

COMFORTABLE PILGRIMAGE

Amarnath Yatra is starting from July 1. Lieutenant Governor of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Manoj Sinha from the day one work hard to provide comfortable Darshan without any difficulty to pilgrims. Besides visiting Yatri base camps at various locations in Jammu and Kashmir, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha also directed officials to make adequate arrangements on the entire route of Amarnath pilgrimage. The pilgrims travel through two routes- Baltal and Pahalgam – in Jammu and Kashmir: The National Disaster Response Force also setting up pilgrim camps at ideal locations keeping in mind any possible unforeseen natural disaster. Despite heavy rain and flash flood, government made all arrangement at on priority to smooth movement of pilgrims. The devotees do not have to face health-related problems and if such a situation arises, preparations have been made to ensure that they can get all the health facilities even in remote hilly areas in time. A 100-bed hospital has been prepared at two corners of the Amarnath Yatra i.e. Baltal and Chandanvadi. This hospital not only have basic medical facilities, but all the labs in the hospital have special facilities for the examination of women, even the facility of ICU has also been prepared. The state government had made tight security arrangements for the Amarnath pilgrims. Under this, Army, Paramilitary Force and State Police have been deployed for providing 24x7 best services to pilgrims for their smooth pilgrimage. All facilities are being provided to the pilgrims by the administration on the yatra route. Thousands of devotees from all over the country are reaching Jammu and Kashmir for the Amarnath Yatra. With the progress of the yatra, the number of devotees is increasing.

Father plays important role in a child's life

■ MOHAMMAD HANIEF

Anyone can be a father of a child, but being a dad takes a lifetime. Fathers play a role in every child's life that cannot be filled by others as this role can have a large impact on a child and help to shape him or her into the person they become.

Fathers, like mothers, are pillars in the development of a child's emotional well-being. They also look to their fathers to provide a feeling of security, both physical and emotional. Children want to make their fathers proud, and an involved father promotes inner growth and strength. Studies have shown that when fathers are affectionate and supportive, it greatly affects a child's cognitive and social development. It also instills an overall sense of well-being and self confidence. Fathers not only influence what we are inside, but how we have relationships with people as we grow. The way a father treats his child will influence what he or she looks for in other people. Friends, lovers, and spouses will all be chosen based on how the child perceived the meaning of the relationship with his or her father. The patterns a father sets in the relationships with his children will dictate how his children relate with other people.

Fathers sometimes underestimate their role. Loving, actively involved fathers contribute to their children's well-being and development, strengthening their self-esteem. For example this could be done by helping them discover the world through games and books.

As human beings, we grow up by imitating the behavior of those around us; that's how we learn to function in the world. If a father is caring and treats people with respect, the young child will grow up much the same. Fathers who are actively involved in their children's lives contribute to their emotional health, overall wellness, social development and self-respect. Dedicated and responsible fathering during infancy and early childhood also contributes to emotional security, as well as improved math and verbal skills.

Babies can attach and bond with fathers just as they can with moms. Dads can play an important role in supporting a mother's breastfeeding, and many hospitals offer programs and resources for expectant fathers. Fathers who respond to their babies' cries, hold and hug them a lot, and participate in their basic care (e.g., feeding, changing diapers) tend to have a positive effect on their children's self-confidence and behavior. Studies show that when fathers are more involved in infancy, their kids are less likely to show symptoms of mental health problems at age 9.

Fathers are more likely than mothers to be a baby's play partner. Fathers' play tends to be more active and energetic than mothers' play with infants. This may help children to explore and be independent. They're the ones who go above and beyond for their families and are considerate of how other people feel or what they might need. They take initiative, and don't give up even if something doesn't work out on the first try. Good dads are involved in family life and regularly show their gratitude. Influence is an important issue in parent-child relationships. Fathers, as well as mothers, want their children to listen to them and to obey their limits. Occasionally parents have to exert control over their children's behavior. They may allow no debate over whether a child can stick gum on furniture, play with matches, or sit on the car while someone is underneath changing the oil. Young children with fathers who praise them when they behave well or accomplish something, hug and kiss them often, and comfort them when they are sad or scared are more likely to do well in school compared to children who have uninvolved fathers. While parents have to be reasonably firm at times, there are occasions when they might yield to their children's wishes and grant permission for safe, enjoyable activities. Giving children privacy; letting them choose their own clothes, and allowing them to make their own purchases with their allowances are examples of giving influence to children. Father involvement in early childhood also leads to positive child development, including advanced language development. While mothers tend to use words children already know, fathers are more likely to introduce new words. Teenagers who receive praise from their fathers are more likely to do well in school and have good attendance, regardless of economic status. Many recent national studies show that father involvement in adolescence lessens the risk for mental health problems or risky behaviors. In reality, although a mother's love is important and special, having an active father figure plays an equally important role in the healthy development of a child. Dad might be a bit of a goofball, but an active father can help increase your child's emotional intelligence and problem-solving capabilities. Studies show that children with fathers who were actively involved throughout the 1st year of their child's life perform better on cognitive development assessments and demonstrate an increased capacity for curiosity and exploration. Children raised with active dads tend to score higher on verbal and math tests and are less likely to drop out of school or commit juvenile crimes. The emotional support provided by a father to his child is a priceless gift. By helping kids to understand how much they are valued and loved, children with supportive fathers are more likely to have high self-esteem and are generally happier and more confident. They also demonstrate a greater tolerance for stress/frustration, less hesitation/fear in new situations and an increased ability to resist peer pressure and stand up for themselves. Fathers provide a positive male role model for their children and help to promote/reinforce good behaviors. As a result, children with more involved fathers tend to have fewer behavioral and impulse control problems, longer attention spans and a higher level of sociability. These children also tend to be more compassionate and generous, with an increased awareness of the needs and rights of others. Children are naturally full of questions, and mothers and fathers approach those questions in different ways. Active parents with different approaches to parenting can be a great way to expose children to a broad range of thinking and problem-solving. It's the most obvious thing to say, but that doesn't make it any less important - having an active father makes a child feel loved! Having dad as a steady source of love and encouragement helps ensure that children grow up happy and healthy, with high self-esteem.

(The author is a regular columnist).

Pawar's Power Short Circuit - Dips the Voltage of Patna Flock

Concerns of Appropriate Governance arise in the Country

■ ER. P.L KHUSHU



Nationalist Congress Party of Sharad

Pawar breaks under its own weight. The root cause is family fanning and family feud over political power. Recently he preferred his daughter to be the president of NCP ignoring the vast and matured cadre leaders of NCP. Ajit Pawar had finally arrived at the BJP camp, which he had been trying to do since 2019. On July 2, Ajit Pawar met party MLAs and submitted a letter of support to the Eknath Shinde-led government to Governor Ramesh Bais. His faction claims to have the support of 42 of 53 of the party's MLAs. 2nd July was also the first anniversary of the Shinde government, which came into existence after Shinde broke ranks from the Shiv Sena, rebelling against his leader Uddhav Thackeray. Thus, a year after, the BJP succeeded in breaking the NCP, another strong pillar of the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA). On his decision to join the government, Ajit Pawar said: "India is progressing under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. That's why, though there are some differences with the BJP, the NCP has decided to join hands with government for the progress of Maharashtra." Looking to the long political journey of Sharad Pawar and being almost super aged now, he should have left the issue of the selection of the new successor to him as the president of NCP, to the new generation of his real and dedicated political followers, rather than to make it a family legacy as also a private firm of his family. This act of his has exposed his ulterior political motives, to hanker after political power by hook or crook. By all standards of the qualities of a true statesman politician, he should have now called it a day in his political life, when he has suffered from a bad ailment which has left him damaged in his posture and is hardly able to speak in public with ease. He has served as the Chief Minister of Maharashtra for four terms and has also served in the Union Council of Ministers as the Minister of Defense in the Cabinet of P.V. Narsimha Rao and Minister of Agriculture in the Cabinet of Manmohan Singh. He is the first and current president of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), which he founded in 1999, after separating from the Indian National Congress. He leads the NCP delegation in the Rajya Sabha, the upper chamber of the Indian parliament. He is the chairperson of Maha Vikas Aghadi, a regional Maharashtra-based political alliance. Pawar comes from Baramati of Maharashtra. He is the patriarch of the influential political family, the Pawar Family and a prominent face in Maharashtra politics. Other politicians from the family include his daughter Supriya Sule, Ajit Pawar his nephew, Rohit Rajendra Pawar a nephew's son and other members of his extended family. Outside of politics, Pawar has served as the Chairman of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) from 2005 to 2008 and as the president of the International Cricket Council from 2010 to 2012. He was the president of the Mumbai Cricket Association from October 2013 to January 2017. In 2017, the Indian government conferred upon him Padma Vibhushan, the second-highest civilian honor of India. Should he still fish in the troubled waters of the present time politics? Probably not. He has been left high and dry in NCP with a small section of his MLAs and supporters, when he is trying to prove himself the original king of NCP, which is myth for him. He has lost the battle this time. He has been exposed by his nephew, Ajit Pawar, when he has been hob-

ners of his political party, including his nephew Ajit Pawar and aclefe long companion Praful Patel. Sharad Pawar, while reorganizing his political party NCP, named his daughter as its new President, ignoring the other leaders, who have equally been his trusted lieutenants. Primarily it has created ripples in his party which probably he has taken as his personal empire. It has strongly been contested by his nephew Ajit Pawar; his trusted lieutenants like Praful Patel, member parliament and other similar leaders of his party. Ajit Pawar's decision to part ways with his political mentor and Uncle Sharad Pawar and joining hands with the Bharatiya Janata Party and Shiv Sena, along with a majority of legislative members of NCP, has left Sharad Pawar and other members of MVA governments guessing and crest fallen. It is a big jolt in the political scenario of Maharashtra after the breakup of Shiva Sena in to two, which led to the fall of the government of Uddhav Thackeray-led Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi government. Ajit Pawar joining the Maharashtra government as deputy chief minister for the fourth time has surprised many. This is the retaliatory outcome of the hasty decision of Sharad Pawar, to ignore the classic lieutenants of his, since the birth of NCP, after his breaking way from congress, which was a historic decision on his part at that point of time. By doing so, Ajit Pawar has agreed to play third fiddle, after Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis. No one joins politics to play a tertiary role after having been deputy chief minister three times. Even more surprising was the list of other Nationalist Congress Party leaders with him Chhagan Bhujbal, Sunil Dattatreya, Dilip Walse Patil and Praful Patel, all of who were deemed close associates of Sharad Pawar. Sharad Pawar who is born on 12 December 1940, being aged of more than 80 years of age, is an Indian politician who is thought to be held in high esteem in the political gamut of India. He has probably belittled his political stature by naming his daughter as the president of newly constituted NCP, ignoring others over her, to make it sure that NCP remains the political bastion of his family only. While doing so he has willfully ignored his nephew too, who smelled a rat in this regard since long.

What had been in the offing for a while has finally become reality. NCP leader Ajit Pawar, who was the Leader of Opposition in the Maharashtra Assembly until July 1, crossed over to join the Maharashtra government on July 2 as Deputy Chief Minister, along with eight other members of his party, who also became Ministers. Every year 11th of July is observed as the World Population Day across the globe to create awareness on the global population issues such as family planning, gender equality, maternal health, poverty and human rights. The theme of World Population Day 2023 is "Unleashing the power of gender equality: Uplifting the voices of women and girls to unlock our world's infinite possibilities. The day was established by the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme in 1989. The day was suggested by Dr.KC Zachariah when the population was reached to five billion. We observe the display of increasing population in every nook and corner of India. Government of India has launched various policies, schemes and programmes for population stabilization. The birth rate in India is still higher than the death rate. Illiteracy, early marriage, poverty and age old cultural norms are the major causes of overpopulation. The first World Population Day was commemorated in 1987 when the world's population touched the five billion mark. In many developing countries fertility rate is declining but even then population growth continues at an alarming rate. In 1804, world population was 1 billion; it was 2 billion in 1927, 3 billion in 1960, 4 billion in 1974, 5 billion in 1987, 6 billion in 1999, and 7 billion in 2013 and now it stands at approximately 7.7 billion, with an anticipated increase in around 8.5 billion in 2030, 9.7 billion in 2050. China, India, the United States, Indonesia and Brazil are the world's five largest countries in terms of population. According to the UN world population grows at a rate of 1.2 per cent which makes a net addition of 77 million people every year. Six countries account for half of those annual increment-India tops the list with 21 per cent, followed by China 12 per cent, Pakistan 5 per cent, Bangladesh, Nigeria and the United States with 4 per cent each. Following reasons explain why population matters.2018 marks the 50th anniversary of a conference on family planning. In 1968, the International Conference on Human Rights was held. For the first time ever, family planning was affirmed to be a human right.

- o Human beings are rapidly spoiling the earth's atmosphere.
- o Around 800 million people are malnourished worldwide and this number can increase significantly.
- o Lack of education in reproductive health is a factor in the recent upsurge of infectious diseases.
- o Water scarcity stems in many parts of the world due to increase in human demand. Worldwide water tables are dropping down.
- o Wild habitats that shelter endangered plants and animals are giving way to human activities and needs.
- o Pollution is causing many respiratory diseases in human beings.
- o Farming lands are suffering from soil erosion and desertification.
- o The competition for resources is increasing day-by day and the poor are getting poorer.
- o By rapid population pressure migration pressures are aggravated.
- o Civil conflict often emerges in societies where rapid population growth combines with environmental scarcity to under-

mine governments. The size of nation's population has a major impact on its development and operations. Reducing overpopulation is essential, whether on a national or global scale so as to ensure the long-term growth of our existing resources. India was the first country in the world to launch a state sponsored population control programme in 1952.It was however met with much skepticism. After 1952, sharp declines in death rates were not accompanied by a similar drop in birth rates. India has built-in population momentum because of its young age structure-one fifth of India's population is between 15-19 years of age. Different regions of the country with different demographic features required a different treatment was another reason of its failure. India's population growth rate depends on how effectively the four Indian states i.e. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh implement the policies because these states constitute 40 per cent of the country's population growth. Improved health services are mostly needed in these states. The fertility rate in these states is the highest. It has been observed that it has taken more time for the message like family planning to reach in these large agricultural and predominantly rural population states. It has been studied that fertility reduction began in the coastal areas of South India and then proceeded to spread inland. This was an advantage that the South had compared to the North. The Southern states have done better in providing family planning services. Population control programme has not been able to make inroads into all the pockets of the North Indian states as a result of which India's population has grown by gigantic proportions and in 2000 India touched 1 billion people mark i.e.16 per cent of the world's population living on 2.4 per cent of the world's land area.

In this century the global population has increased three-fold- while India's population has increased five times in the same period. In 1911 India's population was 252 million,342 million in 1947,361 in 1951,846 million in 1991 ,1 billion in 2000 and 1.27 billion in 2013.It can be mentioned that before independence India took 42 years to add 100 million. Since 1951 when the first census in India was conducted, about 600 million have been added to the population of India. The first 100 million was added in 12.5 years, the second 100 million in 9.3 years, the third 100 million in 6.4 years, the fifth and sixth 100 million in 5.8 years. It was estimated that the population of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Orissa would increase by 15 to 19 per cent during 1998-2016, while it would increase over 40 per cent in the states of Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, the highest anticipated increase being in Uttar Pradesh with 55 per cent. According to estimate of Sample Registration System of the Office of Registrar General of India, the population of India is increasing at 15.5 million per year.15.5 million addition in existing population every year requires the opening of 66,000 new primary schools annually, creating 30 lakh new non-agricultural jobs every year and accommodating 50 lakh additional labourers in the agro-sector. No doubt, China has a different political system which can impose the one-child policy, but its success cannot entirely be attributed to the compulsion factor. China has certainly been able to educate its people on the importance of having a small family and has

nobbing with BJP several times for power in the past, which could hardly be contested by him with ease. While being the architect of the creation of Maha Vikas Aghadi, a regional Maharashtra-based political alliance, he compromised his political position to a lowest level of joining hands with congress which he left long time ago. Similarly, he made himself sub servant to the Chief Minister ship of Uddhav Thackeray of Shiv Sena-led Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi government. It shows his brazen compromise with the Shiv Sena of which he was a strong enemy in Maharashtra. This si the fate of our opposition leaders of repute and fame, like Sharad Pawar, who want to remove Modi somehow and come back to power again.

What is Ajit Pawar's game? What is the BJP planning? Where does Ajit Pawar's entry leave the Shiv Sena MLAs who broke off with the parent organization along with Eknath Shinde? Just a few days ago, Modi told Bharatiya Janata Party workers that the Nationalist Congress Party was a corruption-ridden party. There are allegations of scams of nearly Rs 70,000 crore against NCP. Within days of this speech, NCP leaders joined the Maharashtra government led by Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde and Bharatiya Janata Party leader Devendra Fadnis. Most agree that it is the fear of central agencies probing scams involving NCP leaders that forced these politicians to jump ship. Be it so as is generally made known, will such events carry through the policies of the present NDA government under the leadership of Modi at the centre to show the door to the corrupt politicians, or will it eclipse the honest image of the NDA government to a large extent, in the coming general elections of 2024. It is a million dollar question. Will these politicians who have defected from NCP and taken big ministerial births in Bharatiya Janata Party and Shiv Sena government in Maharashtra, be able to cope up with the administrative style of working of Modi, which is free of all corrupt practices so far. How long will they be able to sustain themselves in such circumstances? Let the country wait and watch.

This situation has created fusion and effusion in the political combinations and circles of not Maharashtra only, but across the political make-ups or making ups of the whole country. The worst victim is the recent unceremonious gathering of some politicians at Patna, looking for resurgence, with the adverse leadership of congress party through Rahul Gandhi ,who is playing in the lap of Kharge, the present congress President, a political leader who may not be able to contribute much, because of his advanced age. Probably Rahul Gandhi's projected imminent presence in all such political weddings of diverse intensions and equations by the congress party has spoiled the broth and the spice of it. No opposition political party across the country is solemnly ready to have him as a tall leader representing the major opposition party the congress, which has a bigger national base, but with diminished leadership. A bigger damage is in the offing for this purposeless conclave, who met at Patna, planning to dethrone

BJP in the 2024 national elections, with non-objective manifesto and superficial subjective political aims. One political party is opposed to the other; is a regular order of this so called excursion conclave, presuming to heat up their anger against Modi and BJP with shallow and hollow maneuvering of their political aims and desires.

Unfortunately for this country, such situations are the causes for the viral of cancer in our political freedom. Political parties linked to deep family tags have deprived the people of this nation from their inherent rights of freedom of expression and freedom to live with dignity. The fault lies with the people who are lured by such political parties and thus change the entire definition of democracy to the autocracy, of these political parties to rule as political monarchs over the people as their subjects of slavery. It is not the tale of one political family only in this country. This country is full of such family linked political parties spread across the country, which are innumerable and spread from Kashmir to Kanyakumari.

In fact, a proverbial axiom fits in here, which says, "out of the frying pan into the fire". Ever since this nation got freedom from the British, we the Indians landed in the laps of these families linked political parties. This specter started from Delhi in 1947 itself, when Sardar Patel was bypassed and Nehru was opted for governing India. Nehru dynasty got linked to the present Gandhii dynasty through Indira Gandhii, the daughter of Nehru, when the Gandhii dynasty has ruled this nation for almost more than 50 years. Political hierarchy of governing power; trickled from Nehru to Indira Gandhii, then to Rajiv Gandhii and through Rajiv Gandhii to his wife Sonia Gandhii, when Sonia Gandhii ruled this country through Proxy for about 10 years by installing stooge Prime Minister like Manmohan Singh, to head the congress government. What happened during such a rule of the family linked congress party is an open chapter: Same is true about most of the states of India, right from Jammu and Kashmir to deep south. Abdullah's ruled Jammu and Kashmir for decades followed by Mufti's, when such dynasty rules in Kashmir resulted in deep anger of sorts in the youth of Jammu and Kashmir leading to their taking to guns. Bihar is another example where the political ruler ship of the state, is mostly managed by one family only, since last more than 20 years. Tamil Nadu is another glaring example in such a scenario. In fact in the southern part of India except Kerala and now Karnataka, it is the dynasty based political parties which mostly change the hands for the governance of these states. UP can be quoted as another example of past in this regard, when only one political party ruled the state, for about two decades, which has now been dethroned. How can it be stopped is the paradox?. However, it has to be stopped at some stage. The answer has to come from the voters of this country.

(This author is a chartered consultant civil engineer, passionately attached and devoted to his mother land - Jammu & Kashmir).

Burgeoning Population-Causes and Effect

■ DR. BANARSI LAL

Every year 11th of July is observed as the World Population Day across the globe to create awareness on the global population issues such as family planning, gender equality, maternal health, poverty and human rights. The theme of World Population Day 2023 is "Unleashing the power of gender equality: Uplifting the voices of women and girls to unlock our world's infinite possibilities. The day was established by the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme in 1989. The day was suggested by Dr.KC Zachariah when the population was reached to five billion. We observe the display of increasing population in every nook and corner of India. Government of India has launched various policies, schemes and programmes for population stabilization. The birth rate in India is still higher than the death rate. Illiteracy, early marriage, poverty and age old cultural norms are the major causes of overpopulation. The first World Population Day was commemorated in 1987 when the world's population touched the five billion mark. In many developing countries fertility rate is declining but even then population growth continues at an alarming rate. In 1804, world population was 1 billion; it was 2 billion in 1927, 3 billion in 1960, 4 billion in 1974, 5 billion in 1987, 6 billion in 1999, and 7 billion in 2013 and now it stands at approximately 7.7 billion, with an anticipated increase in around 8.5 billion in 2030, 9.7 billion in 2050. China, India, the United States, Indonesia and Brazil are the world's five largest countries in terms of population. According to the UN world population grows at a rate of 1.2 per cent which makes a net addition of 77 million people every year. Six countries account for half of those annual increment-India tops the list with 21 per cent, followed by China 12 per cent, Pakistan 5 per cent, Bangladesh, Nigeria and the United States with 4 per cent each. Following reasons explain why population matters.2018 marks the 50th anniversary of a conference on family planning. In 1968, the International Conference on Human Rights was held. For the first time ever, family planning was affirmed to be a human right.

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The size of nation's population has a major impact on its development and operations. Reducing overpopulation is essential, whether on a national or global scale so as to ensure the long-term growth of our existing resources. India was the first country in the world to launch a state sponsored population control programme in 1952.It was however met with much skepticism. After 1952, sharp declines in death rates were not accompanied by a similar drop in birth rates. India has built-in population momentum because of its young age structure-one fifth of India's population is between 15-19 years of age. Different regions of the country with different demographic features required a different treatment was another reason of its failure. India's population growth rate depends on how effectively the four Indian states i.e. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh implement the policies because these states constitute 40 per cent of the country's population growth. Improved health services are mostly needed in these states. The fertility rate in these states is the highest. It has been observed that it has taken more time for the message like family planning to reach in these large agricultural and predominantly rural population states. It has been studied that fertility reduction began in the coastal areas of South India and then proceeded to spread inland. This was an advantage that the South had compared to the North. The Southern states have done better in providing family planning services. Population control programme has not been able to make inroads into all the pockets of the North Indian states as a result of which India's population has grown by gigantic proportions and in 2000 India touched 1 billion people mark i.e.16 per cent of the world's population living on 2.4 per cent of the world's land area.

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offered lucrative financial aid to small families. It reduced its infant mortality rate to 6.8 per 1000, in comparison to 32 per 1000 in India. It has achieved almost 100 per cent literacy thereby making its people to understand the benefits of small family.

In India much success of population control programmes have been achieved in Kerala where the literacy rate is the highest and where women enjoy better status as compared to many other states. Rampant illiteracy among the majority of population has failed to push forward the message of family planning programmes in India. There is need to aware the rural masses on problems associated with large families and benefits of small families. A metamorphosis is needed in the attitude of people. In India, one child out of 13 dies without seeing the first birthday, 47 out of 1000 die within first month and 90 out of 1000 die before they are one year old. In China and Sri Lanka it is only 20-30 per cent. The National Population Commission was constituted on May11, 2000, the day when India crossed the one billion mark. The commission is optimistic that population of India would be stabilized by 2045.Even if the goal is achieved, how we will meet the basic needs of people? The population growth rate in India has slowed down by 0.99 per cent, but it is nearly three times that of China's growth rate of 0.34 per cent. India is one of the most densely populated nations in the world. Its population density is 364 per square km. as per 2011 census which is much higher than many countries. The National Population Policy 2000 focuses on 12 strategic themes to achieve the 14 socio-demographic goals .The immediate objective of the policy was to address the unmet needs of contraception, health care infrastructure and health personnel and to provide integrated service delivery for basic reproductive and child care. The long term objective is to achieve a stable population by 2045 at a level consistent with the requirements of sustainable economic growth, social development and environment protection.

Higher rural population is migrating to towns and cities which overpopulate the urban centers resulting in growing number of shums and unavailability of housing, medical and sanitation facilities. It is estimated that world's urban population would rise to 5 billion by 2030 which was around 3 billion in 2003.Tokyo, the world's most populous city with 37.39 million was projected to still be the largest in 2020 followed by the Indian city Delhi. India should make population control a top priority because all the fruits of development are lost due to increase in population which lowers per capita needs of the people and reduces growth benefits per head. There is dire need for higher quality services in reproductive health and family planning together with supporting measures. Government alone cannot achieve these ambitious goals. People, NGOs, Panchayats and private sector participation is must. There is need to protect and empower the youths both males and females. The knowledge of sexuality should be imparted to them. There is also need to avoid the unwanted pregnancies. Child marriages should be avoided. Laws and policies for girl child rights should be implemented. Equal education is needed for both boys and girls.

(The writer is Sr. Scientist and Head of KVK, Reasi SKUAST-J).