

EXPORTS GROWTH MUST Sustainable agriculture through organic farming

Restructuring of Department of Commerce is very important for making the nation a key global player in world trade. Looking at scenario, it seems that Exports growth will play a key role in India's becoming a developed nation, as the Government is aiming to achieve 2 trillion dollar exports by 2030. Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and Textiles, Piyush Goyal had said that restructuring of entire department of commerce aims at preparing India to become a key global player in world trade. He further said the restructuring rests on 5 major pillars: Increasing India's share in global trade, assume leadership role in multilateral organisations, democratisation of trade, creating 100 Indian Brands as Global Champions, and setting up Economic Zones in India to strengthen the manufacturing base and attract greater investments to India. The Minister mentioned that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had launched Mission Karmayogi with the objective of skill development and upgradation of employees in Govt. departments and Ministries. It is in pursuance of this, Goyal said, that restructuring of departments of commerce has been undertaken to meet the needs of the future. This will enable us to adopt international best practices and prepare ourselves for greater multilateral and bilateral engagement with other countries, he added. Goyal said that restructuring exercise is a mammoth endeavour focused on 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' and an Atmanirbhar Commerce Department. The 14 volumes of the report define the role of each section within the department and lays down the expected outcomes and key performance indicators. These manuals would enable all the relevant stakeholders to understand their role in the revamped department and help the organization perform effectively, he added. The Minister said the focus on exports has been one of the most defining features of the government's efforts to make India a developed country by 2047, a vision articulated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his Independence Day address to the nation this year. He emphasised that Indian Trade and Commerce will not only be a strong element in India's march to prosperity, towards becoming a developed nation when we turn 100 in 2047, but also play an extremely important role in serving the needs of the whole world. Goyal said we aspire to achieve 2 trillion dollars worth of exports by 2030. This will make us among the top nations in world trade and change the way the world sees us. Goyal further said Prime Minister Modi has led from the front and energised the entire export ecosystem. It is due to the constant guidance and mentoring by Prime Minister that we not only met but also beat export targets, he emphasised. The Prime Minister has urged all the missions across the world to focus on 3 Ts- Trade, Technology and Tourism. These are now an integral part of the duties of all the Missions, he added. Goyal noted some of ideas that have emerged out of Restructuring exercise include a dedicated 'Trade Promotion Body' to drive formulation & execution of promotion strategy, Digitization of trade facilitation processes, rehauling of the data & analytics ecosystem and capacity buildSerg of Indian Trade Service to drive specialization & institutional memory.

■ DR BANARSI LAL

Organic farming is a method of farming system which primarily aimed at cultivating the land and raising crops in such a way, so as to keep the soil in good health by the use of organic wastes and other biological materials along with beneficial microbes. Nutrients are provided to crops for increased sustainable production in an eco-friendly and pollution free environment. The aim is to create integrated, human, environmentally and economically sustainable production system which maximize reliance on farm derived renewable resources and management of ecological and biological processes and interactions so as to provide acceptable level of crop, livestock and human nutrition, protection from pests and diseases and appropriate return to the human and other resources. Organic farming is gaining momentum across the globe because of increasing concern of people on health and environment. In organic farming non-toxic methods are applied to manage the insect-pests, diseases and weeds and thus improve the natural resources in the soil including soil and water quality. Organic farming reduces the risk of yield failure, stabilizes the crops production and improves the quality of lives of the people. Organic farming respects the environment by friendly practice of weeds, insect-pests and diseases control. The term 'Organic Farming' was coined by Northbourne (1940). Organic farming means holistic production systems which refer earth friendly methods for cultivation and food processing. It differs from other systems by the certification procedures, specific standards and a specific labeling scheme. Insecticides, pesticides, chemical fertilizers, growth hormones and antibiotics are not used in organic farming. Eco-friendly techniques are employed to increase the production. Organic farming is based on the integral relationship and we need to understand the relationship between different entities of a farm. The organic farming is based on organic relationship. Organic farming can be perceived as a system which should always be in search of natural alternatives

suitable to the local specificity. The organic manures supply the nutrients in the soil, promote microbial activities and improve physical, biological and chemical properties of soils. Agriculture is the backbone of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. This sector provides employment directly or indirectly to around 70 per cent population of J&K. Agriculture contributes about 65 per cent of J&K revenue which signifies the overdependence of the J&K on agriculture. The Environment Sustainability Index of J&K is worsening and is a matter of grave concern for the scientists and policy makers. There are various factors which are responsible for the environmental catastrophe in J&K. The use of fertilizers and other agrochemicals can deteriorate the soil health of J&K. Organic farming is a method of farming in which we largely exclude the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, growth hormones and we maintain the soil fertility by the organic manures, green manures, crop rotation etc. It is a unique system of farming which sustains the agro-ecosystem including biodiversity and soil biological activities. Organic farming can prove as a major tool for the second green revolution especially in the hilly areas of J&K. Over the years, the farmers of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir have adopted new agricultural technologies but still J&K is having low productivity of almost all the crops. There is need to develop systematic approach and plan for the development in organic farming in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir as there is an immense potential for organic farming in J&K. Demand for organic crops is also increasing. Several steps have been taken by the government in order to highlight the importance of organic agriculture in the growth of J&K economy. There is need to make strenuous efforts to promote organic farming in J&K. Soil health is also deteriorating day-by-day in some regions of J&K due to indiscriminate use of chemical fertilizers in the soil. In order to sustain the health of soil organic farming is the best option. Because of Government efforts, organic farming is picking

up pace in J&K. There is need of capacity building of farmers for promotion of organic farming in the region. Union Territory of J&K has huge potential for organic farming as a large area in J&K is already under semi-organic cultivation in hilly districts of J&K due to the lack of availability of chemical fertilizers in these areas and the farmers of these areas hardly apply the chemical fertilizers. Organic vegetables, ginger and turmeric of Reasi district, Basmati rice of R S Pura, Rajmah of Bhadarwah, potato of Gurez and Machil and red rice of Tangdar, Kupwara are major organic products in J&K and have the potential to fetch more returns in the market. There is need to explore markets in the country and abroad for saffron, basmati rice, vegetables, Rajmah, spices and various other agricultural produce from J&K. Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir farmers can tap the opportunity of growing demand of organic products. Organic agriculture is generally environment friendly maintains soil health and enhance biodiversity. Already large numbers of farmers of J&K are organically growing vegetables, spices, basmati rice, walnuts, herbs etc organically. There is need to introduce organic farming commercially, scientifically and in a systematized way in J&K so that the farmers can get rich dividends and farming can become sustainable source of income of farmers. Keeping the importance of organic products there is need to shift from chemical to organic farming so that more and more area can be covered under organic farming in the region. Organic farming system is not new in J&K and it is being followed from ancient times. It is a method of farming system which primarily aimed at cultivating the land in such a way so that the soil health can be maintained. There is tremendous scope for organic Basmati rice in J&K which is grown on more than 35,000 hectares of land in J&K and has a production of over 88,000 metric tonnes, besides rajmah, spices, saffron, pulses and potato. There is need to provide logistic support for organic farming to the farmers of J&K so that they can get maximum benefits from it. The

indiscriminate use of agro-chemicals in soil and on plants is not only damaging the soil bacteria, fungi, actinomycetes etc. but has given rise to phenomenon like pest resistance and pest resurgence. Modern crop farming has increased the food grain production but it has caused many problems to the environment and human health. Besides, it has contributed to global warming causing different kinds of ailments to the human beings and animals. Dependence on the external inputs like fertilizers, pesticides, machines etc. have increased rural indebtedness and created dependencies. Our farmers have indulged in indiscriminate use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides and their numbering is increasing. In order to increase the agricultural production and control of insect-pests and diseases, our farmers are increasingly depending on agro-chemicals. Now the people are questioning the impact of modern agriculture on environment, economic and social aspects. Many farmers are seeking the alternative practices that would make agriculture more sustainable and productive. Organic farming is the only alternative taking care of all ecological aspects. A natural balance needs to be maintained for sustainability of crop production system. Therefore, recycling of resources through organic farming approach is of paramount importance. It can reduce the cost of cultivation and farmers can fetch more money. Good market demand for organic products will have a positive impact on the socio-economic status of the farmers of J&K. Organic farming can lead prosperity among the farmers of J&K. A proper strategy is needed to promote organic farming in J&K. An integrated approach from government and non-government organizations is needed to encourage the organic farming in J&K to mitigate the problem of climate change, health and sustainability. Organic farming can create livelihood sources for the small and marginal farmers.

(The author is Head, KVK Reasi, SKUAST-J).

Political storm & slugfest in J&K politics

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

The recent decision of Chief Electoral Officer of Jammu and Kashmir UT has created a political storm and slugfest in politics of UT. A big controversy and upheaval is taking place in Jammu and Kashmir thanks to the decision of the chief electoral officer that the eligible outsiders residing in J&K will be enrolled as the eligible voters. This decision which is in the interests of the nation has created unnecessary uproar in the political circles. The decision to enlist the eligible outside voters in Jammu and Kashmir is not received well by the political fraternity because they smell some foul in this important decision of the Chief Electoral Officer of J&K. Since, Jammu and Kashmir is fully integrated with the Indian state as the controversial Articles 370 and 35A had been abrogated and this paved the way for the full integration of J&K with India and thus there is no wrong in the decision of the chief electoral officer of J&K regarding the decision of the enrolment of those outsiders who reside in Jammu and Kashmir. The People's Representation Act has been superseded and the all India rules and regulations apply to J&K also and therefore the non locals residing temporarily in the UT of J&K will be enrolled and enlisted to exercise their right to vote in J&K UT who temporarily resides in the UT. Similarly the people of J&K temporarily residing in other states of India are allowed to vote from their and therefore there is no violation of the law and the constitution and as such the decision to allow the non locals to exercise their right to vote in J&K should be welcomed as a positive development. But unnecessary hue and cry is being created by the regional parties and the Gupkar declaration which oppose tooth and nail the right decision of the electoral officers of the Jammu and Kashmir to enlist the eligible outsiders in the electoral rolls and this political storm is not in the interest of the nation and so the political parties should exercise restraint and control and not blindly oppose and create political slugfest over the issue of enrolling of the eligible outside voters in the electoral lists. Those political parties which had demanded the autonomy and also those which had demanded self rule in J&K are today uneasy over the right decision of the election commission of the UT to enlist the eligible outsider voters who reside in Jammu and Kashmir. These regional champions and satraps are beating their chests over the decision of enrolling the eligible outsider voters in the voters list. The regional satraps have taken the decision of the electoral officer as an assault on the already snatched identity of Jammu and Kashmir and hence these regional political parties are uniting to oppose the said decision and they are working to create united

response to the decision in question. The former Chief Minister and President of PDP Mehbooba Mufti has criticized decision of enrolling in voter lists all eligible outside voters who reside in Jammu and Kashmir and she is blowing hot and cold on this important issue. Mehbooba and NC president Farooq Abdullah smell in this decision of registering and enrolling the all eligible outside voters in the voters lists as a big conspiracy to change the demography of the Jammu and Kashmir and hence they oppose the decision vehemently. The fact of the matter is that the decision to enlist and enroll the outside voters who reside in J&K as the voters is in the national interest and one fails to understand as to why are the regional political champions making so much noise on the decision of the electoral officer of enlisting the outside people who normally reside in Jammu and Kashmir. This opposition and criticism has no value and substance since Jammu and Kashmir is now like other states of India and so the outsiders can be enlisted and registered to vote in the assembly and parliament elections. Therefore the criticism and opposition to the right decision cannot stand the constitutional and legal scrutiny and therefore the unreasonable criticism and opposition of the regional chauvinists does not hold water and it is not acceptable since Jammu and Kashmir is like other UTs of India. The enrolment of outside people in the electoral roll is not peculiar to Jammu and Kashmir UT but all states and UTs similarly enter the people residing in these states and UTs in the electoral rolls and there is as such no need and justification in raising of the unnecessary hue and cry by the political parties. In Jammu and Kashmir the mainstream political parties are up against the decision of the electoral officer to enroll the outsiders in the electoral roll and give them the right of franchise at the place they reside temporarily and so are the outsiders residing in the UT given the right to franchise and therefore for this right they are enrolled in the electoral roll and thus a constitutional and democratic right is given to all those people who reside in the state or UT and thus these sections of the people are enrolled for taking part in the elections. But unnecessarily the mainstream political parties are up in arms against the right decision of the electoral officers of the UT with regard to the decision of enrolling of the outsiders who reside in the UT in the electoral rolls so that they will take part in the elections. Those political parties who oppose tooth and nail the right decision of enrolling the non Kashmiris in the electoral rolls so that they are able to take part in the elections should know that the decision to enroll the outsiders in the electoral roll is not peculiar to the J&K UT only but it applies to all the states and UTs of the coun-

try and therefore there is no need to create hullabaloo on this important decision of the election department/commission and so the political parties should allow the smooth functioning of the electoral office and not create ruckus on the decision in question. Thus instead of creating noise and din over the important issue of the decision of the electoral officer regarding the enrollment of the outsiders in the electoral rolls, these political parties should welcome this important decision in the national interest. By criticizing and opposing the important decision of the electoral officers these political parties and their credentials are suspect and so their criticism and opposition has no substance and has no takers in the country. Since J&K is like all other UTs and so it is necessary to apply all rules and decisions which are applicable to other states and the UTs to Jammu and Kashmir union territory and so there is no need to create unnecessary heat and noise over the issue and decision of the electoral officers as it pertains to the inclusion, enrollment and registration of the outsiders who reside in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir into the electoral rolls. This is the decision in the national interest and as such is of national importance and has a positive bearing upon the UT and so there is no substance and use in criticizing of the important decision. Thus the mainstream political parties should show their maturity and should not resort to the unnecessary criticism and opposition of the decision of the election officers as it pertains to the registration, enrollment and inclusion of the non local voters in the electoral rolls to create a level playing field and thus there is no need to create unnecessary controversy over the decision of the government. Therefore all should abide by the decision of the government as it relates to the registration, enrollment and inclusion of the outsiders in the electoral rolls and therefore no heat, noise and dust should be created over this important issue. The decision of the election commission of enrolling the outside voters in the electoral rolls is a decision in the national interest and so no unnecessary controversy should be created which is against the interests of the nation. Let the mainstream political parties show sanity and magnanimity and welcome the decision of enrolling, registering and inclusion of outsiders residing in J&K UT and therefore no fuss should be created over this important issue.

(The author is a columnist and social activist).

Gratitude & Happiness

We often tend to take things for granted in our lives, which becomes a reason for our misery. Gratitude bestows immense happiness, both to the giver and the receiver when offered with purity of heart. A simple 'Thank You' can transform a situation or relationship diametrically. Service of mankind, when done with selflessness, is a natural outcome of gratitude. Gratitude should also not be with an expectation of the greeting or gesture to be returned. Even if we offer a glass of water to someone with gratitude and selflessness, seeing the essence of Nirankar in them, it becomes a reason for bliss and joy. Gifting, sharing and caring are extremely sublime and delightful acts. This kind of offering becomes sewa, selfless service. The sun, rivers, trees, earth and air, all have been continuously providing us with their resources, without any expectation. But we humans become selfish and enforce conditions while giving away even a little bit of what we have and expect much more in return. This is the reason for our sorrow. This does not necessarily mean that we should not desire to grow in life. It only means that after having performed a specific action, we should leave its outcome to the divine verdict, stay content and be thankful for what we are receiving. It means that growth is mutual and universal. We can't expect to save our home if our neighbour's house is on fire. -Satguru Mata Sudiksha

Farmers' empowerment through Agromet Advisory Services

■ DR ASHU SHARMA

The agriculture sector must produce more food for a growing world population, which is expected to increase from 7 billion to about 9 billion by 2050. India is home for 1.32 billion people which comprise about 17 percent of the world's population. As agriculture is the backbone of Indian economy that accounts for about 14 percent of the nation's GDP, about 11 percent of its exports and provides livelihood to about half of its population. India possesses a wealth of biodiversity, have experienced severe weather variability, crop failure and recurrent famine throughout their histories. To tackle the problems that arise as a result of climate change and the resultant droughts, floods, land degradation, losses of crop and biodiversity, famine, malnutrition and poverty, there is a need for greater awareness on managing the natural resources. The country needs a new integrated approach for advancement of improved technologies and good practices to manage crops and livestock, as well as the soil, land and ecological resources of the region. Most of the farmers in India are smallholder farmers often with limited access to technologies and resources which leaves them increasingly vulnerable to weather and climate fluctuations. Increased frequency, severity and intensity of weather and climate extremes have contributed to food deficits and failure to prevent widespread famine in many high risk areas. Agricultural production depends upon many factors, of which weather is the major factor. Weather varies with space and time; hence, its forecast can help to

minimize the farm losses through proper management of agricultural operations. Weather is one of the most important factors determining success or failure of agricultural production. It effects on every phase of growth and development of plant. Any variability in the weather during the crop season, such as delay in the monsoon, excessive rains, flood, droughts, spells of too-high or too-low temperatures would affect the crop growth and finally the quality and quantity of the yield. The losses in crop can be reduced by doing proper crop management in time by timely and accurate weather forecasts. Weather forecast also provides guidelines for selection of crops best suited to the anticipated climatic conditions. The objective of the weather forecasting is to advice the farmers on the actual and expected weather and its impact on the various day-to-day farming operations i.e., sowing, weeding, time of pesticides spray, irrigation scheduling, fertilizer application etc. and overall crop management. Weather forecast helps to increase agriculture production, reduce losses, risks, reduce costs of inputs, improve quality of yield, increase efficiency in the use of water, labor and energy and reduce pollution with judicious use of agricultural chemicals. The complete avoidance of all farm losses due to weather factor is not possible but it can be minimized to some extent by making adjustments through timely and accurate information of weather forecast. Weather forecast and weather based agromet advisories help in increasing the economic benefits to the farmers by suggesting them the suitable management practices according to the weather condi-

tions. Agro meteorological services rendered by India Meteorological Department (IMD), Ministry of Earth Sciences is a step to contribute to weather information based crop/livestock management strategies and operations dedicated to enhancing crop production and food security. IMD is operating a scheme 'Gramin Krishi Mausam Sewa' (GKMS) with an objective to serve farming community at different parts of the country. Based on the medium range weather forecast, AAS bulletins are prepared for 636 districts and issued on every Tuesday and Friday. Efforts are being made to prepare AAS bulletins for all the districts of the country. Dissemination of Agromet advisories: Dissemination of agromet advisories to the farmers through different multi-channel system of like All India Radio (AIR) and Doordarshan, private TV and radio channels, newspaper and whatsapp and SMS etc. is being made on wider scale. In addition to that number of AMFUs and DAMUs in collaboration with Agriculture Universities and Krishi Vigyan Kendra's (KVKs) has started sending agromet advisories through SMS and Whatsapp groups at district and block level. Agromet advisories are also being disseminated in both regional and English languages through 'Kissan SMS', a portal launched by the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India. At present approx. 22.50 million farmers are benefited by this service directly. Weather forecast and advisories under alert and warnings through SMS during extreme weather events are also issued which enable the farmers in planning of farming operations

to minimize/control damage of crops under the adverse weather conditions. Awareness programmes are helping the farmers to make more self-reliant in dealing with weather and climate issues that affect agricultural production and also to assist the farmers and further develop their adaptive capacity with improved planning and better management decisions, a participatory, cross-disciplinary approach is being taken to delivering climate and weather information and enhancing the awareness of information user groups. Farmers receive informative brochures; pamphlets outlining weather-based farming guidelines; information on packages and crop practices in the district; leaflets containing information about pests and diseases, severe weather conditions, crops grown under stress conditions and inbuilt contingency plans; and the District Agromet Bulletin in local languages. This present system of delivering the services at district level is underway to extend up to sub-district/ block level with dissemination up to village level to meet the end user's requirements in both the irrigated and rain fed systems. Establishment of 660 District Agro-meteorological Units (DAMUs) in each district of India at Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) is under pipeline which includes 130 existing AMFUs with the objective of preparing customized advisory at sub district/block level with medium range block level weather forecast, so that small and marginal farmers will be benefited by these services. (The author is Scientist (Agro-meteorology) at KVK Kathua, SKUAST Jammu).

PROGRESSING J&K Govt fulfilling vision of new, healthy J&K with constant development of medical infrastructure

Government is taking several reformative measures for the advancement and upgradation of health infrastructure, besides providing affordable healthcare services to people. J&K Administration is fulfilling the vision of a new and healthy J&K by developing the medical infrastructure on constant basis. Five new medical colleges, two AIIMS, nearly 1000 healthcare and wellness centers, five new nursing colleges as well as start of BSc paramedical courses and with more than 100 pe increase in medical seats are contributing towards the development and advancement of the healthcare sector. To overcome the shortage of post-graduate doctors and to prepare specialists at that level, Health Department has also started Diploma of National Board Courses in new and old medical colleges of the districts, which will increase at least 250 seats. MD Psychiatry seats have also been increased in GMC Srinagar recently. The increase in MD (Psychiatry) seats from 8 to 12 in Government Medical College, Srinagar will boost mental healthcare after National Medical Commission (NMC) approval. Notably, last year, MBBS seats were increased from 500 to 1100. Around 111 more MBBS/BDS seats and 50 PG seats under EWS have been sanctioned. Besides, 14 dental PG seats were approved. 225 DNB seats in 16 disciplines were also approved. Nearly 600 paramedical seats in nine courses were sanctioned. This follows Medical Assessment and Rating Board (MARB) report regarding faculty, their experience, publication, and other infrastructure available at GMC, Srinagar. The admission for new seats will start from the academic year 2022-23. 'It is to inform that MARB reviewed the assessor's report on July 16 regarding faculty, their experience, publication, and other teaching facilities including infrastructure available at GMC Srinagar under Kashmir University, for an increase of seats in MD (psychiatry) for the academic year 2022-23,' said Member/President, MARB, National Medical Commission. NMC asked the GMC to provide all infrastructure facilities in terms of teaching and non-teaching staff, buildings, equipment, and hospital facilities as per NMC norms.