

FUTURE OF WORK

The future of work is a topic of considerable speculation and debate, driven by rapid technological advancements, shifting demographics, and evolving societal values. As we look ahead, several key trends emerge that are likely to shape the landscape of work in the coming years. One of the most significant trends is the continued integration of automation and artificial intelligence (AI) into various industries. Advances in robotics, machine learning, and natural language processing are enabling machines to perform increasingly complex tasks, leading to concerns about job displacement. However, while some roles may become obsolete, new opportunities will also emerge, particularly in the fields of data science, AI development, and human-machine collaboration. To thrive in this automated future, workers will need to cultivate skills that complement and enhance the capabilities of machines, such as creativity, emotional intelligence, and critical thinking. Another important trend is the rise of remote and flexible work arrangements. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of remote work practices, demonstrating their feasibility and benefits for both employers and employees. As a result, many organizations are reevaluating their approach to work and embracing hybrid models that combine remote and in-person collaboration. This shift has profound implications for workforce dynamics, organizational culture, and the design of physical workspaces. To succeed in this new paradigm, organizations must invest in technology infrastructure, communication tools, and remote leadership skills while prioritizing employee well-being and work-life balance. Furthermore, the gig economy is expected to continue its rapid expansion, fueled by platforms that connect independent contractors with short-term projects and freelance opportunities. This trend offers flexibility and autonomy for workers but also raises concerns about job security, benefits, and labor rights. As the gig economy matures, policymakers will need to develop regulations that protect workers without stifling innovation or undermining the flexibility that attracts many individuals to gig work. Additionally, demographic shifts, such as population aging and increasing diversity, will reshape the composition of the workforce and influence talent management strategies. Organizations will need to adopt inclusive practices that value diversity, equity, and inclusion to attract and retain top talent from diverse backgrounds. Moreover, as older workers delay retirement and younger generations enter the workforce, employers must implement age-inclusive policies and training programs to facilitate intergenerational collaboration and knowledge transfer.

Glacier Melting in Himalaya

■ SUMIT JOHAR

The majestic Himalayan Mountains, often referred to as the "Roof of the World," have long captivated humanity with their breathtaking beauty and mystique. Yet, behind this awe-inspiring facade lies a looming environmental crisis that threatens not only the delicate balance of the region's ecosystems but also the lives and livelihoods of millions of people who call the Himalayas home. Recent studies and satellite data from the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) have unveiled a troubling reality: the vulnerability of the Himalayan glaciers to climate change, particularly the retreat of glaciers and the consequent formation and expansion of glacial lakes.

Glacial lakes, once a rare and remote feature of high-altitude landscapes, are rapidly proliferating across the Himalayan region, presenting a concerning situation for downstream areas. Satellite data spanning nearly four decades, from 1984 to 2023, reveal a significant expansion in the number and size of glacial lakes, with particularly notable growth observed from 2016 to 2017. Out of over 2,400 lakes larger than 10 hectares identified during this period, a staggering 676 glacial lakes have markedly expanded, with 130 situated within India alone. Alarminglly, 89% of these lakes have more than doubled in size, with a significant concentration found at elevations ranging from 4,000 to over 5,000 meters.

The consequences of this glacial lake expansion are dire, with downstream communities facing heightened risks from Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs). Recent instances of GLOFs in India serve as stark reminders of the growing threat posed by glacial melting and extreme weather events. From the devastating floods in Uttarakhand in 2013 to the flash floods in Chamoli district in 2021, and the rupture of the South Lhonak Lake in 2023, these incidents underscore the urgent need for proactive measures to mitigate the risks associated with glacial melting.

The research, featured in Scientific Reports, spanned the Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh region, encompassing areas across the Line of Control (LoC) and Line of Actual Control (LAC). It analyzed 12,243 glaciers to assess their thickness and mass changes. Findings revealed that glaciers in the Pir Panjal range are melting faster, exceeding one meter per year, while those in the Karakoram range are experiencing a slower rate of around 10 centimetres per year. Furthermore, scientific studies examining specific glaciers in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, such as the Machoi Glacier in Kashmir, Zaskar, Siachen Glacier in Ladakh, Thajivas Glacier in Sonamarg, Drang Drung Glacier near Zaskar, Ladakh, Biafo Glacier in Gilgit-Baltistan, and Kolahoi Glacier are the primary source of the rivers in erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir, paint a sobering picture of glacier recession and frontal retreat. A recent study (Irfan et al., 2021) examined Machoi Glacier in the Greater Himalayas of Kashmir and Zaskar from 1972 to 2019, focusing on changes in area, frontal retreat, and geodetic mass balance. It also investigated cryoconite, albedo, aerosol variability, and sediments in glacier ice to understand their correlation with glacier recession. Results show that Machoi Glacier lost approximately 1.88 square kilometres (29%) of its area over this period, with a frontal retreat of 500 meters, equating to a rate of 10.6 meters per year. Over the past few decades, these glaciers have experienced significant losses in the area, with retreat rates reaching alarming levels. Climate models predict further temperature increases in the region, which could lead to the shrinkage of glaciers by as much as 85% by the end of the century, exacerbating water scarcity and environmental instability.

The root causes of these phenomena are multifaceted, driven primarily by climate change and its associated impacts. Rising temperatures, altered precipitation patterns, deposition of black carbon, and geological factors all contribute to the accelerated melting of glaciers and the expansion of glacial lakes in the Himalayas. Addressing these challenges requires concerted global efforts to mitigate climate change, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and adapt to the unavoidable consequences of glacier retreat.

In conclusion, the expansion of glacial lakes in the Himalayas represents a looming environmental crisis with far-reaching implications for both human societies and ecosystems. Urgent action is needed to understand and mitigate the risks associated with glacial lake outburst floods, safeguard vulnerable communities, and preserve the fragile ecological balance of the world's highest mountain range. Only through collaborative efforts and sustainable practices can we hope to secure a future where the Himalayas continue to inspire awe and wonder for generations to come.

(The writer is a Research Scholar in the Geology Department, Jammu University).

■ SAJJAD BAZAZ

Promoting a culture of integrity, strengthening institutions, enhancing transparency and accountability, and fostering ethical behaviour are essential components that translate into a high quality governance - be it political governance, corporate governance, socio-economic or bureaucratic governance. It requires collective will and efforts from individuals, communities, governments, and other stakeholders to handle these components in an honest and ethical manner. However, those having power or authority have a huge responsibility to create and promote a more transparent and just society. A slight dishonesty in decision-making processes by this section in power and enjoying unaccountable authority leads to social disorder as this conflict of interest breeds corruption. It has been mostly observed that those in the seat of power are being used as pawns by their own coterie, inside the official system or outside of it, for personal gains or to settle scores with their competitors. The most dangerous part of this form of corruption is when the authority vested with unaccountable powers misuse it as a ladder for his/her own career progression and personal gains. Normally, when we think of corruption or talk about this menace we look at money changing hands clandestinely. I don't think money changing hands unethically or illegally is one and the only form of corruption. What I mean to say is that corruption is blatant and exists in different forms other than clandestine flow of cash from one hand to another: Consider a situation where a person is selling or allowing his coterie to sell his influence over the decision process involving a third party-be it a person or an institution. Isn't this peddling of influence also a type of corruption?

Of course, it is. In fact, peddling influence is the worst form of corruption. In other words, corrupt practice is beyond money matters and has some dangerous forms which can lead to complex social disorder in societies, communities and on the whole severely affect the peace and prosperity of a region. As all of us know, the menace typically involves bribery, fraud, embezzlement, nepotism, and other illicit practices that undermine the integrity, fairness, and efficiency of institutions and processes that govern a region. Favouring relatives or personal friends of an official is by all means a form of illegitimate private gain. Seeking to harm enemies becomes corruption when official powers are illegitimately used as means to this end.

Corruption is not something new. Historians have documented

■ VIJAY GARG

The economic progress, as well as the overall progress of any nation, is strongly linked with the quality of education that is being imparted with the values. Education is something that determines overall progress as well as the standard of a particular region, state or country. Education today has become one of the most important tools that determine the success of a person. Education these days has become an essential part of human growth. One of the greatest aspects of the education is technical education. Though it is very important to have general moral education also, technical education plays an equally important role in the developmental process of a nation. Higher education generally falls, into two categories, either training in the fine arts, the humanities, cultural patterns and behaviour that aims to develop a man's overall personality. On the other hand, technical education aims primarily at equipping a man for work in the practical sense of getting him fit for a job. Liberal education, in origin, has its roots in our society is older than technical education and obviously, it is more popular than technical education in our country. But the need of the hour is to build up a strong base in technical education too, that would help our country to stand at power with other powerful countries of the world. It was only with the advancement of industrialization that the people came to realize the importance of technical education. The Industrial Revolution brought about a great change in the outlook of men regarding education. After the industrial revolution, technical education was seen as a scope for the future and a lot of emphases was put on the topic at various education levels and an even separate council was also set up to ensure proper technical literacy. The increasing use of machinery was the major reason that compelled us to feel the necessity of technical education as a major need. All the developed, as well as developing countries of the world, have started to impart specialized training to their youths in order to maintain their supremacy in the field of the industrial revolution. Technical education is something related very closely to the economic stability of a country too, good technical skills can effect some new technological innovations as well as also helpful in getting good jobs at national as well as international level. It, therefore, becomes very important for our technical education to undertake periodic review of the curriculum and subject content of the technical programmes to ensure that they are up to date and are effectively fulfilling the technological requirements of the country at par with international standards.

Development of Technical Education in India

Education scenario in our country has not been fair enough, before the advent of industrialization, education in India was the privilege of the upper class, and there were no major opportunities for others to gain some quality education. With the popularisation of Technical education in India, it has given a new dignity as well as status to the labour class and lower class in the country. The old myth that mental work is superior to physical work has been replaced by the new concept of education and physical work has gained a lot of respect as well as its due benefits and is looked upon as field of careers these days. Technical education makes a man capable of diving deep into the realities of life and presents before him a true picture of life. India is gaining pace in the terms of technical education since the attainment of freedom the progress made in the field of technical education in the country is not bad, but in view of the tremendous need and the present circumstances, the pace of progress is not quite satisfactory and need some more reforms. The beginning of formal Technical Education in India started way back to the mid of 19th Century. The major policy ini-

YOUR COLUMN

RELIGION-BASED RESERVATION

Dear Editor,

Congress is the protagonist of religion-based reservation. There is no provision for religion-based reservation in the Constitution of India. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has rightly expressed his apprehension that if INDIA bloc comes to power, the Constitution is going to be rewritten. Religion based reservation is against Article 14, 15 and 16 of the Indian Constitution. Dr. Ambedkar's Constitution is not replete with reservation based on religion. Congress is on its toe to create reservation for Muslims. The Calcutta High Court has cancelled the Muslim reservation under OBC Sub category. Infuriated Mamata Banerjee has shouted that she would not follow the High Court order. Reservation has become such a point of attraction that everyone wants backward tag. The space for meritorious candidates has been fast shrinking in education and employment opportunities. Reserved candidates have edge over the deserved candidates. Much hue and cry was raised by the opposition parties when Ananthakumar Hegde favoured changed Constitution. He was not supported by BJP also when the opposition parties attacked him. Rather, BJP cornered him and he has been denied ticket for Lok Sabha election inspite of all his previous elections registering huge margin of victory. His statement was blown out of proportion. A single person's statement cannot change or prevent the change of Constitution. If the people desire for a change nothing can prevent it. If they do not want a change nobody can change it.

This results in the erosion of public trust, distorts decision-making processes, and perpetuates social disorder breeding unrest in societies, communities and the region.

this menace prevalent even in the Mauryan, Mughal and Sultanate periods. Today, corruption in our societies has become so common that people now are averse to thinking of public life with it.

Let me reproduce interesting snippets of some surveys published in my earlier columns. The surveys reveal that the overall corruption score of police is the highest, but its impact is relatively low because of low interaction of a common man with this sector: The corruption score of the health sector is the second highest but its impact score is the highest, due to the high level of interaction of a common man with this sector: Lack of government vigil on the working of the hospitals, non-availability of medicines to patients and even lack of proper staff strength in these health saving institutions in terms of doctors and other professional staff has led to rampant corrupt practices. The percentage of people affected by corruption in the education sector is also worrisome. The key process that seeds corruption in this sector is the admission process. The two main dominant modes of corruption in the admissions process are through mode of donations and through use of an influential relative. In the power sector too, corruption is rampant. Improper supply of electricity and payment of excess bills are the key corruptions faced. Consumers are forced to pay the office staff and the irony is that money is directly demanded from the consumer: For a common consumer, the key actors in corruption in this sector are linesmen, officers, meter readers and billing clerks.

Land administration sector has its own style of corrupt practices. One has to wait a longtime to obtain documents. Then there is an offshoot of the money involved in various activities such as mutation, services and tax etc. In the judiciary the key form of corruption is predominantly 'Paying money to the 'court official'. A Transparency International survey has revealed that money sometimes needs to be paid to the public prosecutor and even the opposite lawyer. Even the ration system where people living below poverty line or for that matter those marginally living above poverty line have to pay money for new ration cards and even for faulty

(less) weighing for different items. Meanwhile, the coterie around any power or authority is always engaged in peddling influence or connections for personal gain, often involving gaining favors or advantages in decision-making processes. Precisely, these influence peddlers exploit the power of decision-makers to manipulate outcomes or secure favorable treatment for themselves or others. In the end, this practice undermines the principles of fairness, transparency and accountability by allowing individuals to gain advantages through personal connections. This influence peddling results in the erosion of public trust, distorts decision-making processes, and perpetuates social disorder breeding unrest in societies, communities and the region.How to curb this influence peddling? This needs a serious thought as the menace in some cases can prove lethal. Even as there are regulations in place to prevent conflicts of interest, ensure transparency in decision-making, and restrict the undue influence of powerful individuals or groups, there is an urgent need to revisit existing measures to make stringent laws as influence peddling is behaving as a termite. Promoting transparency, accountability and integrity in government as well as private sector is crucial in combating influence peddling. Strengthening governance structures, implementing codes of conduct and enforcing anti-corruption measures through renewed accountability laws where an authority or those vested with huge powers are made accountable for their decisions can go a long way to help prevent and address this form of corruption. Remarkably, experts while showing their concern over the growing menace of influence peddling, suggest whistleblower protection mechanisms, independent oversight bodies and strong enforcement of regulations to detect and deter peddling of influence. Generally speaking, there is a need to have increased vigilance in each sector; especially at points of public interaction. We need to shift from a culture of corruption to one of accountability and that is absolutely necessary to win public confidence and is good for future prosperity. We also need some simple strategies like simplification of stringent rules and procedures, transparency and a rapid system of punishment for the corrupt. Let's be frank that fighting corruption effectively is not an easy process. Still, vigorous and determined will and actions will go a long way to reduce it.

(The author is former Head of Corporate Communication & CSR J&K Bank.)

Technical Education in India

tatives in the pre-independence period included appointment of the Indian Universities Commission in 1902, issue of the Indian Education policy resolution in 1904 and the Governor General's policy statement. A major step was the formation of Indian Society for Technical Education (ISTE) that was founded in the year 1967 with a mission to advance for the cause of education in general and all its function which pertain to engineering and allied branches of engineering and technology; architecture and town planning, pharmacy, management, process of teaching and learning, research, extension services and public relations in particular. The main goal was to serve as a common agency for stimulating and guiding its members to formulate the general goals and responsibilities of technical education for the service of mankind and the advancement of general welfare. Another major initiative in the terms of technical education was taken in the year 1987, with the development of AICTE that was the giving of statutory status by an Act of Parliament. AICTE is the All India Council for Technical Education, which was first established in 1945 and later given statutory status by the parliament in the year 1945.

All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)

To ensure proper technical education in the country, at par with international standards an advisory board was established. The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) is the statutory body and a national-level council for technical education, under Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development. It can be seen way back in the year 1945 that an advisory board was established and later on in 1987 it was given statutory status by an Act of Parliament. All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) is responsible for proper planning and coordinated development of the technical education and management education system in India which is aimed to constantly improve the level of technical education in the country. The AICTE accredits postgraduate and graduate programs under specific categories at Indian institutions as per its charter; and is controlling body that approves all the technical institutes as well as colleges in the country. AICTE is not working alone in the field of technical education and is assisted by 10 Statutory Boards of Studies, namely, UG Studies in Eng. & Tech., PG and Research in Eng. and Tech., Management Studies, Vocational Education, Technical Education, Pharmaceutical Education, Architecture, Hotel Management and Catering Technology, Information Technology, Town and Country Planning. The AICTE has its headquarters in 7th Floor; Chandierlok Building, Jampath, New Delhi, which has the offices of the chairman, vice-chairman and the member secretary; plus it has regional offices at Kolkata, Chennai, Kanpur, Mumbai, Chandigarh, Guwahati, Bhopal, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Gurgaon. There is a need for a governmental body that oversees all the aspect of the technical education in the country and makes sure everything is carried out in the field of technical education, as per the standards. This need was fulfilled by the AICTE, that is the statutory authority for planning, formulation and maintenance of norms and standards, quality assurance through school accreditation, funding in priority areas, monitoring and evaluation, maintaining parity of certification and awards and ensuring coordinated and integrated development and management of technical education in the country as part of the AICTE Act No. 52 of 1987.

Technical Education and Liberal Education

There is no doubt that at present there are very few good technical institutions in the country that are catering to the needs of the technically trained individual according to the international levels. Most of our young men have some preconceptions against all types

Former Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhara Rao had also voiced the same views but with a different intent. If Hegde suggested for changed Constitution it is because of the raw deal the 'upper caste' has been suffering from. If Rao suggested for changed Constitution it is because the facilities given to the backward class community are inadequate. Nobody took note of the statement of Rao. But every segment of INDIA bloc has been consistently attacking BJP for Hegde's suggestion for Constitution change. The Constitution has undergone 106 amendments to suit the changing times and needs. However, there is a Supreme Court bar from altering the basic structure of the Constitution as ruled in the Kesavananda Bharti case. Basic structure of the Constitution mainly includes (1) Supremacy of the Constitution. It is unassailable even if the Constitution is changed in deference to the wishes of people. (2) Rule of Law. It will prevail even if the Constitution is changed. (3) Judicial review. The powers of judiciary cannot be abrogated. (4) Articles 32 and 226. Article 32 confers the Supreme Court with the exclusive authority to enforce fundamental rights across the country whereas Article 226 empowers the High Courts to issue writs and directions primarily within their jurisdiction. These Articles may be reflected with different numbers and even with improvement in the authority vested in the hands of courts in the changed Constitution. (5) Federalism. Federalism cannot be given a go-by because the Centre alone cannot rule the nation with states having different languages, different culture and different style of living. (6) Secularism. Secularism was not included in the Constitution framed by Dr. Ambedkar. This was surreptitiously added in the seventies by Indira Gandhi. (7) Sovereign, Democratic Republic culture. Even a new Constitution cannot remain aloof from these. (8) Freedom and dig-

nity of the individual. Gross misuse of freedom of speech and expression is being witnessed. Freedom of speech should not be absolute. Some degree of restraint must be imposed on the speech and expression if the good atmosphere has to prevail among people. (9) Unity and Integrity of the Nation. A new Constitution cannot be insulated from it. (10) Principle of Equality. Principle of equality at present can be seen only in voting rights. Though it is said all are equal in the eyes of law, equality is not being enjoyed by all in the letter and spirit. Ruling parties are taking undue advantages of the law in discriminating one against the other in the implementation of the provisions of law. New Constitution can address this issue. (11) Social and Economic justice. With the introduction of 10 per cent reservation for the economically weaker sections, economic justice is extended to the needy upper class people. Opposition parties opposed the reservation for economically weaker sections tooth and nail fearing that it would give coverage to the 'upper caste'. But when the Supreme Court upheld the reservation for economically weaker sections, the political parties hostile to 'upper caste' want share in it for those who are already enjoying the benefits of reservation. Reservation under Economically Backward Sections should be given only to those who are in and below the poverty line and who were hitherto in unreserved category. (12) Parliamentary system: Debate can be held over Parliamentary system as adopted from the UK or the Presidential system prevailing the US. (13) Independence of Judiciary. It is absolutely essential. Many other issues can also be included in the new Constitution. It is upto the people to retain or dispense with the existing Constitution. Change is the order of nature. If not today, may be anytime in the long run.

K.V. Seetharamaiah