

ELIMINATING HIDDEN ENEMIES

It is really very surprising and matter of grave concern that despite in place all effective security measures along with intensified anti-insurgency operations, the terrorists are still quite active and whenever get a chance, struck at various places thereby killing innocent civilians and security forces personnel. It shows that along with guidance from across the borders, there are few elements present among us who are providing them necessary support and logistics for fulfilling their evil desires. Although with the formation of the Union Territory and abrogation of articles 370 and 35A, looking at the unprecedented growth and development initiated by the Government across J&K, majority people have now understood the value of peace and are supporting the Government in its drive against terrorism but there are still few elements, which like termites are sucking the blood of the nation and carrying forward the agenda of enemies, which is to destroy secular fabric besides creating unrest in the peaceful environment. The Government has several times reiterated its commitment to ensure elimination of terrorism permanently and is no doubt working dedicatedly to achieve the target but it is only due to these supporters of terrorists that despite hectic efforts of security forces that the terrorists become successful in their anti-national activities. Recently, while speaking during a function, LG Manoj Sinha has also directed the forces to adopt equally stern attitude towards the supporters, which they adopt towards the terrorists. Directing for tracing all such hidden enemies and booking them under rules, the LG said that the administration is in no mood to spare or tolerate any such activity which is against the interest of the nation and the person found responsible will be treated just like other criminals without any favouritism as for law every citizen is equal. The statement of LG is very much apt and right as at this point of time when the security forces have launched a decisive battle against terrorism to root out the menace from soil of J&K permanently, a stern check is required to be kept on the activities of supporters and helpers of terrorists so that these termites can be controlled from causing further damage to the nation and its people.



Is there a life after death

We live our lives in denial as if death will never come. But sooner or later, death comes to everybody. This subject of death is relevant to every person. At this moment we are alive, we breathe, we move about or work, we may be living in comfort or existing in misery. The sun rises and sets; somewhere a child is being born, but also somewhere, someone is always dying. All of life is only a temporary assignment. But, where will you go after death?

What is death? Is there life after death? Old Testament Saint Job, speaking out of his despair, asked, "If a man dies, shall he live again?" (Job 14:14). It is an age-old question, and difficult to answer. All of us have been challenged by this question. Is there life after death? What happens to us after we die? Most of us only begin to ask these questions at the end of life, when the certainty of death can no longer be ignored. By that time, we may be caught by surprise and ill-equipped to deal with the situation at hand. A perfectly natural, and even beautiful stage of life, becomes overcast with fear and confusion. Why wait 'till the end? Why not ask these questions now, while there's time to make a serious investigation?

We may recall from the history that awful incident on April 14th, 1912 when the HMS Titanic, on her maiden voyage from England to the United States, struck an iceberg in the icy waters off the Atlantic. Within two-and-a-half hours the then-largest ship afloat a ship claimed to be unsinkable had plunged to the bottom of the ocean. All but 705 of the nearly 1500 passengers and crew aboard perished. The builders of this luxury liner were so confident of her sea-worthiness that they only provided sufficient lifeboats to accommodate half of the passengers and crew. When disaster struck, there was total chaos. The following narrative is how one reporter pieced together the story of that tragic night.

"In the panic and confusion that reigned in the early hours of April 15, orders were misunderstood, mistakes were made, fights broke out; some boats were launched with no one aboard but a handful of the ship's crew, and a few were even launched empty. While those in the boats watched, horrified, the ship tilted steadily toward the vertical. At 2:20 AM, with a great moaning sigh as the remaining airspace was dis-

placed by water, a sigh which survivors would later describe as sounding like the dying breath of some immense wounded beast, the gigantic ship slid beneath the surface. In the eerie silence that followed, all that could be heard were muffled sobs of grief from the boats, and the faint cries for help uttered by the few who had strength enough to jump off and swim away from the ship."

It is difficult to comprehend how the owners of the Titanic were under such a delusion that nothing could go wrong. Little did they or the crew and passengers know when they boarded the ship with such excitement and confidence as they set sail for North America that they were headed for such a disaster. What could be more tragic in life to live under the delusion that we are on a joy ride and all the while be headed for a disastrous end?

Life is a mystery from the flower that blooms in the valley, to the highest forms of conscious and intelligent existence. But what shall we say of death?

The fields of science have been explored by his wisdom and industry. By his authority over the elements, he has compassed earth and ocean, and well near annihilated space. But with all his capacity for great and noble achievement, he has never been able to enlarge the boundaries of human life. Death's arrows are sharp. His hand is unerring and ruthless. The giant stalks unseen, and throughout the vast arena of his conflicts, none can resist, or evade his ravages. We may weep. We may tremble. But we cannot escape his fury. Man has no power to ward off the stroke of death.

Death is the unconquerable foe that has taken over the lives of Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar. Postulates or theories by minds like Einstein or Stephen Hawking can never be proved on this subject.

The afterlife has historically had an important role in cultures all over the world. Greek and Roman mythology described it as an underworld. Chinese mythology refers to the Diyu or hell. Many of the Great Plains tribes saw it as a "happy hunting ground." Even before recorded history, people buried the dead with food, weapons, valuables, and other useful items. The living apparently thought the dead would need these things after death, implying a belief in an afterlife.

Bishop Lalachan Abraham

The fragrance of flowers spreads only in the direction of the wind. But the goodness of a person spreads in all directions.

-Chanakya

EDITORIAL

Eclipse has ended-India's coal sector witnessing rays of development

■ PRALHAD JOSHI

In 75th year of independence, Prime Minister has given us a call to come together and celebrate Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav and make it a mass movement. India has come a long way in the past 75 years. Coal sector of India, however, saw major development and reforms only in last 8 years. India's energy and industrial ecosystem are witnessing extraordinary scenario today. With scorching heat waves, record-breaking temperature, and industries booming with a promising economic recovery after the global pandemic, there is an unprecedented growth in the power demand. Because of our positive reforms, today we are well equipped and confident to face this situation and turn challenges into opportunities. The achievements and contribution of the coal sector to fulfill India's energy needs are significant. Coal is the very source from where India gains its strength. Behind the record numbers of electricity connections provided in the last eight years, behind the industrial and manufacturing sector operating non-stop 24x7, behind the economy's stellar performances, Coal has played the role of industrial backbone.

From darkness of opacity towards Boosting Transparency: A slew of policy interventions and bold steps, since 2014, have helped the Indian coal and mineral mining sector grow in a responsible, sustainable & industry friendly manner. The Coal Mines Special Provision Act was enacted in 2015, putting an end to the decades of malpractices and arbitrary allocation of resources. CMSA enactment played a vital role in ensuring availability of coal for sectors such as steel, cement, and power utilities, which are necessary for the development of the

country and to augment coal production by transparent allocation of coal mines through auction. 10 tranches of auctions have been held between 2015 to 2020. 35 coal blocks have been successfully auctioned through these tranches. A total of 85 coal blocks stand allocated - including auctioned and non-auctioned blocks, with a total Peak Rated Capacity (PRC) of 440.6 MT.

In order to ensure availability of coal to the power sector, the government introduced Scheme for Harnessing and Allocating Koyala (Coal) Transparently in India (SHAKTI) policy in 2017. Coal linkage was extended to power sector under SHAKTI policy for just and efficient distribution of coal.

Dawn of a New Era: Commercial Coal Auction: Prime Minister launched the auction for Commercial Coal Mining in 2020. Launch of commercial coal auction was like a fresh breeze to the entire coal sector by bringing transparency, ease of doing business, investment opportunities, and helping open the sector.

End use restrictions for utilization of coal were removed, 100 per cent FDI was allowed for more investment and healthy competition.

The 2020 reforms resulted in creation of a free market for coal with private participation, bringing competition and greater efficiencies. A number of procedural changes were also introduced for the 1st time towards the development and regulation of coal sector, such as incentive of 50 per cent rebate for early production, allowing single bid, liberal entry norms etc. Since the launch of Commercial Coal Auctions in June 2020, 4 tranches have been completed. 47 blocks have been auctioned so far with a peak rated capacity of 101.5

MTPA. These blocks will generate approximately Rs 11,172 crore revenue and potential employment for more than 1.17 lakh people. Captive coal producers have been allowed to sell 50 per cent of their production in the open market after meeting the demand of their end use plants.

Mining with Responsibility: Mission Coal Gasification & Green Initiatives: The government is also conscious about the fact that while coal is going to remain the most important source of energy in the country, clean coal technologies and diversification is the only way forward. We are committed to scaling up mining activities in the country in an environmentally sustainable way.

National Coal Gasification Mission took a definite direction with Finance Minister announcing 4 pilot projects, during her budget speech this year. In order to incentivize more participation and increase coal production, the rebate of 20 per cent was increased to 50 per cent for successful bidders using their coal for coal gasification and liquefaction. Coal PSUs have prepared an investment plan of almost Rs. 2.5 Lakh crore by 2030 in new business areas, clean coal technologies and new mine development projects. NLC India is the first CPSE in the country to achieve solar power generation capacity of more than 1 GW. Till now, Coal/lignite PSUs have planted almost 100 million trees/saplings.

Slew of reform continues: In a more recent step, one time window has been granted to PSUs for surrendering Non-operational coal mines without penalty. Around 16 coal blocks will be freed by Central/state PSUs. Another particularly important reform includes merger of e-auctions and offer of coal through a

single e-auction window. 5 types of e-auction windows were merged together. Coal offered has been made transport mode agnostic with default option being through rail mode.

To utilize mined out land that is unsuitable for coal mining we approved the policy for optimal use of land acquired under CBA Act. The policy provides for utilization of such land for the purpose of development and setting up infrastructure relating to coal and energy. The policy will unlock land for various coal and energy infrastructure development activities that would encourage investment in backward areas of the country. With this recent-most reform, and many more underway, Coal sector is ready to take all challenges coming its way and continue playing the parental role of fulfilling India's burgeoning energy needs. As a result of these slew of reforms the coal mining sector stands transformed today. In the last 8 years domestic Coal Production has increased by 37.3 per cent and Domestic Coal off-take has increased by 43 per cent. Domestic Coal Production has increased from 716 MT in FY21 to 777 MT in FY22, a growth of 8.5 per cent. Coal Production from Captive mines during the same period has increased from 66 MT to 86 MT, a growth of 30 per cent. Domestic Coal Off take has increased from was 691 MT in FY21 to 818 MT in FY22, a growth of 18.4 per cent. In the 8 years of good under the leadership of Prime Minister, India's Coal sector has seen unprecedented growth and emerged from an eclipse which was cast upon them for far too long.

(The author is Union Minister for Coal, Mines and Parliamentary Affairs).

Medical education still so alien

■ KANKA PANDITA

We strive very hard to get quality healthcare facility at affordable cost during our ailments. Although it is not only our fundamental right but need of the hour too, still we are lacking behind in this field both at infrastructural level as well as its manpower strength, provided either through its private or government delivery system. Restriction of slightly better healthcare facilities to mega cities further deprives a large rural population of this much needed important service. Society together with the government needs to come up with conscious efforts of creating simultaneous mechanism for the development of both healthcare infrastructure and medical education in our country. It is fact that we have merely one medical doctor for nearly 1400 citizens as compared to 250 persons in developed nations. So together, our urgent attention is needed to reduce the huge gape of acute shortage of

medical professionals in India.

Medical education is still considered to be the choicest professional courses in our society, due to which this attraction can be easily preferred as an immediate solution to this vital national problem. In our education system, aspiring to become a medical doctor start from 10th standard of schooling where students opt for studying biology courses, that is pre requisite for studying medicine in India. Students are being further channelized to its specificity through 12th standard pre medical education. Carefully screened at national level all India competitive examination process of National Eligibility Entrance Test (NEET), these aspirants compete for nearly 85,000 under graduate medical seats those are available in both government and private medical colleges spread all across our country. This competition turns much tougher under the provisions of socio-economic and other types of reservations envisaged in this process.

On all India basis, such fifty percent medical students out of total of nearly one and half crore 12th standard students, only about eighteen lakh candidates become eligible to write NEET examination held annually. Thereafter, on basis of fixed percentile score in this NEET examination, again approximately nine lakh aspirants qualify to compete for these 85,000 under graduate medical seats available under Indian medical education system. Thus every year only 1 out of nearly 80 biology studying students, make it to become a doctor, who is truly difficult and too less in number to meet their rising demand in our country. Number of medical aspirants is increasing day by day but medical admissions are not proportionately increasing to that extent in order to address this genuine demand. Further, sizable number of left out aspirants out of this tough competition, turn abroad mostly to countries like Bangladesh and Ukraine for studying

Krishi Vigyan Kendras: Major contributor in socio-economic upliftment of farmers

■ DR ASHU SHARMA & DR ARVIND KUMAR ISHAR

In agricultural invention and innovation continuum in all facets of agriculture and allied activities with its effective diffusion is a key to sustainably increase the agricultural production and productivity with environment sustainability.

Indian agriculture has witnessed phenomenal growth during last four decades with manifold increase in production of major commodities like food grains, vegetables, fruits, milk, eggs and fish. As a result, the per capita availability of important food items has increased despite of increasing population.

With half of the workforce engaged in agricultural sector in India, the role of science and technology in agriculture is pertinent to not only ensure food security of the country, but also to provide farmers a competitive edge and to maintain affordability of the food items for the public at large.

The ratio of agricultural land to agricultural population has shrunk to 0.3 ha per person in India as compared to 11.0 ha per person in developed countries.

The resources are getting marginalized and there is tremendous pressure on natural resources with divergence of agricultural land and water towards industrial, urban and non-agriculture sector. Food security is one of the major concerns.

It is estimated that India's population during the last three and half decades have increased from 450 million to 1.38 billion with a growth rate of 206.3 per cent, which implied that the country has to feed more than the double population.

Food security is attached to national sovereignty and thus, agriculture sector has to gain strength and vision to uphold the national concern. To realize the true potential, farmers must have access to the state of the art technologies, necessary inputs and related information.

In this context, the Government of India through Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) has established a large network of over 725 Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) across the country with an aim to conduct technology assessment and refinement, knowledge dissemination and provide critical input support for the farmers with multidisciplinary approach.

Krishi Vigyan Kendra's (KVKs) also known as Farm Science Centers in India, are one of the key extension systems and integral part of National Agricultural Research System (NARS) in the country. It aims at assessment of location specific technology modules in

agriculture and allied enterprises through assessment and demonstrations with relevant trainings to farmers.

KVKs reach farmers with the technical inputs from lab to land in promoting scientific cultivation practices. They serve the farmers with mandated activities like On-farm testing, front line demonstrations, trainings of farmers, farm women and extension personnel and act as knowledge and resource centre of agricultural technologies.

Having district as its jurisdiction area, KVKs played crucial role in enhancing production and generating part time employment for the farming community. KVKs aims to bridge the gap between the technologies developed at the research institutions and its adoption at the field level by the farmer's through the demonstration of technology/ products etc. and by providing training for the farmers, rural youths and the extension personnel.

Activities Involved:

On-farm testing: Assess the location specificity of agricultural technologies under various farming systems.

Frontline demonstration: Establish production potential of technologies on the farmers' fields.

Capacity building: Farmers and extension personnel are trained to update their knowledge and skills on modern agricultural technologies.

Knowledge and resource centre: Hub for agricultural technologies for supporting public, private and voluntary sector initiatives in improving the agricultural economy of the district. Extension services: Farm advisories using ICT and other media means on varied subjects of interest to farmers.

Farm advisory services: KVKs provide solution to the problems related to agriculture and allied subjects as and when faced by farmers of the region. Interested farmers/persons can also get proper advice regarding establishment of new entrepreneurship on non-traditional sector. The main function of advisory service centre is to provide continuous and constructive advice along with sound theory and practical knowledge to the contact villagers regarding agriculture and its allied subjects for their cultural and economical improvement.

Agro-met Advisory Services: Provides the weather based agro advisory services to the farmer's at block level on every Tuesday and Friday (biweekly) for decision making in response to past, current and future weather change.

This helps the farmers to take weather related sensi-

tive decisions like sowing / transplanting of seedlings, pesticides, herbicides and fertilizer application, scheduling irrigation, timely harvesting of the crops, post-harvest storage of the harvested crop, forewarnings of livestock related diseases and vaccination of livestock and poultry birds.

Helping in Rural Development: KVKs aim at comprehensive rural development and hence training on employment and income generating activities like wire basket making, tailoring, preservation techniques, agarbatti making, leather bag production, rope making, candle making, bee-keeping, goat and pig rearing, and many other agriculture based training are organized for school drop-outs, especially women, so as to make them earn during off-season. These trained people can start their own enterprises in local areas generating employment for the local rural youth. Thus, farmers are not the only beneficiaries of KVK but rural masses in one or another form are benefitted from the activities of KVKs.

Socio-Economic Development: Human Capital: Trainings and other informal meetings conducted by KVK's at village level and tells the importance of imparting education to their children which in turn motivate beneficiaries to educate their children.

Physical Capital: It includes improvements in farm power and resources in the form of number of bullocks and tractor or other farm machineries, construction or renovation of dwelling house and improvement in entertainment materials such as radio, TV etc.

Social Capital: This includes social interaction, respect at home and outside and also leadership opportunities. Exposure trainings conducted by KVKs, contribute in the development of social infrastructure through the formation of self-help groups and village level federations.

Financial Capital: KVKs provide the required inputs at subsidiary cost and other income generating activities. In addition savings, farmers can take bank loan, which further strengthen their financial capital position resulting in improved financial status.

Food Security: Employment opportunities and increase in income through intensive use of land resources for food grains, fruits, fodder and fuel wood production, through various land based activities organized by KVKs can improve the food security in a better way.

(The authors are Scientist at KVK Kathua and Head, KVK Rajouri).