

RESERVATION SYSTEM

The notion of removing reservation systems, which have been implemented in various forms across different countries, is a complex and contentious issue.

The argument in favour of removing reservation systems is based on the principle of meritocracy. Proponents of this viewpoint argue that individuals should be rewarded based solely on their abilities, qualifications, and achievements, rather than factors such as caste, ethnicity, or gender. They contend that reservation systems undermine the concept of meritocracy by granting preferential treatment to certain groups, potentially leading to inefficiency, mediocrity, and a lack of competitiveness in educational institutions, workplaces, and political arenas.

Critics argue that by focusing solely on addressing historical injustices through reservations, governments may neglect broader initiatives aimed at improving access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities for all citizens.

Ultimately, the goal should be to create a fair, inclusive, and meritocratic society where individuals are judged based on their abilities and achievements, rather than their background or identity.

Revitalizing Change: Evolution of Electoral Dynamics in J&K



DR ADIL MALIK

Democracy embodies the essence of empowerment, where the voice of the populace resonates through the ballot box.

With anticipation brewing in the valley, preparations for the forthcoming parliamentary elections are underway. The electoral terrain of the region has undergone a profound metamorphosis, mirroring the rapid evolution of democracy within its bounds. These forthcoming elected representatives, poised to assume positions of authority, symbolize the vanguard for peace, development, and progress in the region. They will emerge through the inaugural Lok Sabha election in Jammu and Kashmir following the abrogation of Article 370 and the subsequent bifurcation of the erstwhile state into the Union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

Recent reports indicate a positive trajectory in voter turnout in Jammu and Kashmir, reflecting an escalating interest and engagement in the electoral process. Remarkably, previous elections boasted a staggering 74% voter turnout, underscoring a fervent desire among residents to assert their voices through democratic channels. Despite grappling with challenges such as security apprehensions and political tensions, the valley has witnessed substantial strides in refining the electoral apparatus. Initiatives aimed at bolstering voter education and implementing outreach programs have played a pivotal role in emboldening citizens to recognize their agency and exercise their franchise in an environment free from intimidation.

Historically, the voting landscape in the region has been multifaceted, characterized by both progress and enduring challenges. The inaugural elections in 1951-1952 were met with scepticism, lacking the hallmark of genuine democratic freedoms according to public sentiment. Subsequently, Kashmir's electoral trajectory has been shaped by the intricate political dynamics peculiar to the region. Periods of political upheaval punctuated by violence and unrest have often encumbered residents' unfettered exercise of their democratic prerogatives.

Voter engagement and turnout have perennially posed formidable hurdles for Kashmiri elections. Anaemic turnout has intermittently cast aspersions on the legitimacy and inclusivity of the political framework. Addressing these challenges has emerged as a paramount objective for contemporary authorities, ensuring every citizen's equitable participation. Concurrently, logistical and security impediments have encumbered election planning and execution, occasionally dissuading voters from casting their ballots amidst the specter of violence and security contingencies. Nonetheless, the electoral apparatus in Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed substantive advancements over time, bolstered by technological integration, heightened transparency, and intensified voter education initiatives.

In 2024, concerted efforts have been marshaled to cultivate a conducive atmosphere for elections. Authorities have redoubled their efforts to fortify the safety and security apparatus surrounding the electoral process, assuaging fears and inhibitions among voters. Despite persistent challenges, discernible progress has been registered within the electoral domain. Notably, a surge in voter turnout, exemplified by an impressive 79.43% in the Mata Vaishno Devi constituency during the initial phases of the ongoing elections, augurs a burgeoning appetite for political engagement and representation among locals.

Moreover, the electoral landscape has undergone salutary reforms, aimed at fostering greater transparency and integrity within the voting paradigm. These endeavors converge toward a singular objective: cultivating and fortifying citizens' trust in democratic institutions, fostering a profound sense of ownership and stakeholder engagement in the political realm.

However, it is imperative to acknowledge the lingering fragility in certain quarters of Kashmir. Sustained efforts are imperative to address the underlying socio-economic and security conundrums that continue to stoke tensions in the region. Robust dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders are indispensable in charting a course forward, elucidating sustainable solutions that resonate with the aspirations and exigencies of the populace.

Voting is not merely a right but a solemn responsibility incumbent upon every citizen in a democratic polity. By exercising our franchise, we wield the power to sculpt the trajectory of our communities, our nation, and the global arena. Voter turnout serves as a litmus test for the vitality of democracy, rendering elected officials accountable to the electorate's mandate. This symbiotic dynamic strengthens the democratic fabric, ensuring that governance reflects the collective will and ethos of the populace. To contribute meaningfully to the forthcoming elections, individuals can partake in various avenues of civic engagement: researching candidates and pertinent issues, volunteering for campaigns, rallying friends and family to participate, or assuming roles as poll workers. Each act of civic participation, irrespective of its scale, enriches the democratic tapestry. The right to vote, a cherished privilege, must not be taken for granted. By exercising our franchise, we pay homage to the sacrifices of our predecessors who valiantly secured this fundamental freedom. Let us unite in safeguarding and fortifying our democracy through active and informed participation. As the region braces for the culmination of the ongoing elections, it behoves us to underscore the imperative of active engagement in shaping Kashmir's future. In summation, let us imbibe the ethos that voting is not merely a right but an indelible responsibility we owe to our community and nation. Through judicious and conscientious voting, we invigorate the democratic edifice, paving the path for a luminous future for Jammu and Kashmir.

Take Action: Empower Your Voice Through Voting

(The writer is active in positive perception management of various political and social issues).

DR BANARSI LAL

In India various international level fairs and festivals are organized such as Mahakumb Mela, Pushkar Mela etc. which are attended by millions of tourists, traders and devotees across the globe. Union Territory of J&K is famous for various fairs and festivals as they are the integral part of the people. In J&K also various types of Melas are organised such as Jhiri Mela, Bahu Mela, Hemis Gompa Mela, Dera Baba Baisakhi Mela, Baba Jitto Mela, Sankari Mela, Sudhmahadev Mela etc. which attract thousands of people across the nation. These events add colour and vibrancy to the lives of the people of J&K. These fairs also help to showcase the rich culture of J&K at national and international level through folk songs and dances. These fairs and festivals are mostly organized near the sacred rivers and holy shrines. Celebration of fairs and festivals in different parts of Jammu region indicates the rich and diverse cultural heritage of the province. The celebration of such fairs and festivals help to unite the people from all the sections of society. These types of events help us to preserve and transmit our rich culture from generation to generation.

Udhampur district of Union Territory of J&K is said to be the hub of religious spots. This district is blessed with numerous religious spots and every year thousands of devotees across the nation visit this district. Various religious places such as Sudhmahadev, Krimchi Temples, Man Talai, Pingla Devi Shrine, Ram Nagar Temples etc. are situated in this district. These places are of great religious importance. There are various other religious places in this district which are not frequently visited by the pilgrims but they can also attract more and more of devotees from far and wide. The scenic beauty of this district contains in itself various unfolded chapters of history of ancient civilizations. The district is blessed by lofty peaks, green meadows and dense forests on the hills. This place is visited by the pilgrims and tourists across the nation throughout the year. Udhampur district of J&K is also known for various fairs and festivals. Mounгри Mela is an important Mela in Udhampur district and thousands of devotees visit this spot during the Mela. Every year a three days Mela is organized at Sar Dabbar (Mounгри) with great enthusiasm. This place is about 50 Km from Udhampur. This event

TARA CHAND BHAGAT

Infinite Mother Nature loves all of us in normal as well as abnormal times and it also must our duty to love 'IT' dearly from the core of our heart.All its creations live in the warmth lap of Nature.It always look us colourless whereas 'IT' is full of seven beautiful colours.It keeps with 'IT' very very hidden things which are always unknown to the man however he(man) may try to know infinite Mother Nature.Not to speak of an ordinary man;even the world famous great scientists could not have imagined its miraculous acts of infinite Mother Nature.One may imagine its limitless boundary as long as one can see with one's naked eyes is an established fact.About the miraculous acts of Infinite Mother Nature it is not an untruthful and unbelievable story which I am going to tell you that once an aeroplane got involved into the storms of bad weather and got lost its right air-route and suddenly becomes out of sight from the range of radar and the helpless pilot tried to overcome its speed very low but did not get perplexed into such a cumbersome situation.

All the passengers on board felt great fear of dying in case it crashes;all would meet with tragic accidental death.Suddenly,a very little bird appeared before an aeroplane and a wise pilot caught sight of that little bird that started flying guiding a pilot on his right air-route and a pilot gets encouraged with his high spirits.After some moments the pilot of the plane found that his plane is hovering over an aerodrum where it was to be landed.But the only surprising thing that I want to tell you that a very little bird had already disappeared flying when the plane was hovering over an aerodrum.The plane landed at an aerodrum safe and sound and all the passengers including all the crewmen heaved a sigh of relief and presented a bundle of thanks to the miraculous act of infinite Mother Nature.

Whatever the manifestations or forms of nature are marvelous ones and the man with his great greed must not disturb its balance of existence at the cost of ongoing development.Recently more than 500 people have been relocated to safer places over 58 houses were completely by damaged due to land sinking in Pernote Village in Jammu and

GL KHAJURIA

Come summer and we shall witness. 'Forest Fires', with the temperature striding over 44 degree Celsius. The losses so emanating from such hazards are staggering. Besides, forest fires, fire incidents elsewhere are on the rise and engulfing structures and reducing them to ashes. The loss of life property runs into lakhs and sometimes even up to crores. The preventive measures are, therefore, of utmost importance as the saying goes a single stick can harm the whole forests.

In J&K, the fire most commonly engulf periodically the 'the Shivalik ranges from Lakhampur to the tip of the border touching Poonch and comprising mostly of scrub forest with chirpine as the most economical species. Nature has itself provided chirpine thick bark for its susceptibility but it is more prone to fire. Admittedly man made big strides in modern days information technology and other allied fields, yet so far no full proof method could be devised to control this malady which strike very year with the onset of summer spells.

In the higher stretches of forest where chirpine, blue pine, deodar; and spruce exist, the incidence are far lesser but once it engulfs those forests, it is havoc. The ground flora is burnt to cinder; the shooting crown fire which spreads swiftly thus making the situation grave and uncomfortable.

Though the modern days man has scrupulous advancement in science and technology, construction of roads bridges, hydal projects and the like and all these factors such as road links provide a smooth ground for moments through forest and the unmindful man, in, his pleasuring travels throw cigarette which ignites the dry needles of springing wild fir which uncontrollably engulfs big chunks of forest.

Man by virtue of nature has born with greed as the saying goes, nature can fulfill man's need but not its greed goes true. So the man, in almost 80 percent cases, is responsible by putting the for-

Historic Mounгри Mela



is commenced from 1st of Jyeshth and last till the 3rd of Jyeshth (around mid of May). This place is situated in the midst of charming hills and in the confluence of two streams at Mounгри block of Udhampur district. Sar means a lake' such as Surinsar and Mansar. It is said that this place was once a lake, the water which was drained leaving behind the vast stretch of fallow land .Devotees from Udhampur, Mounгри, Panchari, Chenani, Ram Nagar and other places of J&K assemble at this spot and throng at Sar Dabbar during the Mela to pay obeisance to Lord Shiva, Goddess Parvati and other deities in the natural caves. There is a naturally formed Shiv Lingam guarded by Sheshnag and stone manifestations of Damru, Nandi and countless other deities. Mounгри is also said as an abode of Kansar Devta.

People have a great religious faith in these caves and they pour milk on the holy Shiv Lingam in the upper cave, which gets absorbed and then trickles down the devotees as they pay obeisance to other Gods and Goddesses in the lower caves.

This Mela also attracts a large number of local artists and cultural artists from other parts of Union Territory of J&K, who present folk songs and dances such as Kud, Geetru, Bhaakh etc. and leave the visitors mesmerised. These artists give pleasure to the devotees. The local people of the area, wearing their cultural dresses move in groups at the Mela site with great happiness and anthuasiasm.

It seems that one has come into a different world of happiness and devotion. Department of Agriculture and other allied departments also establish their stalls to create awareness and educate the people about the various technologies and developmental schemes and programmes ongoing in the district. Various sports activities are also organised with the active participation of the players. An Indian style wrestling which is commonly called as Dangal is also organized specially in the concluding day of the event. Well known wrestlers from within J&K and outside of J&K participate in the wrestling. This activity is attended by the people with greater enthusiasm and keenness. Local people of the area set up various kiosks of sweets, toys, bangles, edible items etc. and they generate extra income during the three days event. District Administration of Udhampur plays a significant role in the organisation of this event. District administration provides basic facilities to the pilgrims during the Mela. Drinking water, security and safety, electricity, sanitation, medical facilities etc. are provided by the district administration.

Free food (langar) is also arranged for the devotees during the Mela. A large number of devotees visit this cave every year during the Mela. This area needs more development and more attention is needed for the developmental activities of this spot. There is also need to construct more shelters for the pilgrims at the Mela site. This place can be constructed as a tourist's hub if special focus is given on this area.

More tourists huts and inns can also be con-

Miraculous Acts of Infinite Mother Nature

Kashmir's Ramban district. The natural Calamity hit the village on Thursday evening also damaging four transmission towers, a power receiving station and a section of the road connecting the Gool sub division with Ramban district headquarters.

We will have to face numerous challenges, with development Chief among them are the following.

Just think of the movement of the celestial heavenly bodies. That is what man's beyond of knowledge. What happens during Solar and Lunar Eclipses.How Lunar Eclipse happens? When the moon is exactly in a line with the earth and the Sun, We have an eclipse.If it is a full moon night, the shadow of the earth falls on the moon and we have a 'Lunar Eclipse' or eclipse of the noon. If on the other hand, it is new moon, the shadow of the moon falls on the earth, so that the sun is obstructed from our view, and we have a 'Solar Eclipse' or eclipse of the Sun. We don't have eclipses on every New Moon and Full Moon. Moreover some eclipses are complete, others are partial.

The reason is that the orbit of the moon and that of the earth are not in the Same plane, but are slightly tilted to each other.Such are the miraculous acts of infinite Mother Nature to whom only the scientists could observe minutely,with the apparatus of observatory.Whereas the movements of nine lakh twinkling stars are even more miraculous than man's thinking.They seem to be hanging into the air of Infinite Mother Nature. They too have got its own orbits and they never seem to be smashing one another: These are the miracles of Nature that too is being controlled nicely,properly,continuously and accurately by the Almighty God

The Infinite Mother Nature has components of five elements that always go on running into its very existence without disturb one another.They never get imbalanced in its formation. We can completely get surprised that mankind has been observing such five elements since the Origin of this universe which has to be loved by the humanity with unending feelings of gratitude.

Great Threats Due To Excessive Use Of Plastics

When we try to disturb 'Mother Nature' to such an extent

that not to be at all;Mother Nature becomes furious in its nature, then fierce earthquakes are occurred at 9-10 richter scale and all infrastructure gets upside down.Moreover all the powers of five elements have been rest with nature.When nature uses its unlimited powers in the manifestation or form of fire that gets out of control. Lakhs of forest cover gets destroyed including causing large scale of killing wild animals, being devoured by its uncontrollable power.Yet another uncontrollable power of 'Jal Dev' Shows its fearful face;causing large scale erosion of fertile land gets flowed along with its uncontrollable flash floods, devastation and destruction of houses and human habitation with loss of precious human lives and animals.Yet another factor of this vast nature is heat and light if it's normal State, it is very much tolerable but When we experience 50 degree celsius heat wave above it becomes intolerable to be unbearable and the most vulnerable are the weak health elderly people who have to suffer with Sun-Stroke and heart attacks. Normal State of light is quite tolerable but when we experience extrême State of light it becomes unbearable.

Just imagine the power of Wind in the Shape of powerful hurricanes which cause great destruction through which the areas they pass over and the most vulnerable is the infrastructure of electricity and tele-communication lines falling a prey to trees which cannot withstand their powerful hit and get uprooted causing obstructions across the roads and also buildings are destroyed with human lives. We humans are polluting them all thats why angry mood of all these elements is being experienced all over the world by us due to extremity of global warming and climate resilience which can only be avoided by the pollution of plastics being used on large scales them having been thrown into the water bodies that too are getting polluted showing their environmental anger towards the peaceful living on this beautiful mother earth.In the concluding lines I would like to say that if our mother nature loves all of us, then why we are standing against the wonderful ways of nature;if we would not reform our ways,the further behaviour of nature will get continue more furious towards the existence of humanity causing upheavals across the globe.

Forest fires: Causes, control & protective measures

GL KHAJURIA

est ground fire for the yield of rich and flourishing grass to fulfill gross requirements for cattle.

A man in the street raises finger towards forest department which is not so. This is baseless, unfounded and uncalled for as the forest department over the years has by all dints protected and preserved the forest at the cost of their life.

There are glaring examples on record where in most of cases the forest officials had to play with their lives in controlling forest fires. It does not go without saying that a poor forester is helpless and ill-equipped to counter menace without local cooperation whereas the forest laws provide that in the event of forest fire, it is obligatory on the part of locals to render all possible assistance underlaw.

They are supposed to assemble at site of fire give/ record their attendants in extinguishing forest fire and make all efforts with forest officials. However, invalids, old persons and female have been exempted from this preview of law and that's why, the local inhabitants are granted concessions in issuance of concessions of timber/ other within the concession zone besides the glazing of domestic animals in the open forest except those prohibited under law en vogue. But ironically, the care is otherwise as the local response is very poor and it becomes cumbersome to face the situation by the department singly handlessly.

All the dead dying and diseased fallen material left after the exploitation by the state forest cooperation agencies are breeding grounds for spread of diseases whereby health crops are inflicted and more so with the onset of dry spell, this material provides empties for further inflammation to the fire. The solution, therefore, lies in the disposal of such remnant material by debris burning under the close surveillance of the department or to issue such timber to the local concessionist. In forestry parlance a wild strip is being lay down in the forest most vulnerable to fire, the nature/ density of the crop and the extent of vulnerability. All unwanted bushes, poles and even trees are cut and removed to make it into a wild passage so

that in the eventually of fire it does not get an occasion to cross adjoining part of forest.

The fire lines formations are warranted. Control burning with the onset of autumn there is leaf litter fall particularly both in the desidous/ conifer forests which almost covered the forest floor; and inflammable material. In order; therefore, to safeguard the forest from the climatic, it becomes imparriate to collect all such leaf litter and remove to safer places for control burning under the supervision of forest department. As is en Vogue with the fire service department, necessary infrastructure such as fire beaters, pick axes, bill-hooks, fire proof jackets, hats and other infrastructure needs to be kept at the Disposal of the department. This is imperative and warrantive. Construction of watch towers is most help aspect and the watch towers need to be constructed at equidistance for close surveillance and regular monitoring so that as an aware fire others, rapid action can be taken instantly to combat and control spreading. Forest protection force is an independent wing provided with wireless sets and all communicative infrastructures. This wing as a crucial role to play with to combat fire hazards. He force further needs to be invigorate and fortified to safeguard he green wealth. Construction of water ponds help in extinguishing forest fires in much needed areas besides fulfilling multi purposed and can go a long way-in combating fire hazards with the advancement of modern technology. Most of the European/advance countries are pressing into the use of foam gas which grips/ control the fire, the CFC (Chloroflouro Carbon) and halogen gases are further he most useful gases in extinguishing fire. These technologies as well to be introduced in our country.

Conclusively, therefore, it is quite pertinent to work out fool proof strategies if at all we humans have to live over this precious mother earth which has bestowed upon us by the almighty godand let us be fear of him.

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