

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Skill development is the process of enhancing one's abilities, expertise, and competencies through learning and practice. In today's rapidly evolving world, where technology, industries, and job roles are constantly changing, skill development has become more crucial than ever.

Multistated Machail Yatra

Jammu and Kashmir as a whole is a land of temples, sacred shrines and of course a treasure trove of pilgrimages of varied hues which occupy almost every nook and corner of the State.

There is no denying the fact that 'Chandi Mata' who is popularly known as Machail Wali Mata occupies a prominent place among the devotees.

The Chandi Mata is mostly confined to Himalayan region. In Jammu, itself she has manifested at Mahalaxmi Mandir at Pacea Danga and at Bhadarwah where from her Holy Mace (Charri) starts in the month of August every year.

It is situated around 306kms away from Jammu, (Jammu-Batote) (120kms) Batote-Kishtwar (121 kms) Kishtwar- Atholi- Gulabgarh-65kms) by road and thence on foot to Machail Mata which is barely 30kms. Though the terrain is too tough to trek but with the grace of Almighty Mata Chandi, one feels joyous in association with enchanting pilgrims echoing Jai Mata Jai Chandi Mata.

According to the ancient sources, Maa appeared in the form of Pindi, the same as it is in Vaishno Devi. She came here from the Mindal Bhattas, a small village in Himachal Pradesh to bless the people of Paddar. The yatra was initially started by Thakur Kulbir Singh of Bhaderwah who was serving in J&K Police department and was posted in Machail.

The mention of Machail yatra would be incomplete without the mention of "Trishul Bhaint" yatra.

The "Trishul Bhaint" yatra leaves from Doda city to Chinote Bhaderwah. It is preceded by a Jagran at Radheysam Temple at Doda city. Then the yatra leaves for Bhaderwah. After reaching Chinote, the yatra is received and welcomed by the local people at Chinote.

The unique holy mace of the Goddess leads the pilgrims and provides them with strength and inspiration. Amidst natural ambience, the people trek the mountainous route chanting "Jai Maa Chandi", "Jai maa chandi".

The holynance is welcomed enroute by thousands of devotees at various villages. These inaccessible hamlets include Matti, Seondi, Hamidran, Massu, Mao, Garh, Nakal, Sugliangadi, Bathree, Mulgo, Shagaani, Kokandran, Rotae, Palalee, Betha and a big village Ligree having hamlets viz, Doordo, Stangarhi, Thatak, Shahalee, totee, Pondale, Tunkhel, etc. The village Ligree is having a population around 1000 or so. At Machail, a small village, rather hamlet is located at the sacred shrine of Mata Chandi and the devotees throng in queues for hours together to have a holy darshan of Mataji, to pay obeisance and obtain blessings.

During the trek, one comes face to face with nature in its true colours. One experiences the silence of lush green meadows, the music of gurgling streams and that of trees when a whiff of air makes them sway here and there. One only needs a sensibility to experience this.

The ambience around makes one spiritually recharged. One forgets the daily routine life, and remains soaked in spirituality. The journey allows us to differentiate between bad and good.

The yatra also allows us to know how faith brings people of different denominations closer to each other. The artificial barriers created on caste or region basis vanish here. The yatrīs who throng here from different parts of the country have just one thing in mind - to get blessings of the Mata, and nothing else. It is also an opportunity to know the lifestyle of people living in farflung areas where there are no basic amenities of life available. The Chandi Dham Machail has both Shiv and Shakti. On the one hand, the Goddess Chandi (Shakti) is blessing her devotees at Machail village while on the other hand there's a Shiva Lingam on the opposite high mountain where the pilgrims visit to pay obeisance on the pious occasion of the Shakti yatra. The mountain is called Shiv Pahad. The devotees describe it as a unique union of Shiva and Shakti at Machail.

The Chhari as such culminates at the shrine Shakti where a Maha Yagya is held.

Machail yatra attracts a vast number of pilgrims. Now with the increasing focus on Bhadarwah as a pilgrim and tourist spot the civic amenities for this religious spot need to be undertaken on a war footing. The toilet blocks, road upgradation, plantation, rain shelters, retaining walls at steep points have to be incorporated in the development plan for Machail Mata Shrine. Then increasing number of people will visit it to get spiritual peace. It will give boost to local economy which is hard pressed at present, apart from boosting tourism the clarion call of the day.

(The author is former Deputy Conservator of Forest, J&K).

Tanda Spinning Success from Commercial Sericulture

DR BANARSI LAL

Sericulture involves the rearing of silkworm, collection of cocoons and their delivery for reeling purpose, reeling of raw silk from the cocoons and availability of mulberry trees from which fresh leaves can be obtained. India is the 2nd largest producer of silk in the world after China. India is also the largest consumer of silk in the world. Union Territory of J&K is one of the leading silk producing territories in the country. In J&K there are various villages where the sericulture is considered as an important activity for the farmers. In J&K there are around 7 lakh mulberry trees out of which 53 per cent are available in Jammu region and 47 per cent in Kashmir region.

Union Territory of J&K has tremendous potential for silk development and can be one of the major employment generating sectors. Its growth has immense employment generation potential particularly in rural areas of J&K. The J & K Government has taken several innovative initiatives to boost the age old traditional sericulture industry for the rural development. Cocoons made in J&K are very famous due to the purity and people from across the world prefer to purchase silk produced from J&K. This sector is assisting to boost the economy of J&K. The J&K government is making some strenuous efforts to revive this industry for the benefit of the rural people. There is dire need to promote the silk produced from J&K. The government has launched some small schemes including free planting material and distributing of free silk rearing kits that growers are using during rearing process of cocoons. In J&K, this industry has been considered as the old industry and the scientific technologies are assisting the farmers to produce the high quality silk. Sericulture authorities organized cocoon auction markets across the UT where the growers sell their cocoons. In J&K, sericulture is an ideal enterprise for the rural development especially for the weaker sections of the society. Sericulture is an eco-friendly vocation and has high potential for poverty eradication. It has proved an ideal tool for women and tribal farmers of J&K.

Reasi district of Jammu division is an abode of Mata

Vaishno Devi and endowed with the vast bio-diversity and agro-climatic diversity. It is one of the oldest towns of J&K. The primary occupation of the people of Reasi district is agriculture and allied activities. Various ethnic communities viz. Hindu, Dogra, Muslim Gujjars, Muslims, Kashmiri & Sikhs are the inhabitant of the district. About 94 % of Reasi district is rain fed with about 6 per cent irrigated area. Mean annual rainfall varies from 1000-1100mm with intensity ranging from the drizzling to the torrential rain. Rainfall is heavy and well distributed from May-September, July being the wettest. Rainfall is moderate in other months. Sometimes dry spell may prevail from the month of Dec-March. Large variation in agro-climatic conditions at micro-level are observed due to mountainous terrain and high peaks in the district. Major crops of Reasi districts are maize, wheat, paddy, mustard and pulses like black gram (mash) and green gram (moong). The other crops which have been making a significant impact on economy of the farmers are seasonal vegetables, potato and fodder. There is ample scope for growing mushrooms, sericulture, apiculture for honey and backyard poultry in both the districts. Horticulture is another very important part of agriculture in the district. Citrus and mango are important crops in Reasi and Pouni blocks while stone fruits and walnuts have great scope in higher elevations of Reasi and Udhampur districts. Reasi district has immense potential for growing mulberry, spices namely onion, garlic, ginger and turmeric in specific pockets. Reasi district of J&K is well-known for sericulture. Earlier the cocoon production was low in the district as most of the farmers were lacking the scientific approach in its production. Department of Sericulture and SKUAST-J interventions increased the cocoon production in the district and thus assisted the farmers to increase their income. Presently a large number of farmers in the district are practicing the commercial sericulture.

Tanda is a remote village in Reasi district of Union Territory of J&K which is about 30 Km away from Reasi town. The major occupation of people of this village is agriculture and agriculture is mostly done under rain fed conditions. The village lacks the road and ICT connectivity. Maize and wheat are the major crops of the village. Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Reasi is about 2 Km away from this village and after establishment of KVK in the area, farmers are continuously guided on the scientific cultivation of different crops. Farmers are also guided to start some agriculture and allied sectors enterprises such as sericulture, beekeeping, dairy farming, poultry farming, mushroom cultivation etc. by which the income of farmers of the area have been increased. KVK scientists imparted training programmes on these enterprises in the village and upgraded the knowledge of the farmers. KVK scientists also did benchmark survey in the village and it was observed that the village has immense potential in sericulture. Department of

Sericulture and KVK scientists imparted awareness and trainings programmes on commercial sericulture. Farmers were also provided the improved varieties of mulberry in the village by the SKUAST-J. Farmers were trained on proper care and feeding of cocoons. They followed all the package of practices for scientific sericulture as guided by the experts. They increased mulberry trees in their fields. Presently there are about 60 farmers of this village who are doing the commercial cultivation of sericulture and thus are generating extra income. They produce about 50 Kg (each) high quality cocoons at their homes and sale their produce at remunerative price. These cocoons are purchased by the merchants at the rate of about Rs.1000/-Kg. Every cocoon producer of the village generate a good amount of money by selling these cocoons. By observing the successful results of these farmers, the other farmers of the area are coming forward for commercial sericulture. Special market linkages of these farmers have been made by which they sell their produce at a good price. Sericulture has been proved as a profitable enterprise and has been helpful to raise the socio-economic status of the farmers of Tanda village.

Mulberry cultivation and silkworm rearing have become a money spinner for the small and marginal farmers of Tanda village in Reasi district. Department of Sericulture and KVK, Reasi are promoting the scientific cultivation of mulberry and rearing of silkworms in the area. This enterprise has been adopted by the farmers and women farmers of Tanda village. This enterprise is attracting the farmers of the area at a large scale. Tanda village has set an example of entrepreneurship development in sericulture in the area and thus attracting many other farmers towards this profitable enterprise. Sericulture has been proved as an effective tool for poverty eradication in Tanda village. This enterprise provided income and employment opportunities to all the family members of the farmers. This sector has the unique feature of converting family labour into useful income for the family of the farmers. This vocation brought significant revenue to the households, thereby helped several poverty stricken families in the village, especially the marginalized sections of the population. Sericulture has been proved as one of the most potential agricultural vocations in the village with low capital investment and high returns. Cocoons are produced by these farmers belonging to economically weaker sections and are sold at remunerative price. Sericulture acts as an excellent tool for transfer of wealth from affluent sections of the society to the poor. This enterprise with a good income potential has been proved as a viable alternative for small and marginal farmers of the village.

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Beekeeping With Youth



PROF DEVINDER SHARMA

Bees and other pollinators are essential for our existence, sustaining agriculture and biodiversity worldwide. With over 20,000 species of bees and various other wild pollinators, they face challenges from human activities, such as habitat loss, pesticide use, and climate change. Bees have been reared by humans since time immemorial and beekeeping is the practise of rearing honey bees in hives for pollination support in crops and production of honey and other hive products like beeswax, pollen, propolis, royal jelly and bee venom, which are commercially marketable and in huge demand for various industrial uses. Beekeeping offers immense scope for self-employment and indirect employment.

It can facilitate the establishment of both small scale cottage industries and large scale commercially viable enterprise. In addition to 4 basic inputs seed, fertilizer & pesticides, water and machinery, honeybees are considered as 5th Input for agriculture which regulates the efficacy of other four inputs. Value of additional yield obtained due to bee pollination alone is 15-20 times more than the value of honey & bees wax / hive products put together. In various agricultural and horticultural crops, Honey bee pollination also improves the quality of produce. The potential of beekeeping has not yet been fully realized due to lack of basic knowledge regarding production, processing technology of bee products and same is required to be transferred among the bee-keepers and farmers.

The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir (32-17 to 37-05 N latitude and 72-40 to 80-30 E Longitude) having all the agro-climatic zones ranging from low altitude sub tropical, intermediate and temperate represents one of the most important beekeeping areas in India. The government of India is promoting beekeeping through various organizations like Khadi and Village Industries Board (KVIB), KVIC (Khadi Village Industries Commission), Beekeepers' Cooperatives and Public Institutions, All India Coordinated Research Project (AICRP) on Honey bee and pollinators, and recently NBHM (National beekeeping and Honey Mission). Right now approximately there are about 3.5 million bee colonies in India, which produce 1,25,000 tonnes of honey annually. India is one of the honey-exporting countries. The major markets for Indian honey are Germany, the USA, the

UK, Japan, France, Italy and Spain.

The Union Territory is richly endowed with diverse forest resources which play an important role in preserving the fragile ecosystem of the region and serve as catchments for important Himalayan rivers. Forest area of the state is 20,230 sq km which is about 47% of its geographical area. Besides the area covered under social forestry is around 1.04 L ha. Per capita forests and tree cover in the state is about 0.15 ha which almost double of the national average of 0.07 ha. About 40% of the forest area is either dense or very dense and rest falls in the category of open forest. The 60% of the total forest area falls in Jammu region and the rest in Kashmir. Good percentage of forest covers and negligible use of pesticides in cropped land offers the state with vast scope for beekeeping towards producing organic honey and pollen for the world market.

In Jammu and Kashmir, there are about 3,500 bee keepers having more than 1.65 lakh bee colonies producing over 2700 tonnes of honey every year. In a modest rate of 3 Colonies per ha for pollination purpose, the state requires a minimum of 6,45,000 colonies to produce field/ fruits crops. But against this requirement, the state has just 50,000 bee- Colonies - a gap of more than 12 times the required numbers. This shows that at present there are just 0.2 colonies / ha against the minimum requirement of 3-5

Colonies/ha. With the appropriate flora, space and demand, the state bee-keeping industry has the potential to flourish and generate employment opportunities easily pursued in the rural settlements. The Doda, Ramban, Banihal, Kishtwar and Udhampur Districts of Jammu region are the most potential and suitable areas of beekeeping.

Honey bees may provide livelihood or a source of income for many beekeepers all over the world. This could happen through the services provided by the bees (mainly pollination service, apitherapy and apitourism), or directly through the bee products. The last include: alive bees to guarantee always new queen bees or bee packs, honey, pollen, wax, propolis, royal jelly and venom. Bee products may be used as food for humans, feed for animals, cosmetics, medicines used in conventional medicine (mainly vaccination), or in apitherapy, or other like manifold products, carpentry, attractant, sweeteners, etc. Disappearing pollinators can mean losing some of the nutritious food we need for a healthy diet.

The decline of pollinators could have disastrous effects for our future of food. Their absence would jeopardize the three-quarters of the world's crops that depend at least in part on pollination, including apples, avocados, pears and pumpkins. And enhancing pollination isn't just about mitigating disaster - with improved management, pollination has the potential to increase agricultural

yield and quality. Pollinators also play a crucial role in maintaining and enhancing biodiversity thus improving the resilience of plants to climate change and other environmental threats. In recognition of the pivotal role that youth can play in addressing challenges bees and other pollinators are facing, World Bee Day 2024 focuses on the theme "Bee engaged with Youth." This theme highlights the importance of involving young people in beekeeping and pollinator conservation efforts, recognizing them as the future stewards of our environment.

This year's campaign aims to raise awareness among youth and other stakeholders about the essential role of bees and other pollinators in agriculture, ecological balance, and biodiversity preservation. By engaging young people in beekeeping activities, educational initiatives, and advocacy efforts, we can inspire a new generation of environmental leaders and empower them to make a positive impact on the world. By observing World Bee Day each year, we can raise awareness on the essential role of bees and other pollinators play in keeping people and the planet healthy, and on the many challenges they face today. We have been celebrating this day since 2018, thanks to the efforts of the Government of Slovenia with the support of Apimondia, that led the UN General Assembly to declare 20 May as World Bee Day. The date for this observance was chosen as it was the day Anton Janša, a pioneer of modern apiculture, was born. Janša came from a family of beekeepers in Slovenia, where beekeeping is an important agricultural activity with a long-standing tradition. Today bees, pollinators, and many other insects are declining in abundance. This day provides an opportunity for all of us - whether we work for governments, organizations or civil society or are concerned citizens - to promote actions that will protect and enhance pollinators and their habitats, improve their abundance and diversity, and support the sustainable development of beekeeping. Fostering more diverse agricultural systems and reducing reliance on toxic chemicals can facilitate increased pollination. This approach can improve food quality and quantity, benefiting both human populations and the ecosystem.

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YOUR COLUMN ADVERTISEMENT MENACE

Your Editor

In one of the articles penned by Hiranmay Karlekar, the opening sentence was "In India all the organs of car make noise except horn". Some vehicles have more halting hours than running hours perhaps due to their condition. The same analogy applies in the case of on-going serials and news telecast in TV channels. More frequently, TV channels take breaks to make advertisements appear.

TV watchers are confused whether the serial is telecast in the middle of advertisements or advertisements are shown in the middle of serials. It is the same in the case of news dished out by TV channels. Generally 3-minute duration is given for advertisements at least three times in the on-going serials. Count-down of minutes is shown

on TV screen.

Before that at least 2 minutes are devoted for advertisements without count-down of minutes at display on the TV screen. When the advertisements appear, generally people do not watch the advertisements.

In this gap, TV watchers shift to other channels and watch them. Also, sometimes people may choose to attend to some other work or attend to nature call which can be finished before the advertisement comes to an end. Time availed for purpose other than for watching the advertisement can be likened to use of "opportunity in difficulty".

A good product does not need excessive advertisements. Opinion about the quality and durability of any product newly entering into market gets publicity by the people who initially use them. Fatigued persons use the advertisement time for drowsing.

In a duration of about 10-12 minutes devoted for advertising, the tired people welcome advertisement to make use of the time for snoozing. For Accounting

purpose, expenditure incurred on advertisement is an indirect expense. Direct expenses are those without which the products cannot be manufactured.

Advertisement will not fall into the category of direct expense. Advertisement is an indirect expenditure, because, even without it, the products can be manufactured. Electronic media and print media have occupied prominent place for advertising.

Good revenue comes from advertisement. Obviously, media cannot live without advertisement.

Limitlessness of the advertisements bores the people and causes resentment while watching the films, serials or sports. Advertisements in the middle of news may not cause much annoyance for the people who have never seen the news channels.

Advertisements should be like pickles with the meals as a side item. But pickles should not become meals. Advertisements per se should not become programme.

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