

ONGOING BLIND RACE

In the present competitive world, where neck-biting competition is prevailing in every sector and everyone is fighting hard to register his or her presence, it has been observed that marketing strategies have also underwent a significant change, in order to attract more and more customers besides leaving the competitor companies far behind in ongoing blind race. These days, we can often see a lot of advertisements on each and every medium, right from hoardings to TV channels, newspapers to social media networks and many others, where companies leave no stone unturned in promoting its product by claiming it far better than others available in market. Besides spending a significant amount of profits in advertisements, the companies sometimes even not hesitate to misguide customers by making several tall claims, which are not present in reality. Taking a serious note of the situation, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution directs advertising agencies to ensure strict compliance of guidelines advertisements.

As per reports, the Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution has directed to Advertising Association of India, Indian Broadcasting Foundation, Broadcasting Content Complaints Council, News Broadcasters and Digital Association, Advertising Standards Council of India, PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Confederation of Indian Industry, ASSOCHAM and Indian Society of Advertisers to ensure strict compliance of the guidelines for prevention of misleading advertisement and endorsement for misleading advertisements. Department has stated that it has been noticed that the guidelines are not being strictly complied with by the concerned entities and numerous goods are being advertised in an inappropriate manner. It has been observed that products like chewing tobacco and Gutka are being advertised taking veil of fennel and cardamom, by employing major celebrities, thereby putting a negative impact on people. Pertinently, the guidelines are applicable to a manufacturer, service provider or trader whose goods, product or service is the subject of an advertisement, or to an advertising agency or endorser whose service is availed for the advertisement of such goods, product or service regardless of the form, format or medium of the advertisement. The Department also cautioned the advertisers' associations that failure to ensure strict compliance of guidelines by concerned parties would lead to the CCPA taking the reins besides taking suitable stern action against violators.

OFF 'D' CUFF

Dissent is not so bad

Does Advaita Vedanta allow for dissent within its philosophical paradigm? Advaita Vedanta has a lot of space for debate, but it has no space for violence or non-acceptance of others' points of view. Through debate, you come to deeper realisations. If you pose a counterpoint to my view, I would not reject it outright. We will investigate it together. We will have a healthy debate. Vedanta says, explore it within yourself and finally, you will come to realise what the truth of the whole thing is.

But are we not told that there is only one truth? Then how can there be room for many points of view? The physicality of truth can be very different, which we call perception. If four people are sitting in a room, they could have different perceptions of the same thing. There are many perceptions of the same reality. People fight over individual perceptions. Yes, there is one reality, but perceptions of that reality by people can be different. The problem arises when I am not ready to accept your perception and say that 'only my perception is the right perception.' That's where we lose it. That's when humanity gets into the 'zone of suffering.' According to Indic wisdom traditions, you can have any perception and I respect that. That is one of the reasons why Sanatana Dharma continues to be relevant. You can be a believer of any perception that you feel is right for you. However, don't impose it on anybody and be respectful of others' perceptions, too. With that, we can live in a harmonious relationship. That is the foundation of Indic culture. But, we are challenging it and we are suffering because of that.

Isn't it the duty of spiritual masters of various traditions to help people become aware that there are many perceptions of reality, even within their own tradition?

In today's scenario, we need sarva dharma samavad, interfaith dialogues. People from different viewpoints come together and talk to each other. We are also a democratic country. If there is constant interfaith dialogue, it will pacify the

followers of spiritual masters. They will be well-informed, and choose their political leaders wisely. Indic traditional wisdom and knowledge, needs to percolate down to all citizens and not remain the preserve of the elite. If we don't do it, we are not doing our job properly. We are not evolving as collective humanity.

Many people prefer to say that they are spiritual but not religious. In which case, is religion still relevant?

Wherever you create organised religion, you will create suffering and war. Organised religion means that someone dictates to the whole group that 'this is the law,' and doesn't allow people to read the dharma for themselves. There are two ways to become wise or illuminated: First, you rely on your self-experience; second, if you are given a certain teaching, you investigate it. You do not take anything for granted. That's what the Buddha said and Vedanta also says that. Aham Brahmasmi is an experience

of Shankaracharya and he is sharing it with you, but don't believe it until you experience it. Spiritual traditions have always maintained that 'I teach you something; don't believe it; go and investigate.' Spirituality is never about blind faith; it's about deeper, inner belief.

What kind of self experiences can a seeker expect on the path? There is a whole range. You can't put a number to them; a range of sounds, smells, light and inner expansion or the beyond. Through the five senses, you can experience something and you can also experience that which is beyond the five senses.

The nature of experience is not as important as proof of experience. The proof of experience is that you will become softer, more loving and expansive. To me, that is spirituality.

This is a way of testing; you could call it self-test mechanics.

You experience all the suffering, yet the heart does not contract; it keeps opening. You experience a range of emotions; you become a witness and don't become a slave of your emotions.

-Sonali Srivastava

When the divine vision is attained, all appear equal; and there remains no distinction of good and bad, or of high and low.

-Ramakrishna

EDITORIAL

Article 370 & PAGD: Farooq Abdullah's candid admissions

■ PROF HARI OM



Time has changed. The nature of Indian State too has undergone a radical change. The attitude of some in Kashmir who used to play all the shots, dictate terms, hold out threats to New Delhi and consider them indispensable and Sultans has also changed to a considerable extent, notwithstanding their oft-repeated assertion that they would snatch from New Delhi what it snatched from Kashmir. The case in point is what President of National Conference (NC) Farooq Abdullah said in an interview to a media group on August 30.

During the interview, he said and explained many things about J&K. However, two of them were really noteworthy. One was about Article 370 and Article 35A, which were abrogated on August 5-6, 2019 by Narendra Modi Government, and the other was about the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD), which was formed under his own leadership at his Gupkar residence on August 4, 2020 by the NC, People's Democratic Party (PDP), Congress, CPIM, CPI, People's Conference (PC) and Awami National Conference (ANC) to get back from the Centre the politico-constitutional status J&K enjoyed till August 4, 2019.

The manner in which he explained his views on Article 370 and Article 35A and the present status of the PAGD only served to demonstrate and prove that the possibility of restoration of the status J&K enjoyed till August 4, 2019 is very remote and that PAGD has almost collapsed or that the PAGD constituents have been treading different paths.

What did he say about the possibility of restoration of Articles 370 and 35A? Farooq Abdullah said, "It is not easy to get Article 370 and 35A restored to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir. We have already approached the Supreme Court and are waiting for the day when they will constitute a bench and hear the petition". "The restoration of Article 370 and 35 A will not come from the sky...We all have to struggle for that together. I hope the day will come and Article 370 will be restored again with dignity and honor," he further said. And what he said could be considered a candid admission that he and others of ilk in Kashmir are simply striving to achieve the unachievable. Earlier, his son and party vice president Omar Abdullah had bemoaned that CJI NV Ramana, who retired on August 26, didn't constitute a constitutional bench for hearing pleas against the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A and division of J&K into two Union Territories.

Just compare their present attitude with their attitude pre-August 2019 and you will see the difference. The difference is

glaring. A streak of defeatism, if not full defeat, can be seen from the recent statements made by Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah, who once had the audacity to say in the presence of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh that people of Kashmir didn't need financial and employment packages; they needed a comprehensive political package (in this case greater autonomy, bordering on virtual sovereignty) and misuse floor of the assembly to tell New Delhi that, "J&K only acceded to India, and not merged with India". And what did Farooq Abdullah say when asked, "Why the PAGD does not exist in the minds of the people"? Candidly admitting that PAGD has almost crumbled, he said, "Everybody has his own opinion and I cannot say anything to them". "The parties who are constituents of PAGD have their own manifesto and ideas. It is an amalgam of the parties made for a particular cause. Whatever people are saying about the PAGD is their own point of view and opinion...I cannot tell them anything. Time will tell PAGD was formed for the benefit of the people of Jammu and Kashmir...It would be premature to say what PAGD can do...that time will tell. Our enemies are hell bent to see that PAGD should disband," he, in effect, said about the status of the PAGD. And what Farooq Abdullah said was self-explanatory. He did admit that people have little or no faith in the PAGD and acknowledged that the ragtag PAGD has even failed to take off. Not just this, the resolution adopted by the NC, Kashmir Province, on August 24 tore into other constituents of the PAGD, particularly the PDP, and declared that the "NC will field candidates in all the 90 assembly constituencies". The resolution, inter-alia, also said, "The participants present in the meeting expressed dismay over the recent statements, audio jingles and speeches made by some of the constituents of the PAGD targeting JKNC. They felt that it does not contribute to the overall unity of the amalgam. They denounced the unfair treatment meted out to JKNC in PAGD". What was significant was the fact that the meeting was chaired by none other than Omar Abdullah, who himself reportedly said, "he will discuss the feedback from the meeting with the party president Farooq Abdullah". All this show that things are not moving in the direction Farooq Abdullah and others in Kashmir want them to move. It also shows that the Kashmiri leaders are a divided lot, that Kashmiri parties and politics in Kashmir are in complete disarray and that the Kashmiri leaders have lost their sheen and appeal. It will be advantage the nation if the Narendra Modi Government takes forward the process of reforms, it initiated in August 2019 to further weaken undependable and questionable leadership in Kashmir. The best thing for it to do would be to further reorganize the Union Territory of J&K.

Lord Ganesha- our mentor & protector

■ VINOD CHANDRASHEKHAR DIXIT

Year after year, Ganesh's devotees look forward to his annual coming, 'Ganesh Chaturthi', which falls every year on fourth day Bhadrapad (approximately in August-September). This year Ganesh Chaturthi is falling on August 31. Who does not know Ganesh? Ganesh, the pot-bellied figure with rounded, childish limbs and an elephant's head with one tusk broken, has four arms holding a goad, a noose, a broken tusk and a bowl of sweets. He is well-known deity not only because it has been ordained that before beginning any Puja or worshipping any other God, one must first pray to Him. Apart from Krishna, Ganesh is the only other God in whom we find childlike innocence. A prayer in the Rig Veda invoking Ganesh shows that he has been worshipped since very ancient times. The sacred symbol 'Om', as written in Sanskrit is said to represent him. He is praised at the beginning of any ceremony or undertaking and has a thousand names, including Ganesh, Ganapati, Gajendra, Siddhadata, Vinayaka, Ekadanta etc. all of which should be recited to avert evil and ensure success and well-being. Now let us see how Ganesh got his name (title) Ganapati? Once Gods were to select a leader amongst them and for this, they had a race. They

were to go round the universe thrice and in this race the God who returns first would be a winner. The Gods, including Kartikeya (Ganesh's younger brother) set out on their swift mounts and the fat Ganesh was left behind with his vehicle mouse. Ganesh went round his parents Shiva-Parvati thrice and returned to the finishing point and was declared first. All the Gods who had competed agreed that after all Ganesh had been round his universe and thus he deserved to win. Thus Ganesh became 'Gananayak', the leader of Shiva's 'Ganas' and it was decreed that people must offer him worship as the remover of all obstacles, before they begin any suspicious work or offer puja to any other God. Ganesh is worshipped with prayers and meditation but is rarely the primary deity of devotion, except in Maharashtra where Puja is offered to him and colorful processions are taken out. The history of Maharashtra since the last two hundred years is recounted and eminent, Maharashtrian politicians remembered. Ganesh Chaturthi festival has provided that symbol for Hindu regeneration in Maharashtra. Ganesh lends power in the world of action and offers protection, opens doors and given success to other Gods and Goddesses. Now let us see what Ganesh embodies within his frame and what his name signifies:

'Ganesha's potbelly or 'lambda' signifies that the entire universe or 'Brahma' is within Ganesh. The ever-moving trunk teaches us to be active. In his four hands' Chaturbhuja', Ganesh carries the Pasha (rope), Ankusha (a curved weapon), Modaka (sweets laddoos) an offering which his devotees must make to him, if they wish to please him. His fourth hand is folded in benefaction to his devotees, assuring them of his help and protection. Now, you all might be wondering why Ganesh is the all-dynamic Number One God ride a rat? There is a reason. The rate is traditionally associated with emotions like anger, pride and selfishness. Ganesh's riding rat means, God keeps these feelings under control.

Lord Ganesh's big head inspires us to think big and think profitably, the big ears prompt us to list patiently to new ideas and suggestions, and narrow eyes point to deep concentration need to finish tasks in hand well and quickly, the long nose tells us to poke around inquisitively to learn more and the small mouth reminds us to speak less and listen more. Blessings of Ganesh is always with us but during festival, he stays with us for complete ten days every year, before his idol is immersed in water with a humble prayer, 'Please come soon next year.'

Success Story: 'Mumkin' giving wings to dreams of youth of Shopian; helping them to become self-reliant

144 cases approved till date, 88 commercial vehicles provided to beneficiaries

Mumkin, a customized livelihood generation scheme of Mission Youth turned out to be a saviour for one Hatib Javed of Memendar, Shopian who always aspired to become self-reliant by becoming self-employed to secure a respectable livelihood that could fulfill needs of his family. Earlier, working as daily wage labourer, Hatib could hardly bear expenses of his family with a meagre earning. "Sometimes I would not get work for many days and all my savings dried up those days, and this feeling of not being able to save money for my dream of being self-reliant by becoming self-employed had left me depressed", said Hatib. "Getting to know about the Mumkin scheme of J&K government through an awareness programme by District Employment and Counseling Centre (DE&CC) Shopian gave me a ray of hope of realizing my dream" said Hatib adding, "Besides, awareness programme also gave my dream a direction i.e. to become self-employed by owning a vehicle". He said that during awareness programme last year, DE&CC Shopian gave him detailed information about the 'Mumkin' livelihood scheme and the official procedure and it was like a dream come true. Hatib said that he is satisfied being the happy owner of Tata Yodha and is earning enough to not only feed his family but also meet other expenses that he would earlier only dream of. Laying emphasis on self-employment, the Employment Officer, DE&CC Shopian said that Youth of Shopian should get more and more involved in self-employment ventures and entrepreneurship by availing the benefits under various self-employment schemes of the J&K government to stand on their own feet and earn for themselves besides creating job opportunities for others. He said that the youth of Shopian have shown tremendous response to the government's promising self-employment scheme viz. Mumkin to become self employed, earn for themselves and their families. Giving details, he said that department has received as many as 200 applications under Mumkin Scheme, 144 cases have been approved till date, out of which 88 commercial vehicles have been provided to the beneficiaries.

He informed that under the Youth Livelihood scheme of UT Government, small commercial vehicles are being provided to the beneficiaries, with the banking partners providing the loan facilities up to 100 per cent of the vehicle's on-road price. He further said that Mission Youth, Jammu and Kashmir, provides Rs 80,000 or 10 per cent of the vehicle's on-road price, whichever is lesser, as an upfront subsidy and the partnering vehicle manufac-

turers, provides an upfront special discount, not less than the subsidy amount, which comes out as total Rs 120,000 or 20 per cent of the on road price in form of subsidy/discount for the beneficiary. Financial assistance for purchase of small commercial vehicles such as load carriers, Taxis, Mini buses, Tempo etc is being covered under the scheme. No down payment or Margin money, collaterals or guarantor is required for availing loan from Bank, said AD, DE&CC, Shopian, the Employment Officer added. He said that department is conducting wide publicity of the employment generation schemes of the Government so that the educated unemployed youth are engaged in the sustainable livelihood and employment generation ventures. Similarly, Sahil Ahmad Khanday of Pinjora said he is on cloud nine after receiving a Mahindra Pickup Vehicle under 'Mumkin' scheme. Like many youngsters of his age, Khanday always dreamt of earning decent to improve the economic conditions of his family. Seeing the struggle of his family in making their ends meet, Khanday learnt driving at a young age and started lending a helping hand to his family. He was working for private companies and other vehicle owners on a daily-basis. "I was not earning enough to fund the education and other needs of my four younger siblings. I used to work for 12 to 14 hours daily, but at the end of the day, I was getting peanuts," said Khanday while revealing his ordeal of tough times.

Last year, Khanday saw the news regarding the Mumkin scheme on social media and immediately rushed to the DE&CC Shopian. Then after completing all formalities, he was handed over keys of the vehicle of his choice. "I am thankful to the government for providing me a source of livelihood with subsidy," Khanday said. It is worth mentioning here that the livelihood generation scheme 'Mumkin' for the youth of Jammu and Kashmir was launched by Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, last year. The 'Mumkin' is a livelihood programme designed primarily for unemployed young people in the age group of 18 to 35. To make the scheme implementation completely transparent, and fast, a module has been developed on JK-e-Services portal for operating the scheme digitally. 'Mumkin' is a special initiative of J&K administration towards channelizing energy of Youth and engaging them through systematic livelihood generation programme. This initiative will help transform numerous lives in the UT through a collective approach of all stakeholders towards materializing the scheme into a huge success.

While people aspiring for a change in the central dispensation and are looking up to the only National party capable of challenging the ruling party, the Congress itself is getting shattered due to its in-party fighting. Gandhi Members of the party at this juncture have to understand the situation and give due regards to the public voice. It is pertinent to say that the leaders like Nitesh Kumar, Tejaswi Yadav and others have come closer to Congress and at the same time several influential leaders, uncomfortable with ruling party, would also be happy to strengthen Congress party. I would like to appeal to the Congress High Command not to forget the national interest and find out a viable solution to stop disintegration in party by forgetting personal interests at all levels.

Santosh Singh Komal,
President, Live & Let Live Society of India
(LILLSI).

PROGRESSING J&K
Govt establishes transparent, accountable governance system across UT

EMPOWERMENT, BEAMS, JK-PaYSyS among host of initiatives bringing financial discipline in Govt Depts

J through which every work is being put into public domain thereby establishing a greater accountability and transparency in the work culture as well as ensuring that money is spent as per the developmental needs of people. Government is undertaking several reforms which will help to further fine-tune the developmental strategy and give an impetus to the efforts fast tracking development here.

The proper documentation of development projects with photographic evidence and geo-coordinates is an effort towards enhancing transparency and accountability in the execution of works. 32,889 works are available online on Empowerment portal for citizens to check and ensure they are being done as per predefined specifications. The UT of J&K has achieved an unprecedented level of transparency in the financial management through a host of financial reforms and interventions made by the Government which include the activity-wise online release of funds through 'BEAMS' (Budget Estimation, Allocation and Monitoring System); EMPOWERMENT (Enabling Monitoring and Public Overview of Works Being Executed & Resources for meaningful Transparency) portal which gives details of projects and related expenses and puts them in public domain, making administrative and technical approvals, e-tendering, geo-tagged photographs mandatory for payments; online bidding through 'JK Payment System'; streamlining of GST; e-stamping; e-GRAS; digital payments; implementation of GeM; publication of important manuals relating to Budget and Audit, Back to Village and My Town My Pride initiatives and 100 per cent physical verification of projects.

The administration has successfully implemented innovative initiatives in this regard which inter alia included BEAMS, online submission of bills through J&K PaySys, mandatory administrative approvals, technical sanctions and e-tendering, digital payments, GFR, GeM and related measures which have greatly helped in bringing financial discipline in government departments here. Key reforms introduced by Jammu and Kashmir government in its financial structure envisaging added transparency and accountability have brought UT's fiscal system at par with any other progressive arrangement across the country. Promoting good governance in the financial management has been one of the core objectives of the government. The financial system in J&K is one of the most transparent systems anywhere and is among the key changes that have taken roots in the Union Territory.

Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, during her recent visit to J&K said the abrogation of Article 370 brought impetus in financial activities, transparency in administration and growth in UT's economy. "In the past two years, work that has happened in J&K is absolutely stunning. The government procurement, recruitment, government spending of its resources, taxation or deployment of resources, whatever it be, they are now available online 24X7 with all transparency," she asserted. So in terms of bringing transparency in governance, in terms of being transparent itself tells you that they are accountable for every one rupee which is being spent on ground, she added.

YOUR COLUMN
Congress stalwarts themselves making 'Congress-Mukt Bharat'

Dear Editor,

The facts so far coming to fore reveal that even Congress Stalwarts have themselves started to make Congress-Mukt Bharat and fulfill dreams of BJP. Such a situation has been created where the senior leaders who took birth in Congress are quitting Congress en masse alleging the treatment meted out to them was a dent to their self-respect. In his comments, G N Azad said that instead of ensuing Bharat Jodo Yatra, a Congress Jodo Yatra is must at present time. He got worst hurt on attaching to him the false allegation of 'speaking language of BJP'. He exerted that he would never join BJP.