories, instead of the factual one. These days the social media has become an instrument for portraying a corrupt as an honest person, a truant as a regular person, a shirker as a worker; an atheist as a theist, a miser as a philanthropist, a communal as a secular; a pretender as a committed and a true member of the organizations and the department one works. Any how one cannot deny about the multifaceted uses and importance of the social media which has converged the knowledge and information about the whole world on a small screen which can retrieved within the twinkling of an eye. Though performance and the development appear two different words literally yet both are supplementary and complementary to each other in term of their goals and objectives in the long run. Where performance goals enable employees, public representatives and the members of various organizations contribute to their teams, companies and organizations success, the development goals

focus on the achieving of the aspirations of the people and often align with the organization's and governments ultimate goals. The onset of NDA 1 and 2 under the capable leadership of Narendra Modi brought with it a new work culture in the country known as e- governance. The ultimate aim of this type of governance was to take the governance to the portals of the masses living in different parts of the country. The basic purpose of the e - governance is to simplify processes for all, i.e. government, citizen, Businesses at national, state and local level. Also, the purpose of e-governance is to bring SMART governance implying; simple, moral, accountable, responsive and transparent governance. For the successful and flawless functioning of the e-governance in the country, it has been made obligatory for all the government functionaries to keep their respective departments updated and well informed regarding their daily performances, qualitative and time bound execution of the developmental schemes and projects, about their individual achievements, regularities and truancy in their offices and regarding the completion of their daily assignments and pendency, if any; through, uploading their photos, videos and progress on face book, instagram or e-mails.

Prior to the introduction of system of e-governance in the country the common man was bearing the brunt of corruption, pendency, red-

tapeism, injustice, adamant and non cooperative behavior of the government functionaries, but after the introduction of e-governance in the country the people have a sigh of relief because the complicated system of governance was made easy and accessible to an ordinary man in the country. It is reality that the schemes and the development projects of the nation can't be executed or implemented without the joint, cooperative and concerted efforts of the entire governmental machinery. Dereliction carelessness and lack of sense of duty on the part of the implementing agencies can prove a great hindrance and impediment in the process of making the life of the masses comfortable and easy in respect of deliverance of social justice, education, health, employment and life amenities.

It is a matter of great satisfaction that the entire governmental machinery, enforcing agencies are following the norms of the e-governance to the letter and spirit. Now the people seem have got rid of the bureaucrats who used to get on their nerves always. But as in India and anywhere in the world there are certain black sheeps and hard skinned public functionaries who are expert hands in inventing alternate ways to dodge the government and their task masters through the social media considered as the fool proof instrument of monitoring. As already explained the social media is, now, being used as a double

edged sword which can assure and misinform their task masters sitting in higher offices simultaneously by feigning their performance on the Facebook. There is one folk tale where an ox (a plodder) yoked in an oil mill (kohl) used to pretend as working by shaking its neck in order to keep the bells, around its neck, ringing. Similarly in many cases it is noticed that many departments instead of working on ground dramatize the occasions by managing big school children rallies with placards indicating the purpose of the rally and uploading it to their higher authorities. It is every day practice in majority of the departments where the officers are shown planting saplings on the Van Mahotsav, cleaning of the surroundings of their offices with the brooms, kick-starting the developmental projects, which are never completed, laying of the foundation stones, distributing the relief or other material to the beneficiaries and taking pledge for the honesty, cleanliness and deliverance of good governance before the lens of the camera. It is, therefore , requested to condemn and discourage such practices developing among the bureaucrats and their subordinates where they portray themselves as the most capable and dedicated organs of the government in order to remain in the good books of their superiors for the loaves and fishes of the offices.

(The author is a social activist from Basohli).

The Valley of Flowers

■ DEEPIKA SHARMA

"Thou art the lustre in the moon and effulgence in the sun, thou art the taste in water and warmth in the flame; bereft of thou, the world would be devoid of substance (Panchastavi)". And the mother earth and all her manifestation of charming natural gifts like lush-green forests of higher and lower strata intermingled with blooming flowers and with them the mother earth smiles. This is an unutterable truth and is the greatest strength-(Mahabharata).

The enchanting and thrilling upper Bhyunder valley was brought into limelight far back in 1931 by Frank Symthe, member of the successful Kamet expedition who gave the name 'Valley of Flowers' and made it world famous. Frank Symthe was so enamored by its charming and enchanting valley that he visited it six years later, explored it extensively with utmost curiosity. As a consequence, therefore, he wrote a fascinating description in his famous travelogue- 'The Valley of flowers'. He also collected more than 250 varieties of seeds and plants for the botanical garden of Edinburgh.

The valley of Flowers lies between the main land of Alknanda and Dhuli Ganga, in Zanskar ranges of Garhwal Himalayas. The river Pushpavati which flows through this valley has its source in the huge Tripta glacier which extends up to most famous Ghorri Parvat peak which is a flattish valley about 5 Km long and 2 Km wide stretching East-West. The most convenient entrance to the valley is from South Where Pushavati flows through a very deep gorge. Besides, two more routes preferred by the shepherds and trekkers branch off or offshoot from the valley. The one from the western side leading to Hanuman Chatti via Kant-Khal pass and the other from the eastern side leading to Ghamsali village via Lakshman pass and both these places cover three days trekking distance from the valley itself. The river Pushpavati is joined

by river Lakshman Ganga which flows down from Hemkund Lokpal lake at Gangharia where after it takes the name Bhyunder Ganga which joins Alaknanda at Govindghat. Govindghat is situated on main 'Rishikesh-Badrinath 'Pilgrims route at the right bank of Alaknanda and is at an elevation of around 1800- 2000 mt from Mean sea level (MSL). Around 278 Km road journey through the river one reaches Govindghat from Rishikesh - The foothill town which is as wall the main rail/motor head to the valley of flowers together with other enchanting and pilgrimage spots for the religious and tourists alike. At Govindghat, the road leads to the Bhyunder valley which further branches off the main road. Gangharia, the last human outpost and the main base camp for the valley of flowers are the Hamkund Shrine. It is around 2-3 Km from Govindghat and can be trekked on foot or by ponies. This track runs along Bhyunder Ganga. One has to cross over through suspension bridge at Alknanda- Govindghat. Ahead, one has to trek through bridle-path which takes a steep and continuous climb which de facto is tiring.

The view around the vicinity of this spot has a disappointed introduction to the beauty of nature's bounty ahead. It is after a weary plodding around 3kms or so that the valley widens and one comes across some bewildering and breath-taking landscape. The gradient of river is very steep whereas the flow of water is fast. The fog generated by the churned water beating against perpendicular rocks and massive boulders is wafted far and wide ridding on the breeze produced by the down rushing water of the river. It's cool touch mops the sweet beads and drains away the fatigue caused by the uphill journey. On the right side, a water fall more than 150-meter high descend down the granite rock to meet Bhyunder Ganga. And all the time, one is passing through one of the most beautiful

forests full of alpiners intermingled with maple, walnut mulberry, elm, oak, bird-cherry, horse-chestnut, honeybee, Alder, rhododendron etc. The foaming river cascades its way till one cross over to the left bank, a little beyond the Bhyunder village. The route to Hathi Parvat and Ghorri Parvat emanates from this village. The vegetation changes all of sudden. One is completely surrounded by tall centuries old massive trees of silver fir at Gangharia. Ghangharia, a hamlet having a Forest Rest House (FRH), Tourist Rest House (TRH), a sacred shrine (Gurdwara) and few shops. This spot is located at an elevation arounding 3,200 meters from mean sea level (MSL) and beyond Ghangharia exist the unspoiled beauty of nature, the valley of Flowers which is barely 4-5 Km trek on foot or on pony. And from here onwards, Hemkund is hardly 4.5 to 5 Km trek. Thence onwards, the valley of Flowers veers sharply to the left from the main trail which climbs steeply to the sacred and famous lake. Hemkund, situated at an altitude around 4,200 meters from Mean Sea Level (MSL). The ascent to the valley of Flowers is almost gradual till the valley narrows down into a deep gorge and the forest is compressed between narrow walls of rock. The awesome cliffs guarding this southern entrance of valley are almost rising to more than 1000 meters on either side which block the view of the valley. The valley of Flowers is having a wide space. Beginning at an elevation of 3,500 meters, it gradually slopes down up like a winding corridor, to a little more than 3,700 meters till it meets the snout of the glacier. The valley is snow-bound from mid-November to mid-may during which period this area remains frozen and thereby it is impossible and desolate. But as soon as snow starts melting, the rains commence, and that is the miracle which has made this valley famous world over.

