

MODI'S CABINET EXPANSION

The expansion of Modi cabinet on a massive scale is first of its kind after the two year rule of NDA Government .The expansion was long overdue as so many aspirants were waiting for long to be included in Council of Ministers of Modi 2.0 Government. All the factors were considered by the Prime Minister before embarking on expansion of the cabinet. In all, twelve ministers were asked to step down and they tendered their resignations, which were accepted by the President. The big wings were asked to step down and it was done after auditing their performance and therefore those ministers, whose performance was not up to the mark, were asked to tender their resignation and make room for the new faces. The way twelve ministers were asked to put forward their resignations reflects that Modi is a hard task master and wants that his cabinet should work efficiently for implementing programmes and policies of the Government. The new entrants are highly qualified and some are holding PHD degrees. The technocrats and experienced faces were also inducted in the council of ministers. The OBCs, Dalits, minorities, weaker section and women were given a chance in the cabinet. All the states were equally represented in the cabinet expansion. The political pundits opine that the expansion of the cabinet was done with eye on the assembly elections because as many as five states are going to polls in next few months. Therefore, polls of 2022 is a big factor and consideration in the cabinet reshuffle. In this cabinet expansion seven women candidates were given chance and in total, 11 women are now there in the cabinet. New faces were given place in the council reshuffle. The youth were given representation in the new cabinet and also those possessing administrative skills were inducted in the cabinet. Some being retired IAS officers were inducted into the cabinet to give an efficiency push to the cabinet so that the policies and the programmes are properly implemented. Thus planning and execution were given a thrust by way of cabinet expansion. While the electoral interests were the fundamental considerations in the cabinet expansion, the representation to the various states was also an objective of the cabinet reshuffle. Seven ministers from UP were given a place in the cabinet and this in itself suggest that the expansion of the cabinet was done with an eye on the elections. In a democracy everything is weighed on the balance of the electoral dividends and so is this cabinet expansion. As Modi means business and so he is not going to tolerate any dead wood in the cabinet and therefore efficient people were given a place in the cabinet. Those having experience and administrative acumen were included in the council of ministers to make room for the efficiency in the planning and execution of the works in the interests of the country. Some ministers were promoted and made cabinet ministers and the work load of the ministers was eased through this cabinet expansion. Modi has weighed all the pros and cons of the exercise before embarking upon the cabinet reshuffle and all the factors were well considered before the cabinet expansion. This cabinet is the aggregate of all the good factors and is a balanced one so that it will prove its efficiency in the days ahead. Though the cabinet expansion was done with an eye on the coming elections, but the fact is that ministers will contribute their might towards welfare of countrymen. The representation to the OBC, Dalits and the women and weaker sections is a glaring point of the expansion of the cabinet and the expansion is aimed at the fair representation to all the sections of the society to pave way for good governance. Since the prime minister believes in the minimum government and maximum governance and so the cabinet expansion was carried on with this principle in view. As the reshuffle of the cabinet is a routine exercise but this cabinet expansion is of extraordinary in nature as the ministers giving low performance were asked to make the room for the new entrants and those having experience and those who are technocrats were inducted into the cabinet so that there is no compromise on the efficiency and good governance. The way Ravi Shanker Prasad, Prakash Javadekar, Dr Harsh Vardan and others big wings were stripped of their portfolios is enough to suggest that the prime minister wants the business and delivery of the works and efficiency in the governance. So the massive cabinet expansion is done with the aim of the efficiency and good governance in order to come to the expectation of the electorate which is the litmus test of the government's efficiency. The Modi Government's 2.0 expansion of cabinet is in fact an exercise in the efficiency so that the council of ministers will deliver efficiently in the interest of the countrymen. Thus on the one hand the cabinet expansion aimed at the efficiency and on the other hand it also made it possible to give a fair representation to the weaker sections and far-flung areas of the country. In any case, the present reshuffle is an exercise in efficiency and fair play so that the governance is carried on smoothly in the interest of the countrymen.

Omkar Dattatray



Like Ganesh, listen to others attentively

God has given us one mouth and two ears so that we speak less and listen more. In Indie philosophy as well as our forefathers' prescriptions, importance has been given to 'listening'. Some people talk endlessly merely to derive pleasure. It is only when one stops talking and listens to others that the importance of what others have to say can be understood.

The interpretation of what one listens to is also important. The Buddha once addressed a gathering. 'Do not forget to complete your duties before going to sleep', he said. The disciples' duty was to meditate, so they started meditating before going to sleep. A thief also heard the Buddha's sermon. He was a professional thief. He asked himself, 'What is my duty? I am a thief, my duty is to rob. The Buddha has endorsed my lifestyle.' Interpreting the sermon this way, he continued to rob every day before he went to sleep. Very often we do not listen to the ideas of others with an open mind. 'Who is speaking? What is his objective? Why does he talk on such matters in these circumstances?' Such deep

analysis is necessary while we listen to others. Many do not have the maturity to listen objectively. They are not willing to accept what others speak.

The purpose of depicting Ganesh with huge ears is to show that he listens carefully and attentively to the words of others. We may well ask, what is the evidence. The whole depiction of Ganesh denotes how a human being should be and what characteristics he should possess.

Ganesh's huge belly has a specific meaning. It denotes that one should learn to stomach and digest all the problems of life and overcome them. His trunk tells us that one must develop skills. This large limb is capable of picking up a tiny needle from the ground and also uproot a tall tree. His broken tusk reveals that one should master one's likes and dislikes. Our likes and dislikes are like ivory, very valuable. The broken tusk represents operating from commitment, not from likes and dislikes. The small axe in his hand is a tool that tells us to cut away our desires and infatuations.

Swami
Sukhabodhananda

Participatory environmental protection

■ DR BANARSI LAL & DR PAWAN SHARMA

Protection of environment is essential for sustainable development. The degradation of forests, industrial pollution, depletion of ozone layer, the emission of green house gases result into the global warming and climate change which ultimately have an adverse impact on the environment and human health. There is dire need to focus on the conservation of biodiversity, protection of wetlands and prevention of environmental pollution. In the Indian Constitution several provisions have been provided to protect the environment. Due to global warming there is gradual increase in the Earth's temperature by which the climate is changing. It has been proved by the scientists that the planet Earth is warming and the level of CO2 in the atmosphere has crossed all the previous records. Now, it has been observed that all this is human-induced. With global warming different species of plants and animals and their habitats are decreasing. The chances for ecosystem to adapt naturally are diminishing. Climate change is one of the greatest threats on the Earth. Agriculture, water resources, forestry, human health, coastal settlements and natural ecosystems all need to adapt to the changing climate. The changing climate has increased the vulnerability to the natural disasters such as by the droughts, floods and cyclones.

People's participation plays a pivotal role in driving the fruits of various developmental schemes. For instance, sanitation is a chronic problem in rural areas but it cannot be solved by the various programmes of the government alone. It can be effectively solved by the people. Environmental issues cannot be solved unless the local people participate in this movement. People participation is helpful in promoting wildlife conservation, afforestation and also in employment generation. Local people skill and manpower are needed to deal with the aftermath of environmental disasters. Afforestation and arresting of deforestation can be carried with the help of local people. Protection of environment is mainly in the hands of the people. People's participation is an imperative need in the environmental protection. Environment protection is an essential part of development. Without adequate environment protection, development is useless.

It has been estimated that by 2030, food production will need to double and industrial output and energy use will increase three times in the world and five times in the developing countries. This growth can bring the risk of appalling environmental damage. With development there is need of

better environment protection, clean air, water and eradication of poverty. Environmental disturbance can affect the present and future human generations. It affects human health and reduces agricultural production, productivity and food quality. Illegal cutting of forests is a matter of great concern and there is dire need to prevent it. Lack of appropriate technology for maximum utilization of the raw materials, poor silvicultural practices, low recovery, low budgetary provisions for forest operations have all hampered effective management of forests. As a result, fuel wood, timber, pole wood and carving wood are being exploited at unsustainable levels. Ecological degradation of wetlands together with pollution has resulted in the loss of flora and fauna. The high amount of fertilizers and other inputs required in agriculture for increasing the productivity has led to the degradation of the soil health. Despite decades of warning about pollution and efforts to control it, people are still being exposed to toxic pollutants. Pollution from agricultural land caused by leaching of nitrogen fertilizers has been detected in the ground water in many areas of the country. In Haryana, for example, some well water is reported to have nitrate concentration ranging from 114 mg. / litre to 1800 mg. /litre far above national standard 45 mg. /litre. Government should monitor and implement policies to reduce pollution and environment degradation and safeguard the natural system that supports renewable resources. Rigorous efforts are needed to achieve a sustainable future for the coming generations. Sustainable development can promote growth and equity simultaneously and also promote the development of democratic process at the grass root level by creating awareness on social forestry, soil conservation, population control, protection of tanks, rural energy management, biodiversity, popularization of eco-friendly activities etc. Sustainable rural development on the one hand benefits local people and safeguards the flora and fauna of a particular region on the other.

Natural resources are the wealth of any nation. Presently they are facing environmental hazards due to many reasons. Sustainable development is focused on any kind of betterment that should not harm the environment so that the well-being of future generations is guaranteed and the harmonious relationship between environment and development is sustained. The process of sustainable development tries to build social and economic progress satisfying the needs and values of the social groups without foreclosing future options. Rio-Earth Summit (1992) highlights the view that

socio-economic development and environment protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing processes. Recently, the healthy rural environment has encountered divergent environmental hazards as an addition to their existing issues of social and economic hardships. Such threats badly affect the local community which is the impetus behind research for alternative sources such as cultivation in marginal lands. It constitutes a growing class of environment refugees. Environment is one of the most important pillars of sustainable development. There is a need to establish a sustainable development process in rural India. Environmental aspect assumes great significance in growing deforestation, soil erosion, land degradation, water pollution, biodiversity loss and the like which continue to worsen economic development in India. The common property resources which are mostly natural must be protected for overall growth of the rural areas.

Public participation has become an important part of environmental protection. The natural resources should be protected for overall growth of the nation. Such efforts not only lead to optimum utilization of natural resources but also generate more employment for the rural people. This initiative requires people's participation. For instance, afforestation activities cannot be successful without the help of local communities. The relationship between development and environment is well established. This requires the awareness on environmental issues. Environment protection is possible through effective participation of the people. It has been observed that unless the people are put at the core of any development activity, the relationship among the environmental development ceases to exist. It has been observed that people's participation is the most determining factor of biodiversity conservation. People living around Periyar Tiger Reserve of Kerala can be taken as an example. They are not only taking care of the decentralized government control over forests but also ensuring the biodiversity conservation a reality. The participatory approach to environmental protection can be strengthened through the decentralized planning which provides opportunity for the rural communities to effectively participate in the development process. Committed involvement of each and every one is must in this process. All the stakeholders should understand the present environmental crisis and find out suitable solutions to tackle this awful situation.

(The writers are Head, KVK Reasi and Scientist, KVK Kathua).

Updating Digital Knowledge

■ VIJAY GARG

How many of you waking up only to grab your phone and switch on Facebook to check news-feed to see what you're missing while you're sleeping? The advancement of technology has allowed us to constantly connect with rest of the world and stay updated with the current trends, news, and other parts of our social life. Now, let's put same idea to your digital and marketing knowledge. Shouldn't they also be checked regularly?

Digital literacy is the ability to effectively and critically navigate, evaluate, and create information using a range of digital technologies. Like it or not, the reality today is that digital market and social media ecosystem would only become more crowded and more competitive. Every marketer knows that digital world is a constant and fast-paced changing environment. As such digital marketing is never going to be a set-it and forget-it solution. What you knew working today might not be relevant tomorrow. That's why digital marketing needs constant attention and regular maintenance, including fresh knowledge.

Report showed that the demand for technological skills will only keep increasing from 2016 to 2030. Companies and talent developers are well aware of this and hence, are putting employee development as their priorities. As businesses are getting digitized at a faster rate, upskilling employees regularly is important to avoid a gap between skills and needs of the companies. 54 per cent of companies acknowledged that digital talent gap is hampering their digital transformation programs and that their organization has lost competitive advantage because of a shortage of digital talent.

Up-skilling employees, who already fit with your brand and culture, allow them to keep up with industry advancements while putting their skills back into your company. Employee turnover is costly for companies. Employees are in a way your brand advocates. Up skilling is a great way to engage them and let them know that the company cares for their well-beings. Happy employees will lead to better customer service and satisfied customers.

With the development of mobile technology nowadays, you can give your employees the choice of learning on any mobile devices at any time as per their convenience. As such, your employees have access to seamless training content while also having the option to seek performance support at specific time when needed. You can also invest in online learning platforms to give your employees full learning flexibility at a time and place that is best for them.

Learning new skills shouldn't be boring. Companies can spice up the process using creative games and rewards. Gamification has long noted as an effective tool to motivate learners in a healthy and competitive way. It's also good to encourage your employees to put their newly acquired skills into practice and to acknowledge their achievements. Up skilling your knowledge shouldn't be an extracurricular activity. So make sure it's engraved in your company's culture. You can set aside time during the workweek for your employees to focus on refining their skills, design a room in the office specifically for training classes, setting up workshops, releasing short tutorial videos, holding seminars, etc. to encourage continuous learning culture in your company. With so much digital disruption happening today, up skilling is more important than ever now for the success of organizations.

Historical introduction of forests

■ G L KHAJURIA

Nature has endowed the Indian sub-continent with luxuriant and plentiful forest wealth. The vast and varied climatic and geological conditions bore forests of different types and intensities ranging from dry thorny forests to wet evergreens. The coniferous forests of hilly region and the deciduous types along foot kills conglomerates many valuable species which serve for the use of construction of houses, bridges and score of other purposes.

The original inhabitants of the country had great reverence for forests and a grove of trees around temples were of ample importance of these trees were considered as sacred as our Gods and Goddesses. And cutting or removal of any of such tree was considered a sin. Under some compelling conditions of a tree was removed, five to ten saplings were planted out to absolve oneself of the sin so committed. As such, the forests played a prominent part in the cultural and spiritual development of our generations.

The Rishis and Munis is search of salvation and attainment of wisdom had their Ashramas in sylvan surroundings of these forests. The Ramayana and Mahabharata give an attractive description of forests like Dandakaranya and Nandavan. The wildlife consisting of varieties of mammals, birds and reptiles also received due attention for their protection and conservation.

When Bhagwan Ram told Laxman to fetch firewood for cooking, he advised him to remove only dead-dried branches of tree and asked for not cutting green branches. Even our Gods and Goddess were much conscious of forest whereas we human are always have become lusty and are hell bent to go to any extent to fill our ladder by injury to vibrant lush-green trees.

It is dismaying, painful and ironical when we chop-down those trees more for our greed than our need. Lord Buddha had said, 'Forest is a peculiar organism of unlimited and benevolence which sustains us by all means. It offers shade even to the axe-man who cuts it.' Around 2000 BC, there is evidence of a flourishing Dravidian civilization existing in consonance with the forests that were then in such abundance. The early Aryans were pastoral people interacted in the pursuance of agriculture but they also cleared forests only in the areas where they actually settled down, establishing habitations and institutions in the

beautiful surroundings of the forests.

The records of Chinese pilgrims (600BC) refer to dense Indian forests even in the North-West regions where much depletion of forests has occurred now. Records relating to Alexander's invasion (327 BC) mention existence of dense forests. Babur, the first Mughal emperor to real Indian in early sixteenth century is reported to have shot in these forests indicating existence of dense forests and wildlife in that period.

The abundance of forests created an impression that resources were inexhaustible and thus there was no organized effort to conserve and maintain the forests. Casual instructions appear to have been issued by different ruler from time to time to regulate fallings and earn maximum revenue.

During the reign of Chandra Gupta Murya (300 BC), a superintendent of forests was appointed to look after the forests. The protection of wildlife was also a part of his duty. Sometimes specified species of timber value were proclaimed by local rulers as 'Royal Trees' felling of which was prohibited without permission otherwise the forests were open to all and the public obtained their requirement without restrictions. The Muslim rulers did not have much special interest in the conservation and organized management of forests. Their main interest in forests was for hunting. Areas with good wildlife were declared as 'Royal hunting reserves' and thus received some protection. But increase in population and need for extension for agriculture continued to make incursions on forest land and its produce.

The increasing demands of land for expanding agriculture and demand of timber for Navy and other constructional purposes made considerable inroads on forests and forest wealth so much so that it was felt that the forests may not to continue to meet the demands for timber unless some concrete steps were taken for their conservation and maintenance.

In 1855, Lord Dalhousie, the Governor General issued a memorandum to the Government of India outlining policy of conservancy for the whole country. By that time, it was clearly recognized by the administration that if the forest were to be conserved, proper scientific management was necessary.

In 1856, Lord Dalhousie, appointed Brandish to take charge of the forest and after 22 years in 1878, the Government honoured Brandish with title of Companion Indian Empire and

he was served a Knight Commandership in 1880 in recognition of meritorious service he rendered during the period of 19 years. Brandish was truly the founder of Indian forestry and it was always befitting to commemorate his achievements. As soon as Brandish was appointed as Inspector General of Forests, Cleghorn was appointed to assist him. They were responsible for methodical system of Management of forests in all states. A separate forest enactment as introduced that time. Moreover, with the passage of time, the demand of forest officer increased for the better control and Management of forest.

While Forest Research Institute (FRI) came into existence in 1906, the status of forest school was raised to that of college. A separate two years course was started in 1912 at Dehra Dun to train science graduates for the provincial forest services of states. The cadre of these officers formed a link between Indian forest services and forest rangers. It was, however stopped in 1928. The forest research institute is located in a spacious campus called the New Forest. It has fine buildings and vast field research areas. It provides facilities for research in forestry and has received worldwide recognition. The institute is associated with professional training for the forest officers both in the superior as well as the junior levels. The colleges impart training to the forest officers on such pattern which make them physically and mentally fit, making them adequately stout in administrative and executive activities.

With the passage of time, the Indian forest college was re-incarnated and named Indira Gandhi Forest College, Dehradun. A short administrative course is imparted at Lal Bahadur Shastri College of Public administration. The Forest Research institute is overall looked by Director of FRI and colleges. The forest colleges are both for Indian Forest Officers and Forest Ranges officers under the overall control of the Principals. The FRI and colleges are of global fame where trainees from all Indian states including foreign countries are imparted trainings. With the passage of time, the Indian states opened rangers training college in their respective states. After a detailed imparting two years course, the trainees are awarded degrees to serve in their respective states.

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

YOUR COLUMN

Begging-a social evil

Dear Editor,

Through the columns of your esteemed daily I would like to highlight this social evil in a few lines. It seems that all the beggars, be it able-bodied males or females or even so many groups of small children are professionally habitual of begging and by way of this beggary, they have become addicted to so many intoxicant drugs. One gets moved by their oily behaviour of innocence and gives them alms. They often chase the cars without fearing any accident. One of the reasons why we have so many beggars in our country, especially in Jammu UT, is that we being Hindus, still have a tradition of holy-

men living on charity. Now, not all are Sadhus, but some Babas in the guise of Sadhus have adopted this easy way of earning, thereby leading a comfortable life. Our modern society considering them as holy-men gives charity, but they are not holy ones now. Centuries ago, this might have had some relevance, but in the changed circumstances, these men being able-bodied should be made to work instead of proving them charity. Instead of depending on others for an easy living, they can contribute to the good of society.

The case of blind, lame or infirm persons is different. Even among these, there are some who could be trained to do useful work and remain from begging. Begging is a social evil and it should be eradicated. For the really needy ones, special homes should be opened while rest should be trained in some skills or useful work or trade. If people want to prescribe charity or alms to them, they

should be persuaded to contribute towards running homes for beggars and reform houses. The people and the government should work together to remove beggary, as it is not possible without help of each other. By this way we could be able to remove the bad habit of begging, as Jammu city is becoming a hub of beggars day by day. It is further requested to responsible officers that effective steps to check this social evil of begging may kindly be taken, effectively on ground level.

Last but not the least, Jammu city is a sensitive district area bordering along Pakistan. These so-called beggars in guise of Sadhus could be enticed by the bad elements any-time and misused by terrorists in carrying out anti-national activities. As such, there is a dire need to keep a check on this free flow of begging with an iron hand.

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