

CONFIDENCE RESTORED

The abrogation of Article 370 has unified hearts of people from Jammu & Kashmir with rest of the country. J&K, after breaking shackles of Article 370 on August 5, 2019, is now progressing towards wholesome development with rest of India. Socio-political and development changes were visible in J&K after the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A. The move was aimed at complete and all-inclusive development of the region. With the removal of these temporary provisions, important Central laws like prevention of Child marriage Act, 73rd and 74th Amendments, Prevention of Corruption Act, political reservations, women rights and hundreds of other such acts were implemented. Development projects are being completed at record pace now. Indicators of progress as establishment of AIIMS, development of road infrastructure reducing travel time between important destinations, improvement in rankings of universities, decrease in stone-pelting incidents, activation of grievance cell, Shalpur Kandi project, Devika project, first Industrial Biotech Park, Uri Multipurpose project, Mansar Lake rejuvenation, highest railway bridge are a testimony of the positive changes ushered in after the abrogation of Article 370. During past three 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 Government and UT administration 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 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 valley and enable the 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. 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 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 J&K people. J&K's transition into a Union Territory restored confidence of the people in the Indian democratic scheme.

OFF 'D' CUFF

Is Suffering Inevitable?

We believe that this world is full of suffering, that we must experience the pain of the body, misery of the mind, and agony of the ego, we think that suffering is a way of life. We have been taught that in life, there will be pleasure and pain, sun and rain, loss and gain and we must accept this suffering joyously. While there is no doubt that we must accept the Divine Will, we must realize that to suffer, is a choice. It is up to us to suffer or not to suffer. It is wrong to believe that there is no option but to suffer.

Because we have grown up with the belief that it is necessary to suffer, and there is no possibility of living a life without suffering, we do not investigate to find that state of eternal bliss or Ananda. We believe in Karma, the Law of Action and Reaction and accept suffering as a result of our own Karma. We even believe that we have no choice or free will and therefore, no opportunity of changing our destiny.

We live just like puppets, without using our intellect and without Realizing the Truth that if we suffer, it's not because God wants us to suffer. Suddenly, the mandatory suffering of the body, mind, and ego, disappears with the Realization of the Truth. A few of us are fortunate to escape from this triple suffering as we go on the quest to find out the answer to the question - Who am I? If we are sincere and Realize the Truth that we are the Divine Soul, we will suffer no more!

If you have any questions on happiness, suffering, life, death, rebirth, karma, liberation, enlightenment or anything related to spirituality, you can ask AitR directly on a free Zoom call at 8 pm every day.

Aitman In Ravi

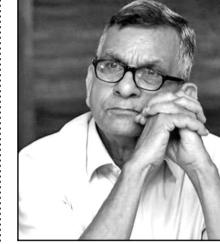
If you first fortify yourself with the true knowledge of the Universal Self, and then live in the midst of wealth and worldliness, surely they will in no way affect you.

-Ramakrishna

EDITORIAL

Why must Modi Govt grant statehood to Jammu?

■ PROF HARI OM



On July 17, Jammu Party (IJP) held protests across Jammu province to attract attention of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Government to its demand seeking separation of Jammu province from Kashmir and statehood status for what they called 'their enslaved region'. The protests were held simultaneously in Jammu, Kathua, Samba, Udhampur, Doda, Kishtwar, Ramban, Reasi and Rajouri-Poonch. The one held at Jammu was a massive affair. Such was the nature of the protest that police swung into action and arrested scores of the IJP activists, including its President, Advocate Ankur Sharma.

The IJP leadership and activists across province made it loud and clear that 'statehood for Jammu is their motto, their battle-cry, their watchword and the gospel of Jammu's political redemption' and that they, unlike secessionist Kashmiri leadership, seek development, progress and empowerment of the people of Jammu province within India and want a status for the people of Jammu province the people of rest of the Indian states enjoy in the polity'. They also held out a threat that 'people of Jammu province will rise in revolt sooner than later if the powers-that-be continued to treat Jammu as Kashmir's colony to appease, please and pamper jihadists in Kashmir'.

The upshot of the IJP's whole narrative was that the Jammu province was reduced to the status of Kashmir's colony in 1947 itself and the residents of Jammu province to the status of subjects not entitled to any say in the state

administration, Kashmir-dominated government and the semi-independent and quasi-sovereign J&K polity. The refrain of the IJP just can't be ignored and dismissed as something silly and preposterous. It did make a valid point. That Jammu was no more than a Kashmir's colony, that the residents of Jammu province no more than slaves of Kashmir and that Kashmir and Kashmiri leaders of all hues the sole factors in the J&K's political situation could be seen from that fact that the heart-wrenching story of slavery of Jammu province started on October 26, 1947, when Maharaja Hari Singh acceded his J&K to India. A reference to a few instances in this regard would be quite in order.

The then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and his UK-founded Congress to which London handed over the state power on August 15, 1947 transferred the state power from Jammu to Srinagar in October 1947 itself with their friend and known India and Jammu-baiter Sheikh Abdullah exercising the Veto Power or the power to do whatever he wanted to do to create a Switzerland-type independent Kashmir. Nehru created a theocratic republic of J&K within the Indian Republic through Article 370 on January 26, 1950 and applied unconstitutional, illegal and discriminatory Article 35-A in J&K on May 14, 1954 with retrospect effect (read May 14, 1944) to keep Sheikh Abdullah and his successors, including Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, in a good humour. Article 35-A, which was reportedly introduced reportedly at the behest of Pakistan, declared all non-Kashmiris a persona-non-grata in J&K.

Nehru held parleys with Sheikh Abdullah in 1952 to decide the otherwise decided political future of J&K. The 1975 Indira Gandhi-Sheikh Abdullah Accord under which the

deflated Sheikh Abdullah was brought back to power after a long gap of 22 years and empowered to review all the Central laws introduced after August 9, 1953. On August 9, 1953, Sheikh Abdullah was dethroned and put behind bars under sedition charges. The 1986-87 Rajiv Gandhi-Farooq Abdullah Accord under which NC and the Congress were to share power - an accord that led to the rise of anti-India movement in Kashmir.

The November 2002 Sonia Gandhi-Mufti Mohammad Sayeed Accord which provided for a dialogue between India and Pakistan on the political future of J&K and under which Mufti Sayeed was to serve as J&K CM for the first three years and the Congress to head the government during the remaining three years. 2009 Sonia Gandhi/Mannmohan Singh-Farooq Abdullah/Omar Abdullah Accord under which the NC was to lead the state government for a full term of six years.

The March 1, 2015 BJP-Mufti Sayeed/Mehbooba Mufti Accord or the divisive PDP-BJP Agenda of Alliance under which PDP was to lead the state for a full term of six years, the state's separate status shall be maintained, talks with Pakistan will be held, the AFSPA would be withdrawn, steps to demilitarize J&K would be taken etc etc. The November 21, 2018 unsuccessful BJP-Sajjad Lone (of the separatist People's Conference) Accord under which Lone was to be installed as J&K CM despite the fact that the BJP had 25+ MLAs and the Lone's party only two. What were some of the grave consequences of these pernicious Articles and Accords? (1) CM always from Kashmir and from one particular community and religious sect; (2) gross discrimination with and marginalization of Jammu province; (3) creation of Muslim-majority Doda district out of the

Hindu-majority Udhampur district in 1948; (4) under-representation of the people of Jammu province in the J&K Assembly and Lok Sabha; (5) exclusion of Jammu province from the Civil Secretariat, the seat of power, as well as other vital departments such as Finance, Revenue, Home, Law and Education; (6) the exclusion of the Jammu youth from the vital job sector (over 69 per cent unemployment rate in Jammu, as against less than 33 per cent in Kashmir); technical and professional institutions and universities; (7) meagre amount for developmental activities and infrastructural development, including road connectivity, healthcare/educational/irrigation facilities; (8) loot and plunder of the Jammu's natural resources, including water, precious minerals and green-gold; (9) the forced resignation of two BJP Cabinet Ministers on April 13, 2018 for the reason that they demanded a CBI probe into the unfortunate Rasana episode so that the real culprits could be brought to justice and victims provided justice; (10) demographic changes in Jammu province on a massive scale; and (11) settlement of thousands of Rohingyas and Bangladeshis at strategic locations, especially in Jammu and Samba districts. All this should vindicate the IJP. All this should also convince the Narendra Modi Government that the demand the IJP has put forth is as genuine as it's justifiable and constitutional. Even otherwise, Jammu province deserved full state status because the people of Jammu province are conspicuous by their absence anywhere in Kashmir and because their needs, compulsions and aspirations are 100 per cent different from those of Kashmiri leaders of all hues and their respective constituencies.

Successive regimes neglect Hill Kaka on all fronts; area lacks even basic facilities

■ CH RASHID AZAM INQLABI



In twin districts of Poonch-Rajouri, there are lush green meadows and coniferous forests that display a rich wealth of flora and fauna. From time immemorial hill folks, pilgrims and Mughals trekked over its hills to Kashmir. Rajouri - Poonch is separated from Kashmir valley by the Pir Panjal range, whose highest peak Tatakuti standing at 15560 feet, falls in Poonch district and is visible even from across border on a clear day. This is still a virgin peak challenging adventurers with crystal clear water, alpine lakes viz Nandansar, Sukhsar, Neelsar, Katoirasar, Kaldachnisar and other thirteen lakes are surrounded by glaciers and snow-capped peaks. The historical waterfalls, Noori Chamb, and Dera Ki Gali attract visitors. People from various parts of Jammu and outside UT, have conducted innumerable trekking expeditions in the upper reach of Poonch, due to which Rajouri and Poonch have now been projected on the tourism map of India. In the local Gojri/phari dialect, the passes, alpine lakes, and meadows are called Gallis, Sars and Margs or Dhoks respectively. Some of the common Dhoks in Poonch are Girjan, Panjtar, Isanwali, Nainsukh, Dhararam, Pirmarg and Sarimastan etc.

In Poonch, Hill Kaka is a remote hamlet located on the southern side of Pir Panjal ranges in the lapse of Tatakuti peak and it takes 10-11 hours to reach this village from nearest road head. Hill Kaka remained in news in early 2000 as it was infested with terrorism. In a unique operation, the locals fought alongside the Army to flush out terrorists from this village and remain in national and international news. In 2003, army along with the help of locals started the historic Operation 'Sarp-Vinash'. The senior officers of the army recognized the role of locals in bringing peace to area. The short movie on operation of Hill Kaka was also released in collaboration with the army. The then Defence Minister and Army General appreciated the role of the people of Hill Kaka in bringing peace to the area. Many local people lost their lives in the operation along with the army. Hill Kaka is the only village in Jammu & Kashmir where

women VDC members took part in the operation against the terrorists. The martyred of Hill Kaka will be remembered for their sacrifice. The inhabitant of Hill Kaka had shared some of their grievances on telephone with me virtually. A young boy became emotional while telling some incidents in which people have to carry a pregnant woman on a cot (charpai) for more than 40 Km to reach Surankote hospital. The village is cut-off from the rest of the area as it has no road connectivity and transport facility and lacks electricity, potable water and Anganwadi activities. It takes a person to reach Surankote at least one day on foot from Hill Kaka. The medical facility and health care were nowhere in the sight, they said. Lack of medical facility, education facilities and no road connectivity till date have made lives of people difficult. The people have to cross Hill Kaka river on foot more than four times to reach Surankote. Hill Kaka is part of Mora Panchayat which is about 40 Km from Hill Kaka due to which people cannot get benefits of various Government schemes. Hill Kaka was also provided facility of a school building and a Government School also opened here. A room was constructed but unfortunately, UT authorities took no real interest to monitor the school. The teachers were posted there but they are nowhere to be seen. The children are eager to study but problem is who would teach them. The Education Department of UT Jammu (J&K) has to take the final call, if they do want that these children of poor too would be hopping, skipping, and jumping gleefully.

The medical aid center exists in papers but medical staff fails to report for duties in Hill Kaka due to which people suffered, even for first aid people have to come to Surankote.

Happiness is a garden walled with glass: there's no way in or out. In paradise, there are no stories, because there are no journeys. It's loss and regret and misery and yearning that drive the story forward, along its twisted foot trek. Hill Kaka is a testimony to the fact. It was a hell zone till 2004 but now the situation improves to some extent but requires more attention from the government. The people do ask here that the administrators are keen to make promises, but we have yet to see even one completed till now, on development, education for our children, and health of the people staying

here but where is the deliverance? Nowhere to be seen is the situation as of now and mind you this was the place from where started the downslides and evaporation of terrorism from 2003 onwards in this region! These people need a better deal! Healing touch from the Government. Definitely yes they do! Lack of education is one of the main causes of poverty in this remote area of Hill Kaka. Not every person without a formal or non-formal education lives in abject poverty, but several researches have proved that most of those living in extreme poverty do lack basic education. The families living below the poverty line (BPL) most likely keep their children out of school, which means that their future generation will also have a greater chance of living in poverty. Technical and formal education can open the doors for jobs, resources, and skills which in turn lead to poverty eradication.

The Government of India extended the Forest Rights Act (FRA) of 2006, after August 2019, a progressive piece of legislation that ensures the land tenure, food security, and livelihood of traditional forest dwellers, the majority of communities like that of the Gujjars and Bakewals have actually been treated more harshly than they ever had been before. Even community right is not best ousted to the resident of Hill Kaka. Not only has the rollout of the FRA not provided the nomadic communities with the Act's promised benefits, but its extension to J&K has actually made life more difficult for them because

The Forest Department appears to feel that the legislation challenges its authority. The local residents were mostly illiterate and poor. They looked like a primitive tribal group but were true patriots. Dilpizer Ahmed Kalise of Hill Kaka, Haji Mohd Qassim, Wazir Mohamed, Mohd Rashid, Ab Haq, Khadem Hussain told the story that in 2003, they fought with terrorists even with sticks and rods and after the formation of VDC helped the army in clearing the area from terrorists but govt is not serious in redressing their grievances, they are worst sufferers.

In 2018, General Officer Commanding White Knight Corps Lt Gen Paramjit Singh Sangha visited the Hill Kaka and enquired about the problems of locals. He as a young company commander in Hill Kaka area had participated in counter-insurgency operations in 2003.

During the visit, the villagers shared some of their grievances. Army approached civil administration and Advisor to the Governor of J&K to have a passionate look at the problems being faced by the locals. As a result of the continued follow-up actions, most of the issues of the locals have been addressed to some extent. The foremost problem of road connectivity was addressed with the commencement of the project for the construction of 14 Km road from Bafliaz to Hill Kaka. The project is halfway through with about only 7 Km of road constructed but which is not in good condition. This will open avenues for overall development and pave the way for the eradication of grass root level problems being faced by the resident of Hill Kaka. LG Manoj Sinha who is trying his best for redressing problems of common people is requested to pay special attention to the problems of residents of Hill Kaka. Some of the problems that require immediate attention are as under.

1. Expedite work of Bafliaz to Hill Kaka road on a war footing.
2. Bifurcation of Hill Kaka from Mora Panchayat
3. Posting staff in Hill Kaka medical center
4. Providing admission to children of Hill Kaka in Gujjars hostel, KGBV, Nvidia veda
5. Opening of fair price shop by food department at Hill Kaka particularly during summer.

6. Providing compensation to residents of Hill Kaka, which Government of India had promised during operation 'Sarp-Vinash' carried out by Army.

7. Opening of Anganwari center, school building at Hill Kaka
8. Including deserving person in list of BPL.

10. MANREGA budget for Hill Kaka

11. Providing drinking water and electricity facility
12. Solar energy.

LG Manoj Sinha is requested to take cognizance of Hill Kaka and also spare time to visit Hill Kaka personally so that patriot people of Hill Kaka can feel that LG's administration has special care for them. Union Home Minister and Defence Minister are also requested to issue the direction to the concerned for providing all facilities to people of Hill Kaka so that they may not feel left-out or deprived.

(The author is a retired KAS officer).

PROGRESSING J&K

44 DVCs established at Gram Panchayat-level across J&K

DVCs to enable delivery of governance effectively through IT-enabled services

To empower Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) at Gram Panchayat level, 44 Digital village Centers (DVCs) have been established, two in each district, across the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Under this mission, 44 Panchayat Ghars were identified by concerned District Commissioners. The DVCs were established in these Panchayat Ghars, equipped with IT infrastructure, other equipments and all connectivity. DVCs will act as one stop service solution at village level and provide services like Wi-Fi Hotspots, telemedicine, Agricultural support service, digital payments and

other G2C/B2C services. IT department, with active support of Finance Department, plans to establish more such DVCs in rest of the Gram Panchayats of J&K. The programme was launched on pilot basis at a cost of Rs 5 Crore across 44 villages in J&K. In first phase, two villages are being taken up from each district, feasible in terms of connectivity (Fibre VSAT) to offer digital services. After ascertaining the impact in the pilot phase, remaining Gram Panchayats are being taken up in second phase. The basic aim of the programme is to deliver governance effectively through IT enabled services, generate awareness regarding implementation of Government Schemes and upgrade the socio-economic status of the rural masses. The existing Gram Panchayat buildings are designated as Digital Village Centers (DVCs), provided with facilities like Smart LEDs, Computers, Screens, internet and other relevant facilities. The Village Level Workers (VLWs) of the Rural Development Department are the custodians of the DVCs; responsible for overall management of the centers. These centers are looked after by concerned village Nambardar/Lambardar(s) and Chowkidar(s) as well.

After inaugurating 44 digital village centers in Jammu and Kashmir, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said that a new era of development has rightly started in the Union Territory, which has taken a giant leap towards inclusive development. "A new era of development has rightly started in Jammu and Kashmir, and we have taken a giant leap towards inclusive development. Today, 44 Panchayats, 40 blocks have been dedicated to the people in the form of Digital Village Centers and arrangements have been made to reach out with all the online schemes of the government," said Sinha.