

FINDING PERMANENT SOLUTION

It is intriguing that despite J&K Administration's strictures against corruption there are a number of officials who are not mending their ways and are consistently indulging in corrupt practices. The situation is alarming and calls for special provisions to tame the delinquent officials as the scenario with regard to misuse of official position is quite the same as it was few years back when the J&K was used to top the lists of states and UTs having corruption as main characteristics. Despite the dwindling situation one cannot say that Government in J&K is doing nothing in containing the rampant corruption because very often the corrupt and delinquent officials are being caught taking bribes and in this context Anti Corruption Bureau has acted against another corrupt official in the UT of J&K telling the country that the days of corrupt have gone and sooner than later things will become transparent and officials accountable for the deeds and misdeeds which they will accomplish while remaining on duty. In this context, Anti Corruption Bureau received a complaint alleging therein that a Clerk in Tehsil Social Welfare Office, Sopore is demanding bribe from complainant for release of financial assistance in favour of a physically challenged person. The complainant alleged that he is a resident of Adipora, Sopore and his wife is a specially-abled person. As the complainant has submitted the fresh medical certificate the financial assistance was not restored by the concerned officials and finally the officials demanded a bribe for carrying out the work in favour of the specially-abled woman. As the complainant approached ACB and requested for action against this corrupt and merciless government official, a trap was laid which finally lead to the arrest of the corrupt official. It is however imperative to monitor the working of government offices as people are not bold enough to file a complaint before anti-corruption bodies. The step taken by ACB is praiseworthy but the number of corrupts in the UT of J&K is very high therefore under the present pace of work it is very difficult to curb corruption therefore the government should take some extraordinary steps to root out corruption once and for all from the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

ENSURING SAFETY OF LABOURERS

The development of any country or a society is no doubt very necessary for the growth and prosperity of that particular area and is to be ensured at every possible cost but same, at the cost of human lives is neither welcomed nor acceptable. After the formation of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, under a well-planned strategy and unprecedented development spree was initiated by the present dispensation in almost every sector which, during the last more than two years, has brought significant changes and development across the length and breadth of Jammu and Kashmir. Among numerous such development initiatives, ensuring a durable and all-weather road network across the Union Territory was on the top priority of the administration and no stone was left unturned in achieving the same, thereby ensuring connectivity between areas located even at far-off places. Majority among these road projects have either been completed or are near completion. But the incident regarding a collapse of an under-construction tunnel near Ramban on Jammu and Srinagar National Highway is really sad and a matter not to be taken lightly as a number of precious lives were lost in it. The executing authorities as well as other concerned should implement all possible safety measures at such crucial spots which are quite prone to the landslides etc so that such heart-wrenching incidents may not happen in future. Although the Government as well as NHAI has announced ex-gratia relief for the NoKs of the deceased, who lost their lives the accident and the Centre has announced a 3-member special committee of experts to probe the matter, which will submit its report very soon after which the action will be taken against all those responsible for such tragic incident which brought gloom and pain to several families by snatching their dear ones from them, without any fault. Besides initiating action against the persons responsible for the tragedy, the need of the hour is to ensure provision of safety precautions for the well-being of on duty labourers so that while carrying out the developmental works no such incident may occur in future.

OFF 'D' CUFF

Which holy pilgrimage is this?

Once the queen of 'Anglo' country went to bathe in the lake with her maids, she put her clothes and jewellery on a high place. The queen's maid saw that a bird flew away carrying the queen's necklace made of priceless gems. Hearing this, the queen and maids came out of the water; but by then the bird had gone away. When the king heard this news, the queen was disappointed and said, 'Rajan! That necklace seemed more dear to me than life, if that necklace isn't found, I'll probably lose my life.' Hearing this, the king explained a lot to the queen, but the queen didn't agree, the king announced, whoever finds my queen's necklace, will be made an officer of half of the kingdom.' On hearing this announcement, out of greed, every person in the city left all the work and went out to find the necklace. A woodcutter living in the same city was carrying wood from the forest. To take rest, he sat down under a tree on the bank of a pond which was filled with water from a filthy drain coming from the city. Suddenly his eyes fell on the queen's priceless necklace shining in the pond, just by imagining half of the king's kingdom, the woodcutter's mind began to shake after seeing the necklace. Without caring about anything, he jumped into the pond full of mud and

similar stuff with a great joy. Even after searching a lot, when he failed, came back tired to the bank of the pond and began to grieve that I must have dreamt. He was only thinking that the water of the pond became stagnant. That necklace started appearing again. He immediately jumped into the pond again. A person was watching all this, started asking the woodcutter the reason for his behavior. As soon as he came to know, he also jumped into the mud-filled pond in search of the necklace. Slowly this news spread in the city. The one who heard it left all the work and went out to find the necklace. The king also jumped inside the pond to save half of his kingdom from being lost. It is rightly said that Lobhanvitah Kim Na Karoti-Kilviyam means what is such a step which a covetous person does not do. By the will of God, a Saint came there and seeing this strange situation there, started asking the king and the subjects, "Hey brother! which holy pilgrimage is this? What is the auspicious festival today that everyone is taking a bath? I have done many pilgrimages, but this pilgrimage seems to be something new". The king replied politely, "Lord! this isn't a place of pilgrimage, nor is there any festival today. The necklace of my queen has fallen in it, which has been shown here in the pond, but isn't being found."

Sri B V Vishnu Maharaj

Don't make PM package employees sacrificial goats

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

The lives of Kashmiri Pandit package employees are as precious as the lives of other people. These unfortunate employees should not be made sacrificial goats by the powers. The package employees are performing their duties under most trying circumstances as they are working under perpetual threat to their lives because they are being targeted and killed by the terrorists for no fault of theirs and for the only reason of professing other faith and being Kashmiri Pandits. There is continuous scare and fear among these employees and they are feeling oppressed and depressed and are working in threat to their lives. They are agitating for the fulfillment and resolution of their genuine and only demand of being relocated to safer places outside the valley so that they are saved from the jaws of the terrorists and do not fall prey to the sadistic terrorists who are always on their prowl. The package employees are agitating in different places of the valley including the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir-Srinagar for attracting the attention of the government towards their demand of relocation outside Kashmir to different states of India but unfortunately the insensitive BJP government of the centre and the deaf LG administration is not paying any heed to the agitation of the package employees and thus these employees stand dejected, ignored and forlorn. There is continuous threat to their lives while living and working across Kashmir as their lives are not safe but are at great risk as a number of them have been shot dead by the terrorists and day in and day out threat warnings are issued and given to them and they are asked to leave Kashmir or otherwise face the serious consequences and killings. Thus there is fear psychosis in the package employees and they demand their temporary adjustment in Jammu division and other states of India. There is threat perception among Prime Minister Employment package employees and they

do not feel safe in Kashmir and performing their duties is now not possible because there is no normalcy in Kashmir and the conditions resemble to the hay days of the terrorism of 1990 and as such their life, limb and dignity is under attack and is not safe. The package employees work at the cost of their lives and the rulers turn a deaf year towards their sad plight and threat to their life. On May 12, one of their colleagues was killed while working in his office in the central district of Budgam and the barbaric incident sent shock waves across Jammu and Kashmir particularly among minority Pandit community and PM package employees. After the incident, PM package employees are fear stricken and frightened and they feel it humanly impossible to discharge their duties across Kashmir. They want safety to their life and limb which is not possible while living and working in Kashmir and thus they are agitating from the last twelve days for their evacuation and relocation to safer places outside valley so that their lives are not put and subjected to the risk of being killed by the terrorists. The unfortunate and hapless package employees are not agitating for the service related matters and for the facilities of drinking water, electricity and other such things but they are agitating for the safety to their lives and which is possible only when the government orders their relocation outside the Kashmir and in the present circumstances it is the genuine demand and the powers should accept this demand to save the lives of the package employees otherwise they will continue to be targeted and killed in the line of their duty and this is a very serious matter and the government should arise from deep slumber and fulfill the only demand of relocation of agitating employees so that they are saved from the bullets of the terrorists. There is no normalcy in Kashmir and the tourist footfall in Kashmir is because of the scorching heat outside the valley and this is no parameter and sign of normalcy because both Hindus and Muslims are killed by the

terrorists and so there is no normalcy and in such atmosphere of fear and scare the package employees cannot perform their duties across Kashmir because the fear of gun is looming large and is consuming precious lives. The BJP has only elicited votes from this minuscule minority Kashmiri Pandit community and is using the cause and sad plight of the Kashmiri Pandits for vote bank purpose and is insensitive to the genuine demands of the Kashmiri Pandits and package employees and does not pay any heed towards the Pandits and package employees while they are getting killed while performing their duties. There Wales and woes has no effect on the ruling BJP dispensation and the LG administration and they continue to be killed by the terrorists and the government says that everything is normal. The BJP's balloon of normalcy has busted by the killings of the soft targets which are taking place on an average and soaking the valley with the innocent blood and the government busy in propagating false normalcy and there are no takers of this normalcy claim of the BJP. The people belonging to minorities including the Kashmiri Pandits and the package employees are becoming cannon fodders before the guns of the terrorists and they stand sandwiched between the guns of the terrorists and the apathy of the insensitive centre and LG administration and thus they are subjected to the great risk to their lives and government turning a deaf ear to their genuine demands and trying to sabotage their agitation by making sinister efforts to divide them so that their unity move fails. But the package employees should remain united in their fight against the rulers so that at the end they will succeed in their genuine fight. The package employees cannot work in the fear and threat to their lives as they are exposed to the threats of the terrorists who have warned them to leave valley otherwise face

death. The government should come to the rescue of the package employees and wipe tears from their eyes and balm their hurt feelings by acceding to their genuine demand of relocation to Jammu division and other states of the country. If the BJP government is really interested in the welfare of the Kashmiri Pandit community and the package employees they should be sensitive to their demands and order their relocation to safer places outside Kashmir for the time being so that they are saved from the gun tottering terrorists. The BJP is only earning wrath from the Kashmiri Pandit community and the package employees for their indifference and reluctance to the genuine demands and in the coming days they will not vote for the BJP and instead chose other political alternatives like AAP. The AAP Chief and Chief Minister of Delhi Kejriwal deserves praise and kudos for declaring that he will adjust all the package employees in Delhi if the centre government agrees. But the centre BJP government does not want to come to the help and rescue of the package employees and it seems that the killings of the Pandit employees has no effect on it as the BJP dispensation is silent on the killings of Pandit employees. Now the LG of J&K UT Manoj Sinha has paid a visit to Budgam's Sheikhpura and met the agitating Package employees. It is hoped that very soon the LG will recommend to the centre government the relocation of the package employees outside the valley to Jammu division and other places of India which is the only genuine demand of the package employees. It is pertinent to mention here that the BJP government has done nothing for the uprooted and displaced community of Kashmiri Pandits except of using them for vote bank purpose in different states of India and dumping them when the community needs their help. To conclude one can say that Package employees should not be made sacrificial goats by the Government.

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Caste census inevitable for inclusive growth

■ ER PRABHAT KISHORE

People's voice for a complete Caste-based Census is gaining momentum in various corners of the country. In the absence of a caste census, the country is relying upon 90-year old data to formulate its holistic developmental policies and schemes for backward and deprived sections of the society. Caste and social justice are interlinked to each other and caste census will help the Government to implement welfare schemes, with a pious motto of 'Jiski Jitni Bhagidari, Uski Utni Hissedari'. For a welfare government, it is a constitutional obligation and commitment for the inclusive growth of the weaker sections of the society. So, Caste Census is vital for social equity. A section of people argue that it may allow social tension to develop between communities in the country. Such fictional argument of a handful forces is creating hurdles in way of all-round development with social justice. If religion-based and language-based census had not created division and hatred in the society as per their claim, how a complete caste-based census can create differences in the society?

Actually various census, conducted after independence, cannot be termed as casteless, since not only castes of Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribes are being recorded, but religion-based census too is being conducted. It is beyond the perception of the people that is why Centre is hesitating on a complete Caste-based Census, enumerating OBCs too. The reference to Caste Census is found in the Rigveda and Kautilya's Artha Shastra; although Caste or Class categorisation was not as nasty as are being seen today. Systematic caste-wise enumeration of population was introduced by the Registrar General of India in 1881 under British Rule, which continued till 1931. In the 1941 census too, the caste-wise figures were collected, but the exercise was curtailed due to World War-II and final data could not be published. In 1951, the Census exercise was revamped drastically and recording of caste, except SCs and STs, was abandoned. Thus 1931 Census, which included Pakistan and Bangladesh territories too, became the last caste-based census in India.

The first Backward Classes Commission, headed by Kaka Kalelkar, has recommended in its report of 1955 for undertaking caste-wise enumeration of population in Census 1961. The second Backward Classes Commission, i.e. Mandal Commission has highlighted that the report is based on 1931 Census data, which is not adequate and hence next, i.e. 2001, Census should be caste-based. The commission had no way other than to assume inter se rate of population growth of various communities & religious groups over the last half a century to be remaining the same. But this was far from reality. The census records of the years 1951 and 2011 reveal that population of Hindu has decreased from 84.1 per cent to 79.30 per cent, whereas that of Muslim has increased from 9.8 per cent to 14.23 per cent. Similarly, the population of SC and ST has increased from 14 per cent to 16.63 per cent and 6.23 per cent to 8.61 per cent respectively. Obviously, the assumption of constant decadal growth of all communities is a farce. In December 1996, the H D Deve Gowda Cabinet has taken decision for caste-wise enumeration in Census 2001. But in 2001, Vajpayee-led NDA government scuttled the decision on plead of so-called caste-biases. In June 2010, The UPA government had made a commitment for caste census after discussion in both Houses of Parliament. But instead of adding a column in the main decadal Census of 2011, a separate Socio Economic Caste Census (SECC) was initiated, whose final report was neither concluded and nor made public. On 31st August 2018, after reviewing progress for Census 2021, the then Home Minister has promised for collecting data on OBCs first time, but the Government took U-turn in Lok Sabha in 2021 saying No to it. The demand for a complete caste-based census emerges every time in Parliament, when it is due. Usually, such demand comes from OBCs and other deprived sections of the society and it is constantly & aggressively opposed by the representatives from upper castes, who are dominating the power share despite having nominal population share and are afraid of losing their age-long monopoly.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is leading the chorus for Caste Census and all political as well as social institutions are in its favour. The proposal for caste census in 2021 was unanimously passed by the Bihar Vidhan Sabha on 17th February 2019 and again on 27th February 2020. Such a resolution has also been passed in Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha on 8th January 2021. Last year Odisha became third state to urge the centre for holding enumeration of socially and Educationally Backward Classes along with a general census in 2021. The National Commission for Backward Classes has also urged the government for the same. But, as Central Government has not accepted the proposal, the various State Governments should come forward to conduct the exercise on their own resources on the pattern of Karnataka. It may be noted that the Karnataka High Court and the Supreme Court had directed the Karnataka State government to provide the latest percentage of a particular caste in the total population of the state, whenever the government plans to extend reservation facility to a particular caste. So, the State government decided to conduct the caste census to know the current status of various castes in the state. The Maharashtra State Commission for Backward Classes (MSCBC) has recommended for Socio Economic and Caste Census by the State government. Caste Census is the need of the hour, as the unavailability of reliable and authentic data regarding the exact population of each segment of the society, geographical area of their spread & density is posing a huge challenge in ensuring focused and outcome-specific planning. The latest data and statistics are the essential tool for policy-making and research, as it helps the policy-makers to determine the target and direct the course of policies & actions. With the fresh assessment of the caste-wise population, the economic deprivation levels of different castes in various states could be determined and it would help to tailor reservation policy to ensure equitable representation of all of them.

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JUBILANT J&K 125 women trained as 'DIGI-Pay Sakhi'; 2,000 villages being covered in Phase-I by JKRLM

In an endeavor to promote door to door digital banking and financial services in remote areas of Jammu and Kashmir, J&K Rural Livelihood Mission (JKRLM) has trained 125 women from Self Help Groups as DIGI-Pay Sakhis in 2000 villages under Mission 'One Gram Panchayat-One DIGI-Pay Sakhi'. Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, led administration is taking several ground breaking steps to transform the lives of women of Jammu and Kashmir especially those living in rural areas by engaging them in gainful livelihood interventions.

Lieutenant Governor, during the launch of Mission 'One Gram Panchayat-One DIGI-Pay Sakhi' in the UT last year had distributed 80 Aadhaar Enabled Payment Systems (AEPS) among the DIGI-Pay Sakhis under JKRLM. Lieutenant Governor said that DIGI-Pay Sakhi has introduced financial inclusion within the UT's Self Help Group (SHG) ecosystem creating much needed financial access points with greater transparency even in remotest of the areas.

Apart from depositing money, the village population can also avail the benefits of additional banking and financial services such as Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maandhan Yojana, registration of Kisan Credit Card etc, LG added. Believing that Nari Shakti's social and economic independence is the bedrock of any nation's progress, the J&K administration has started a mass movement for socio-economic uplift of women across the UT. The three new initiatives of Digi-Pay, Krishi Sakhi and Pashu Sakhi besides several other programs of women empowerment such as Hausla, Tejaswini, UMEED, Rise Together will further supplement the efforts of J&K government in empowering women and making them a key partner in UT's development journey. In a first of its kind, J&K government is working to set up Women Industrial Estate at Udhampur Industrial Estate to further strengthen the Women Entrepreneurs Ecosystem in J&K. With increasing female literacy rate, enhanced access to quality education, encouraging more and more women to become entrepreneurs and providing financial support for the uplift of women, Jammu and Kashmir is now leading in the world of women empowerment.

Meanwhile, Rural Livelihoods Mission, J&K has trained DIGI-Pay Sakhis in financial services training courses run by BSE in J&K. The DIGI-Pay Sakhis are also spreading awareness among rural women to avail maximum benefit of various central and UT sponsored schemes. The Digi-Pay Sakhis are also playing a key role in giving wings to the dreams of rural women in becoming independent and progressive women, an official said.

JKRLM is not only training women associated with Self Help Groups in financial services but is giving them marketing support to sell their goods to the bigger consumer base online. The SHG products are now available on e-commerce platforms like Amazon, Flipkart and Meesho and JKRLM is helping rural women to connect with global e-commerce platforms thus increasing the scale of their business.

but we must all learn to do it.

Mutual understanding is an element that is crucial to the development of peace in this world, because without it, we would not be able to resolve our differences and they would remain in place, which would give rise to more misfortunes. A solution to these conflicts is finding some sort of common ground or understanding from the neutral point of view of a mediator. Mutual understanding is an element that is crucial to the development of peace in this world, because without it, we would not be able to resolve our differences and they would remain in place, which would give rise to more misfortunes. It begins with raising children in a positive way, resolving differences with a mutually beneficial solution, and rooting out problems before they grow. If we do all these, less lives will be lost, and there would not be as much chaos and destruction as we have it today. At the conclusion of this, I would like to state one thing here 'You destroy your enemies when you make peace with them.'

Mool Raj.

YOUR COLUMN Make peace with enemies

Dear Editor,

Peace, as we all know, is very important in our lives and it is essential to our overall well-being. However, this is something that has, regrettably, eluded us for years and years in this world. It has been hindered by war, conflicts and disagreements throughout human history, which has left our world and the many people in it in a deplorable emotional and physical state. This should not be the case. Even in the places where the guns are silent, there is still some form of conflict going on in many homes, which is obviously going to have negative effects on the future society and spark more wars and conflicts in this world. For example, when there is conflict between siblings in a home; if not checked, they might continue this conflict on a much greater scale, and it might end up in either one of them dying. Also, conflicts that can prevent peace from being possible are conflicts between different ethnic groups, different religions, different races, and so on, which are quite frequent in today's society.

If this continues, then any chance of peace will be lost, so we should try as much as possible to raise the future generations that will replace us one day to value peace above all else so that this world will be a better place. Any kind of violence, even in its lowest form can be a huge hindrance to peace, and that is why we must stamp it out in order to preserve peace and the lives of millions of innocent people. If we do not root it out, then we will be seeing full scale wars a lot more often and more lives will be lost. In any case, conflict is senseless and accomplishes nothing for us but rather, it creates more problems. In fact, it is a big factor contributing to revenge, which is one of the biggest hindrances to peace. However, it does not have to be this way as there is still hope for us to become peaceful. How? Peace has many benefits if we give it a chance, and it is a far more favourable option than conflicts. Imagine all the positive developments we could make if we were to have lasting peace throughout the ages. It might be hard,