

GROWING POPULATION

India is the seventh largest country in the world as per its land and second largest as per its population. The land area of our country is 2 per cent of the world and population is 15 per cent. At present China is the most populous country in the world but it is the second largest country as per area in the world. Our growing population is going to leave China behind in near future. The population is continuously increasing but land is still the same which means extra burden on land and all other resources. The country is rich in many types of natural and man-made resources and brilliant brains but if the population increases at the same pace all these resources will fall short. Just think, what will the dangerous effects of swelling population? It will eat up all the resources of the country. Ever growing population will require more houses, Schools, hospitals, roads, decreasing of agriculture land and shortage of foodgrains, unemployment will go up, more pollution, shortage of drinking water, poverty, crime or terrorism will increase. What will be the horrible situation when we will without drinking water, houses, food and an abundance of diseases without treatment and uncontrollable pollution? Hence it is the need of the hour to make an effective law to control the population but it requires courage, selfless mind set and sincere love for the country. We are facing such problem today because of selfish and spinelessness leadership, feeble in decision making and lust for political gain. The govt. at the centre need courage and selfless approach to make an effective law to check the population growth today or tomorrow will be late. No doubt, gang of selfish and power lusty will folk together and rise against the law and create hurdles. At present, the centre govt. has already made good decisions which were declared impossible by the previous Governments. Let's hope that the ruling Government will come out with a solution for this problem to save the future generation from turmoil.



OFF 'D' CUFF

Ego hinders one From Progressing

Man is not free. He is dependent on others. In a way, he is like a prisoner of himself. He remains tied up with many worldly issues all the time. He wants to be free but circumstances do not allow him to escape from the bondages.

His greatest bondage is his egoism. The ego keeps the man tied up in its bonds. The feeling of 'I', the feeling of 'mine' and the feeling of ego is nothing else than the bond that keeps the man tied up. Due to the bondage the man is unable to reach the destination where he wishes to reach. Egoism keeps him tied down and does not allow the man to rise or make any progress.

Ego pulls the straight-forward-looking person backward. He becomes confused and loses all his initiatives of progress. He becomes unaware that he is tied up in the knots of egoism. If one is able to overcome ego or can successfully remove ego from the life then there is no power which could retard the progress of the man. If we look at the history of our country and also of other civilizations, it was due to the ego of certain individuals that there had occurred widespread bloodshed and many forward-looking countries got eliminated. Great civilizations had perished and, even at our local household levels, many prosperous families got destroyed for nothing.

If a person is able to overcome the traits of ego, one can easily reach the doors of the Supreme Power. Remember that God does not feel inclined to listen to the prayers of the arrogant and of those who are intoxicated with the egoism. There is no place for arrogance or indifference in the court of the Almighty. He is Supreme and there is none who is above the Supreme.

The feeling of 'I', 'my', 'me', and 'mine' does not allow any two persons to get together. This feeling does not allow union, rather it divides individuals and communities. Egoism is the cause of social and political upheavals in the world. Great wars have been fought because of egoism and arrogance of few people in power.

It was the egoism of Duryodhana that the great Mahabharata War was fought which had caused untold and unaccountable deaths and

destruction. Lord Shri Krishna, Bhishm Pitamah and many others had counseled Duryodhana against the war but he remained adamant and became the cause of annihilation of the entire Kaurava clan.

The great loss which had resulted from the war was due to the ego and arrogance of one single person. In the same way we also see the dance of death and total destruction during the two World Wars in our times. These were also the results of egos of a very few individuals.

If we turn the pages of history, examples of arrogance and ego of individuals spring up. Ravana was another example. Our Epics are full of such instances which go to teach people at large to get rid of ego and suppress it to create a more congenial environment in the world.

In the present times when we have developed new and more modern methods and tools of management and information, a control of ego is more necessary. It is the era of 'button' technology – pushing of just a small button to start a large-scale and highly destructive atomic war. We need people with cool mind and logical thoughts to govern the world. Just out of a short bout of frustration, anger and arrogance a crazy ruler can destroy the lives of millions and even destroy our lovely planet.

Wisdom, together with the application of knowledge, ushers widespread peace and prosperity in the world. As per the norms of Hindu religion wisdom does not approve of destruction and frustration in the society. Wisdom calls for all round peace and progress. Our Scriptures and Vedic literature abjure violence in any form.

Bhagwan Shri Ram Chander, through his actions, tried to establish a realm of norms and ideals. Bhagwan Shri Krishna promoted religion based code of conduct. None of them appreciated the egoism.

My submission is to adhere to the concept of compassion and mutual understanding and respect for each other. Cohesion within the family needs to be promoted and arrogance and egoism need to be shunned and eliminated.

Shri Sudhanshuji Maharaj

3rd anniversary of abrogation of Art 370; J&K witnessing rapid transformation

■ KRISHNA SHARMA

Nearly two years after abrogation of Article 370 - a temporary provision in the Indian constitution - the recent All-Party Meet on June 24 this year in New Delhi chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi ushered much hope for restarting political process in the Union Territory. During past two years, the UT has been marching on the path of development as a result of the Government's initiatives, which included various developmental schemes executed under the Prime Minister Development Package (PMDP) focusing on individual beneficiaries and reviving long-pending projects lying dormant for several decades by removing the obstacles, through ensuring effective and transparent administration. Both the Union and the UT Governments have been leveraging technology to provide a number of benefits to the local population of the UT. In the field of IT, a number of procedures have been framed such as providing 'subsidy on rent' to the outside investors, building two large sizes IT parks (spread over half a million square feet) - one each in Jammu and Srinagar. Among some other initiatives, the UT administration also released a real estate policy equipped with a transparent bidding process to disburse government-created 'Land Banks' to private developers. The all-around developmental approach adopted by the J&K government has a special focus on developing a network of roads and highways only.

In order to ensure growth in the valley and enable UT to come at par with the other states of the country, almost all the projects across various sectors that were ignored during

the past political regimes, have been infused with new life. In 2015, a huge package of Rs.800 Billion was allocated by the Modi government to the State Government for initiating various development projects. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had expressed his 'heartfelt desire' that J&K government would utilize this grant for the welfare of the Kashmiris and convert J&K into a modern, prosperous and progressive place. While allocating the grant, Modi had stated, "Not only our treasury, but our heart also beats for people of Kashmir". However, in the first four years (2015 - 2019) the J&K government could spend only 37 percent of the huge financial package, under which several developmental works were to be completed by the end of 2020. According to the official figures, only 18 out of a total of 63 projects could be completed with the help of Rs 300.49 billion that was released till March 31, 2019, for J&K. In 2020, the parliamentary panel had expressed dismay over the slow pace of work under the package.

While remaining in power for nearly 70 years, Kashmir-based politicians misled the common people with slogans like self-rule, autonomy, etc, but forgot to address people-centric issues despite the unanimous central government's monetary grants meant for the development of J&K. The so-called special status of J&K deprived people of the benefits of the centrally sponsored schemes and the progressive laws that were devised by the Indian parliament. For example, the reservation laws for the weaker sections of the society were not applicable in J&K and gender bias had encroached upon equality in property

rights for men and women in cases of marriage outside the erstwhile state. On the eve of the second anniversary of the abrogation of article 370, Jammu and Kashmir is a changed place now. The benefits of the merger of J&K with the Union of India have started to trickle down to the people. Articles 370 and 35A deprived outsiders from buying land in J&K and thus repelled outside investors. As a result, Kashmir didn't witness much industrial growth. However, after August 5, 2019, the J&K government received investment proposals worth Rs 150 billion from around 40 companies from sectors like Information Technology, Defense, Renewable Energy, Tourism, Skill, Education, Hospitality, and infrastructure. During past two years, J&K government has achieved 100 percent household electrification with 24×7 power for all. Household water connections have reached 43 per cent of rural households which is double the national average of 21 per cent, and a road map has been prepared to ensure 100 percent coverage of piped water supply to all the rural households by December 2021.

Indian government in February 2020 approved Rs60 billion for a multi-purpose irrigation cum power project in J&K's Kathua district. From 2014, National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) has been in charge of power projects to overcome the acute shortage of electricity in J&K.

In September 2019, Union Power Minister R K Singh and then J&K Governor Satya Pal Malik jointly inaugurated 15 power projects and laid the foundation stone for 20 others worth Rs 100 billion. The formation of

Kashmir Power Development Corporation Limited (KPDCL) and Jammu Power Development Corporation Limited (JPDCL) has been helping J&K to become self-reliant in the power sector. All these facts contradict Mehbooba Mufti's claim that J&K has lost its identity. Since 2019, the Government has undertaken a holistic approach for all-around human development in the UT covering crucial sectors like education, healthcare, employment generation, tourism, industrial growth among others. With the aim of providing quality education to Kashmiri children and youth, the government has established hundreds of schools and 50 new educational institutions offering 25,000 seats to students, launched scholarship schemes benefitting more than half a million students so far.

Funded by PMDP package, a new Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) and an Indian Institute of Management (IIM) are coming up in the UT. Similarly, in the medical education field, 2 All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), 7 new medical colleges, 5 new nursing colleges and a state cancer institute are being constructed for better healthcare services to the J&K people. J&K's transition into a Union Territory restored the confidence of the people in the Indian democratic scheme. Kashmir-based leaders, including Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti, need to understand that no Government at the center would even think of rolling back Article 370 and there are no takers for their rhetoric that they will get everything back. J&K is prospering and people have already associated themselves with 'New India' where they know that their future is secure and they will grow.

Equitable society created in J&K post abrogation of Article 370

■ SHIVANI BHAT

Extension of central laws after the abrogation of Article 370 has established an equitable society across Jammu and Kashmir while the implementation of several legislations is bringing a new era of progress and development in the Union Territory

With the extension of 890 central laws applicable to Jammu and Kashmir, repeal of 205 state laws and modification of 129 laws after the abrogation of Article 370, a system of equitable justice has been established in the UT for all sections of people, the Jammu and Kashmir administration.

The rights of weaker sections like Scheduled Tribes, other traditional forest dwellers, Scheduled Castes and safai karamcharis' are now ensured by the application of relevant Acts. Rights of children and senior citizens are now being ensured.

In order to create a just and equitable society, reservation rules have been amended to extend benefits of reservation to left out categories like Pahari speaking people and economically weaker sections.

Sections of society like displaced persons of Pakistan-Occupied-Jammu and Kashmir, Chhamb, West Pakistani refugees are getting due benefits with the extension of central laws.

For the first time, the spouse of a Jammu and Kashmir domicile shall also be deemed as a domicile. Earlier, spouses of Permanent Resident Card holders were considered at par but not domiciles. Children of central government officials posted for over

ten years in Jammu and Kashmir will also continue to be considered domiciles.

The implementation of several path-breaking central legislations after the revocation of Article 370, like the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forests Rights) Act, 2007, the Scheduled Caste and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1954, among others, is bringing a new era of progress and development in Jammu and Kashmir.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha is taking a personal interest in tribal development and recently launched the Smart Schools' project in the UT for tribal communities.

Under this maiden project, modernisation of 200 schools in Tribal areas will be completed in 2022.

After a wait of more than 14 years, due rights have been conferred upon the tribal community by implementing the Forest Rights Act, 2006, keeping in mind the basic spirit of social equality and harmony as guided by the Constitution of our country and Parliament.

The poor and weaker sections of society were neglected for many years in Jammu and Kashmir, but on the historic day of August 5, 2019, Article 370 and Article 35A were abolished and the people were given all the Constitutional rights.

In Jammu and Kashmir, a new development path has been charted out after August 2019. For decades, infrastructure was in tatters despite huge amount of money sent by the Centre. The non-development agenda of seven decades in Jammu and

Kashmir mired the Union Territory in a low growth syndrome.

Under the guidance of the Prime Minister, Jammu and Kashmir is witnessing a new dawn. Tribals are getting land rights, 11,000 government jobs have been provided within record time with complete transparency and major steps have been taken to ensure the empowerment of women, marginalised and weaker groups.

In a major relief to socially and educationally backward classes, the Jammu and Kashmir administration has enhanced their income ceiling from Rs 4.50 lakh to Rs 8 lakh allowing them to avail benefits of reservation according to provisions of the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Act, 2004.

After abrogation of Article 370, terror related activities have declined in Jammu and Kashmir, and an environment for investment has been created. Development in Jammu and Kashmir has got a new impetus and is emerging as the top most new investment destination across the country both for National as well as International investors. Delegation from the Gulf Cooperation countries is looking at possibilities of increasing their investment in the Union Territory This has led to the Extensive spending on physical and social infrastructure in the state.

Incentives given to different sectors of the economy combined with largely peaceful environment, is empowering many lives.

With corruption and leakages drastically reduced, resources are reaching the intended beneficiaries. The road ahead also seems filled with hope and optimism.

People's participation in grass root democracy enhanced post Article-370

■ NASIR MOHD

Akis Naseer, a 29 year old man, is very busy now-a-days. Since being elected as Sarpanch of Jamola Lower village in Rajouri district of Jammu & Kashmir; he has been one of the most sought after persons in his village. Be it the road construction in villages or getting access to the latest government schemes, people start to hoard outside his office in Jamola right from the dawn itself.

Acknowledging that he is being overwhelmed by love and the expectations people of the village have from him, the young Akis also knows that fulfilling the expectations of the people isn't an easy job. Born in March 1994 in village Jamola of Rajouri district of Jammu & Kashmir; Akis Naseer's childhood dream was to become a cricketer and represent India at the International level. "I am a huge fan of Sachin Tendulkar. I loved watching him bat while carrying the expectations of billions of Indians over his shoulders", reveals Akis Naseer. Akis believes that he has learnt a lot of lessons while watching Sachin play on the field. "I used to watch Sachin not only for his batting prowess, but also how he carried himself on the field," said Akis, adding, "During my childhood days, Indian batting was totally dependent on Sachin and yet he never let that affect his mental balance and always carried himself in a flawless manner". Akis desires to meet Sachin one day and express his deep admiration and love for the legend. While growing up, his father noted a deep sense of public duty his son had in him. "I would often observe Akis, helping neighbors and advising them on their rights". "He would often accompany them to the local govern-

ment offices for speedy redressal of their grievances", recalls his father. Finally on advice of his father; Akis decided to contest the Panchayat elections and at an age of 24 years went on to become one of the youngest Sarpanch's of J&K. Revealing his motivation for contesting the elections for Sarpanch, Akis said, "My dream behind contesting Sarpanch election was to make Jamola Lower top ranked Panchayat in the country." Akis's hard work quickly paid off and just 1.5 years after becoming the Sarpanch, Jamola Lower panchayat won Child Friendly National Award 2020. His hard work was recognized not only in Rajouri but outside as well. Jamola Lower Panchayat had a special mention at Mission Samrithi Conference held in Chennai. Greater Devolution of Powers Post Article-370: Akis considers himself lucky enough to be working in a Post Article-370 period. "Earlier the devolution of powers to the Panchayats was only on paper. Local bodies didn't receive any funds and were left to fend for themselves", observed the young Sarpanch. He added, "Despite several petitions and requests, minimal funds were released for the local bodies thus leaving them at the mercy of the authorities". He maintained that post abrogation of Article-370, things have changed at a fast pace. As per the directions of the Union Home Minister; the bureaucracy has intensified the process of devolution of maximum powers to the local bodies. Akis also makes sure that he makes best use of the current opportunities for the betterment of the people of his area. He chairs all the Gram Sabhas in his village which consist of representatives from 28 departments and formulates a developmental plan. He even attends all ward

Sabhas of his village given the fact that it is not mandatory for a Sarpanch to attend any ward Sabha. Constant follow up is done on the agreed upon actions to ensure its swift and flawless implementation. Thanks to the new government regulations, the earlier top down approach has now been transformed into bottom up approach, placing village Sarpanch at the top of the administrative hierarchy in the village. Akis maintains that effective changes have been implemented in the working structure of the Panchayati Raj Institutions which was not the case earlier. He observes that the departments and Officers are now accountable to Panchayats. Akis now directly or indirectly releases the salary of various staff and workers working in the Panchayat, making the staff more accountable to him which was not the case earlier. According to latest regulations introduced for the seamless functioning of the Panchayats, the village Sarpanch will now head the Village level Biodiversity Committee along with all the Sarpanches of J&K, thus making Sarpanches responsible towards the State forest land falling in their villages. Dedicated Young Sarpanch: Akis's dedication towards his work has earned him 'National Child Friendly Panchayat Award' by Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India. He completed vital immunization program of all the children of his village in a time-bound manner. He has also organized several Special Health Camps for children of his village. In a widely appreciated gesture, Akis started a Library at his village for the developing a culture of reading among the students of his village. Akis has also formed a village level committee which regularly checks the mid-

day meal given to the children studying in all the 09 schools of his village. In a unique initiative, Akis has started a new trend in this village, where the village level toppers of 8th, 10th and 12th standard are facilitated and awarded. He is working towards ensuring lesser school dropouts and due to his concerted efforts; the schools are now witnessing significantly lesser dropouts. He is working towards providing vocational training to the youth of his village and it is due to his persistent efforts that a number of youth in his village have started their own business. Akis is now working towards making his Panchayat 100 per cent solar powered village and has also achieved notable success in his ambitious effort. Akis is now aiming for National Youth Award. He has got the necessary recommendations from District and State level and hopes of winning it. He maintains that he has not worked for any award. Instead, he considers them as milestones in the long journey of the Social Work that he has chosen for himself. Akis observes that many people had opposed the abrogation of Article 370 initially, but after witnessing the enormous development it has ushered in the small villages and towns of the region, they have realized the futility of their initial misgivings. He also notes that after the abrogation of the Article-370 followed by the devolution of the powers to the local bodies, people of the region have started taking keen interest in the democratic process. As the region is freed from the political hegemony of a few families, more and more youngsters desire to be a part of the power structure from which the subjects of the region were deprived till now.