

## PRECIOUS GREEN GOLD

In Indian culture, a revered place has been given to plants like Mango, Peepal, Banyan, Amla etc. is a sign of this belief. Even today, the traditional practice of worshiping trees in many Manglik rituals shows the unbreakable relationship between nature and human beings. The degradation of natural forest wealth in the process of physical development is certainly ironic. Concrete civilization made wildlife home-less, many species reached the brink of extinction. According to the Forest Status Report 2021, the country's total. The forest-tree cover is 80.9 million hectares, which is about 24.62 of the total geographical area. Compared to 2019, 2261 Sq Km, comparative growth has been registered, but plantation and forest protection targets are yet to be achieved. In technological access, mountains are cracking, vegetation is shrinking, glaciers are melting. On the one hand, cry of rain, on the other the orgy of excessive rain. June is hot in the month of March, after all, whose hand is there in this unexpected change of seasons? How did the proponents of science forget that there is life in plants too, they breathe too. They are trembling, they are also angry at contempt. All anger is a clear sign of manifestation. Globally, biodiversity is facing the threat of climate change and global warming. To deal with the problems of carbon emissions and climate change, the Government of India has set a target to increase the forest area to 33 per cent by 2030. According to report, most of the people are unaware that the role of forest resources, including providing oxygen and clean environment, is also directly related to our economy. If the Government wants, it can connect people to the plantation campaign by fixing the minimum support price for the products obtained from trees, fruits etc. According to experts, shady, fruitful, economical, full of aroma, medicinal properties. The best species of the world are present in India. A greener environment can reduce temperature by up to 7 degrees. If the balanced environmental cycle is to be brought in a balanced state, then at least one-third of land will have to be covered with tree wealth.



**The quality of our thoughts will always determine the quality of our life**

Art is organized beauty, Music is organized sound; Science is organized knowledge, Government is organized society, religion is organized Mystery, and Philosophy is organized thought. Our thoughts impact how we feel about ourselves and others. We share our fears, our sorrow, our joy, our love, and our dreams with our thoughts. Our thoughts create words and action. Thoughts and Words can actually change the direction of a nation. King Solomon said, "Be careful what you think because your thoughts run your life" (Proverbs 4:23).

Our thoughts have the power to run our lives, controlling our words and actions, feelings and emotions — even our peace and happiness. When disappointment crushes our dreams, when people hurt or anger us, or when problems seem overwhelming, it's easy to get caught in the rip current of negative thoughts. And when we think negative thoughts, we feel negative feelings, leading us to believe life is negative overall. Whatever our minds focus on is what will play out in our lives and eventually shape who we are. Our thoughts turn into feelings that have the power to control our lives, gradually steering us — and possibly our faith — in a direction we do not want to go. King Solomon knew this to be true and counsels us to be careful about what we think and feel. He knew it's often our thoughts, not our circumstances, which cause us to sink. The quality of our thoughts will always determine the quality of our life.

Proverbs 23:7 says "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." Job said, "The thing I greatly feared came upon me." You will eventually become what you think. If you allow yourself to think negatively worried, fearful thoughts, then you will become a negative, worried, fearful person. You cannot think of defeat and expect victory. You can't think of poverty and expect wealth. You can't think the worst and expect the best. Quit thinking about what you don't have and start thinking about what you do have. Quit thinking about what's wrong with you and start thinking about what's right with you. Quit thinking about how big your problem is and start dwelling on the fact of how big your God is. What we focus on, we magnify; we're not changing its actual size, we're simply making it bigger in our own mind. If we stay focused on our problems, on a negative report, what somebody said about us, how we'll never get out of problems, all that's going to do is make it bigger than it really is; it's changing our perception of it. The Apostle Paul warns us in 2 Timothy 3 that there will be terrible times in the last days.

**Bishop Lalachan Abraham**

# Potential of regenerative agriculture in J&K

■ DR VIVAK M ARYA & DIVYA SHARMA

**T**echnology has been easing the burden of farming since the dawn of the industrial age, allowing farmers to adopt various methods and techniques for making the sector a sustainable source of livelihood and gainful employment. However, intensive tillage practices, mono-culturing, disproportionate use of synthetic chemicals and pesticides, and other practices have ruined soils in recent decades, killing the organic materials that they contain. At current rates of soil destruction, we will not only suffer severe public health consequences, but we will also run out of arable topsoil to feed ourselves within 50 years that will pose a grave threat to our survival in the future. The key is transition to 'Regenerative Agriculture', which not only "does no harm" to the land but actually improves it through the use of technologies that regenerate and revitalize the soil and the environment.

**R**egenerative Agriculture: Regenerative agriculture describes farming and grazing practices that reverse climate change by rebuilding soil organic matter while also restoring degraded soil biodiversity resulting in both carbon drawdown and improving the water cycle. Regenerative agriculture leads to healthy soil, capable of producing high quality, nutrient-dense food while simultaneously improving, rather than degrading land, and ultimately leading to productive farms and healthy communities and economies. It is dynamic and holistic, incorporating perma-culture and organic farming practices, including conservation tillage, cover crops, crop rotation, composting, mobile animal shelters, and pasture cropping to increase food production, farmers' income, and especially, topsoil. This

practices-based assessment includes farming techniques that align with five recognized principles of regenerative agriculture: keep the soil covered, minimize soil disturbance, maximize crop diversity, maintain living roots in the ground year-round, and integrate livestock. With regenerative agriculture, producers are not just sustaining the current land resource to continue to be used in the future. They are actually improving what is there, leaving it better for the next generation. It is a triple win: climate change mitigation, increased profit for farmers, and greater resilience to a changing climate.

**P**otential in J&K: The economy of Jammu and Kashmir is agrarian and informal, with nearly 70 per cent of the population dependent on agriculture and related activities directly or indirectly, and more than 70 per cent of the population residing in rural areas. Around 50 thousand hectares of land is under the agriculture industry in J&K, which is worth 1600 crore and is steadily growing every year. J&K's economy is heavily reliant on agriculture, which accounts for about 63 percent of the state's revenue with agriculture accounting for 16 percent of GSDP in J&K. Our production has undoubtedly increased as a result of the use of high yielding varieties seeds, as well as increased use of chemical fertilizers and plant protection measures, but the quality of the produce appears to have deteriorated. The terrain of J&K is hilly and mountainous, making agricultural activities difficult. Lack of irrigation and rural electrification issues also obstruct agricultural progress and prosperity. There is no doubt that the use of modern technology has completely transformed our agricultural scenario, particularly since the

green revolution. The Environment Sustainability Index of J&K is rapidly deteriorating due to a variety of factors, including the widespread use of fertilizers and other agrochemicals, which has resulted in deterioration of soil health. The fertilizer consumption rate of J&K is 38.3 Kg of fertilizer per hectare, compared to 170 Kg in Punjab. The amount of nutrients mined by crops is estimated to be 48 Kg/ha. The situation is changing, however, as fertilizer use in J&K is increasing by 10 to 15 per cent every year. According to experts, excessive use of chemical fertilizers can promote uncontrollable growth of algae and floating weeds, which can have negative environmental consequences, and common use of Urea, Di-ammonium phosphate, and Muriate of Potash has serious side effects, as reported by Kashmir Monitor in 2020. To overcome these concerns, emphasis is to adopt regenerative agricultural practice as it has the potential to address environmental health and sustainability issues.

**J**&K is an ideal location for regenerative agriculture due to favourable environmental conditions such as a suitable temperature and easy access to water. With proper implementation and development of regenerative agriculture, J&K's agriculture system has the potential to become a profitable and long-term source of income. In addition, J&K is blessed with a diverse range of agro-climatic zones, allowing for the cultivation of a wide range of agricultural and horticultural crops, some of which are unique. The Jammu region is known for its high-quality 'Basmati', 'Rajmash', and Black Caraway, while the Kashmir region is known for its high-quality Saffron, 'Zeera', fresh and dry temperate fruits, and commercial floriculture.

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## PROGRESSING J&K

### NABARD- a vital driver for boosting rural/ agro economy

**J&K achieves 3rd rank among States/UTs in monthly income to agriculture households, 5th rank among best performing UT in Agriculture & allied sectors**

**J**&K's Agriculture Department and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) have jointly planned a development package of Rs 25,991 crore to improve agricultural inputs, farmers' income through easy availability of credit besides technical up-gradation of Agriculture, horticulture and allied sectors. The comprehensive plan is in line with the vision of the Prime Minister to double the farmers' income. J&K Govt is focusing on the development of rural economy for unlocking its full potential by filling the gaps vis-à-vis infrastructure, human resources and financing.

In J&K, NABARD has been a vital driver of rural economy by meeting basic needs of infrastructure under the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund, under which 4178 projects have been completed in the last 26 years at a cost of Rs 8457 crore, focusing mainly on irrigation and rural connectivity. Notably, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has Rs 34,829 crore Potential Linked Credit Plan for J&K UT which focuses on meeting the aspirations of rural population, bridging gaps in rural infrastructure and strengthening the co-operative credit systems to transform the agricultural economy. The

credit plan was announced at the 'UT Credit and Development Seminar' organized by NABARD in Jammu for presenting the 'UT Focus Paper 2022-23' for J&K, covering physical and financial potential under Agriculture & allied activities and other priority sectors including the off-farm activities in the UT.

In J&K, 36 Farmer Producer Organizations have been formed by NABARD, benefiting around 6,000 farmers. 26 more such organizations are being formed in this financial year, advancing the development of a strong base of modern agriculture and horticulture in the UT. Jammu and Kashmir has achieved top position in the entire country with a yield of 70 quintals per hectare of paddy besides achieving saturation in Kisan Credit Cards, Soil Health Cards and PM Kisan Samman Nidhi. "Among all State/UTs, Jammu and Kashmir is 3rd rank holder in monthly income to agriculture households and 5th best performing UT in Agriculture & allied sectors", official data revealed. J&K government is working on a vision to look beyond subsistence agriculture by leveraging special agro-climatic conditions of the Union Territory for securing high returns to the farmers from transformed and modern sustainable and inclusive agriculture interventions.

The mission of J&K Administration is to secure a complete transformation in the lives and outlook of the farmers of the UT from subsistence to modern, vibrant and high return agriculture by the end of year 2023. The government has also started several marketing initiatives to make the agricultural sector of J&K more viable. GI tagging for Saffron and Guchi (Wild Mushroom) of Doda has given remarkable strides to acclaimed Saffron of Kashmir in international market as well to the Guchi Mushroom. Moreover organic Certification of Basmati Rice of R S Pura has also increased the marketing value for the rice.

To give further boost to Agriculture sector, Agriculture department has also decided to collaborate with Amazon Fresh which has evinced a keen interest in Fruit & Vegetable assortment available in Jammu with the motive of expanding network in North India. Jammu is also going to have a collection/procurement centre next year. To provide market for Kashmiri Saffron, National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED) has decided that it will sell Kashmiri Saffron at all its outlets across the country, thereby providing another option to the farmers to sell their produce at attractive prices.

### Empowerment of women after abrogation of Art-370

■ MEENAKSHI SHARMA

**O**ne of the major advantages of the abrogation of Article-370 has been the unshackling of the chains of bondage of women of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir. Women have been one of the main disadvantaged sections of erstwhile state. Women were not just constitutionally denied their rights; there was also erosion of their existing rights. With the scrapping of the controversial Article-370 by the Government of India on 5th August 2020, the women would no longer be deprived of their property rights in J&K if they get married to a non-resident. Article 35A, which emanated from Article 370, prohibited them, till the abrogation of the article, to be property owners if they marry an outsider. Article 35A also empowered the J&K government to decide who could be a 'permanent resident'. Only a permanent resident could acquire land, get a government job, settle in the state, etc.

Putting restrictions on the choices of the residents of a state is patently illiberal; and putting restrictions on the basis of gender is anti-women to boot. Article 35A and Article 370, thus, were blatantly against the ethos of our constitution and the principles of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity that it espouses. Introducing the abro-

gation Bills on August 5 2019, home minister Amit Shah said in Parliament, "Daughters of the state marrying outside the state lose their rights to property. It is so discriminatory to the women and their children. SC and ST (Scheduled Castes and Tribes) people have been discriminated against and have been deprived of reservation to political offices. Despite knowing this a few people have been perpetuating this article only for their political gains." The next day, Shah said that those who favour Article 370, oppose the Prevention of Child Marriage Act which could not be applied to J&K due to Article 370. Similarly, other laws like the Right to Education, the Land Acquisition Act, the Multiple Disability Act, the Senior Citizens Act, the Delimitation Act, and the Whistle Blower Protection Act could not be applied to J&K.

In his address to the nation on August 8, 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi also stressed the discrimination against women, "Daughters of Jammu & Kashmir were deprived of the right that our daughters had in rest of the states." Article 370 itself is gender neutral, but the way permanent residents were defined in the state constitution based on notifications issued in April 1927 and June 1932 during the Maharaja's rule, seems biased

against women. The 1927 notification included an explanatory note said, 'The wife or a widow of the state subject ... shall acquire the status of her husband as state subject of the same class as her husband, so long as she resides in the state and does not leave the state for permanent residence outside the state.' This was widely interpreted as also suggesting that a woman from Jammu and Kashmir who marries outside the state would lose her status as a state subject. With the abrogation of Article 370 and with it Article 35-A, women in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) can now buy real estate and transfer property to children, even if they get married to a non-resident as Article 35-A has automatically become void with the scrapping of Article 370. On August 5, 2020, the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir completes one year since the abrogation of the Article-370. These have been numerous success stories where women from remote and backward areas have risen to

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### Abrogation of Art-370: New ray of hope for West Pak refugees

■ EHSAN MALIK

The partition saw emergence of two nations India and Pakistan accompanied by a series of communal riots, immense destruction, loss of lives and displacement of millions of people from either side of the International border. Those who came to the Indian side, mainly Hindus and Sikhs settled in the course of time in different parts of the country. However, for those who came to the State of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) from West Pakistan, the situation was different owing to the disputed and unsettled nature of the Kashmir issue and promulgation of Article 370 and 35A of the Indian Constitution.

The displacement in Jammu & Kashmir is as old as the partition of the Indian sub-continent. Millions of people fled from the adjoining areas of Pakistan, mostly from Sialkot district. These 'refugees', 80 per cent of which belonged to Scheduled Castes, migrated during partition from Sialkot in Pakistan to Jammu in Jammu & Kashmir. Thousands of Hindu and Sikh refugees started entering into Jammu district from surrounding districts that had been marked to become the part of Pakistan. These refugees settled in the State of Jammu and Kashmir in 1947 were not considered as citizens of the erstwhile State. As the time passed by, the West Pakistan 'refugees' in J&K realized that several of their human rights were violated and they were deprived of their territory, home and their very identity. They faced problems related to food, shelter, health and employment. Neither they were treated at par with the refugees in other parts of India, nor did they had the basic rights of land ownership, livelihood, and right to participate and stand in the Assembly or Panchayat elections, or vote in local bodies in the erstwhile state of J&K. Settled in different parts of the region, particularly in Jammu, they have come together and formed an association to take up their grievances with the government. However, Article-370 proved a major roadblock in effective redressal of their grievances.

The families, who settled in other parts of the country, are enjoying all fundamental and other basic human rights. But these refugees' settled in the erstwhile State of J&K in 1947, even after 65 years were not provided with fundamental and other basic human rights. They had been denied State Subject benefits of the State, as they were not considered permanent residents of the state. They couldn't own property; they couldn't get government jobs, were discriminated in the matter of admission in the technical institutions and were denied employment in the prominent institutions of the erstwhile State. They couldn't even vote or stand in Assembly elections, they couldn't vote/contest Panchayat election or local bodies in J&K and couldn't avail of other benefits that were provided to the citizens of the erstwhile State. The people displaced from West Pakistan in 1947 are presently putting up in the areas adjoining India and Pakistan border right from Jorian in Jammu district to Kathua district. Official records estimate their population about 1.5 lakh. They have been denied permanent resident status of J&K State. They are living on the evacuee property and some State land occupied by them since 1947, but do not have ownership rights with respect to the said property.

Life changed after abrogation of Article 370: The announcement of the Government of India of abrogating Article 370 of the Indian Constitution ushered in a new ray of hope for the refugees from West Pakistan. With the abrogation of the Article 370, their long pending demand of being given the citizenship of Jammu and Kashmir was finally fulfilled. Also, the severe discrimination against the refugees of West Pakistan in the field of Jobs, employment, education, government schemes which was perpetuated by the Article-370 is now a thing of the past. With the abrogation of the controversial Article, these people can now avail the benefits of the Central reservation reserved for the people belonging to the Scheduled and other backward castes from which they had been deprived till now. Also, with the implementation of the Central laws in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir; the Right To Education (RTE) shall be applicable in the region thus allowing the children belonging to the deprived sections of the society to have access to high quality education free of cost. Also, the refugees from West Pakistan are now having an equal right over the employment opportunities in the Union territory of Jammu Kashmir which wasn't the case till Article-370 existed. These developments will further motivate the younger generation to have high hopes and aspirations from their careers. They can now avail the vast opportunities especially in the field of education, employment and other avenues for the betterment of their future. The abrogation of Article-370 has ushered in an era of new possibilities and opportunities for the refugees from West Pakistan. For the first time since their displacement, they are made to believe themselves as being equal citizens of the land on which they live and work. 'Sky is the Limit' for the new generation youth of the West Pakistan refugees as the chains of bondage has been finally unshackled and their wings have been set free to live the life of their dreams.