

DEVELOPING J&K

Jammu and Kashmir as an integral part of India. Jammu and Kashmir indeed holds significant cultural, historical, and natural importance. It is known for its breathtaking landscapes, including the beautiful Himalayan mountains, pristine lakes, and lush valleys, which have earned it the nickname "heaven on earth."

It's important to note that the political situation and issues surrounding Jammu and Kashmir are complex and have been a source of tension between India and Pakistan for many years. The region has a unique autonomous status within the Indian Constitution under Article 370, although this article had been revoked by the Indian government.

The situation in Jammu and Kashmir has been a matter of international concern and debate, with differing perspectives on the issue. India has indeed faced security challenges in the region, and the Indian Army has played a crucial role in maintaining stability and safeguarding the area.

Efforts by the Indian government to support the return of migrants to Jammu and Kashmir are commendable, as it aims to address the concerns and needs of the people in the region. It's important for any government to work towards the well-being and development of all its citizens. The Prime Minister of India is focusing on three main areas in Jammu and Kashmir which include speedy development to benefit the ordinary citizens and uplift their living standards; strengthening grassroots democracy, which likely involves promoting local governance and democratic institutions; ensuring a peaceful security scenario, suggesting efforts to maintain law and order in the region.

Jammu and Kashmir is recognized as a global tourist destination with diverse tourism opportunities, including recreational, adventure, pilgrimage, spiritual, and health tourism.

Social media is inherently a selfish medium

■ JUGESH SINGH THAKUR

In the vast landscape of human interaction, social media stands as a virtual realm-a terrain that has reshaped the way we communicate, connect, and consume information. Like any Geological feature, it has its distinct features, and one of the prominent ones is the prevalence of selfishness.

Social media, as a tool for communication and self-expression, often reflects elements of human nature, including selfishness. Users frequently engage in a manner that prioritize personal gratification, self-promotion, and the pursuit of individual interests. This is evident in the thoughtfully chosen self-presentation, the craving for attention and validation, and the formation of filter bubbles that insulate users from diverse perspectives. While social media isn't inherently selfish, it can amplify and encourage such behaviours. It is the responsibility of users to balance self-interest with broader societal considerations in the digital age.

Social media, the e world where billions of voices converge, has emerged as a double-edged sword in our interconnected world. It is a landscape shaped by human nature's duality, where the instinct for self-preservation and self-promotion interlaces with the aspiration for connection and communal well-being. Beneath the shiny facade of perfectly filtered photos and precisely assembled posts, a profound question lingers: Is social media inherently a selfish medium?

At the very surface of this digital landscape, we encounter the Self-Presentation contradiction. This is a place where people work very hard to make themselves look good online, like artists painting a perfect picture. Everything they post, every photo they share, is like adding a piece to this digital version of themselves. But underneath all this, there's a big focus on getting likes, comments, and shares from others to feel good about themselves. This is where selfishness starts - wanting recognition and approval from others on the internet. It's like we're sculpting our digital selves, hiding our flaws, and showing only the best parts of who we are. While it gives us a sense of control and makes us feel good about ourselves, it also makes us very focused on ourselves.

But in this strange world, there's also a desire for real connections with people. We sometimes show our true selves, our vulnerabilities. This creates a conflict between how we show ourselves and who we really are. This makes us wonder if social media is inherently selfish.

One of the biggest drawback of Social media is, it gives birth to the expression of excessive and inappropriate ads. The random occurrence of inappropriate ads on social media can have profoundly negative effects on individuals' lives, particularly on children. These ads often feature explicit content, misleading information, or promote harmful products, and their presence can lead to various detrimental consequences. First and foremost, the exposure to inappropriate ads can harm the mental and emotional well-being of children. Young minds are impressionable, and witnessing explicit or disturbing content at an early age can lead to confusion, anxiety, and even desensitization to inappropriate material. These experiences may contribute to the development of unhealthy attitudes and behaviour.

Furthermore, these ads can compromise children's online safety. Clicking on inappropriate ads may lead to malicious websites, putting them at risk of encountering harmful content or potential cyber threats. Moreover, the constant exposure to these ads can hinder children's ability to focus and engage in productive activities. The click bait nature of many inappropriate ads can be distracting, pulling them away from educational or constructive pursuits, ultimately affecting their academic performance and personal development.

The frequent engagement, a complex construct that controls the distribution of attention throughout the digital landscape, is encountered as we go more beneath the surface of the social media ecosystem. Users compete for the limited resource of viewer's time and attention in this competitive ecology, acting like attention-seeking organisms. Like skilled predators, social media sites have mastered the art of grabbing and retaining our attention. They seduce us with notifications, enticing scrollable feeds, and recommendations for tailored content. But this competition for our attention, which is frequently fuelled by algorithms created to optimize user engagement, turns social media into a place for selfish actions. Sensational, emotionally charged, or provocative content usually gets the most attention because it appeals to our fundamental needs for novelty and excitement. In this competition for attention, people cultivate a culture of self-promotion where they compete to make their voices heard and get followers. Users prioritize their own content and need for attention, frequently at the expense of fair and meaningful connections, which fosters selfishness in this environment. Like an expedition into the depths of the digital ocean, our search for our own treasures-likes, shares, and followers-can sometimes obfuscate the real gems of connection, empathy, and understanding the mixed experiences.

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

PM Narendra Modi is creating a history by giving the cabinet nod to the tabling of the long overdue women's reservation Bill in Parliament and in fact his government has tabled this important bill of empowering the women who constitute half of the population of the country in Lok Sabha .Women's reservation bill is tabled in the new parliament on the second day of the special session of the parliament .It now seems that the myth of the women's reservation is now becoming a reality .Modi is not only tabling this important piece of legislation in parliament having far reaching importance but will get it passed after the debate ,discussion and deliberation in both the houses of the parliament .He has the guts ,will power and the political will to get this important bill to passed in the parliament .The issue of the reservation to women in the parliament and state assemblies dates back to pre independence days and in the modern times it has been lingering on for the last 27 years .The women reservation bill seeks to reserve one-third -33% of the total number of seats in the state legislative assemblies and parliament for women .The bill also proposes sub - reservation for SCs ,STs and Anglo Indians within the 33 % quota .The union cabinet on Monday cleared the Women's Reservation Bill - WRB in a key meeting chaired by the PM Narandra Modi ."Only the Modi government had the moral courage to fulfill the demand for women's reservation which was proved by the approval of cabinet .Congratulations to Narendra Modi Ji and congratulations to the Modi government. "minister of state for Food Processing Industries and Jal Shakti Prahlad Patel wrote on the X .Reacting to the development senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh wrote on X ."It has been a long standing demand of the Congress party to implement women's reservation .We welcome the reported decision of the union cabinet and await the details of the bill

A Bold Step Forward: Modi Government's Women's Reservation Bill

■ MANZOOR NAIK

In a historic move that signifies a significant milestone in India's journey towards gender equality, the Modi government cabinet recently approved the Women's Reservation Bill, reserving 33 percent of seats in the Lok Sabha for women. Furthermore, this groundbreaking legislation extends its reach to the Legislative Assembly elections, fostering greater political participation among women in the regional politics. This development is nothing short of a triumph for gender inclusivity, heralding a new era for Indian democracy.

The Women's Reservation Bill, has its origins in India's long-standing struggle for gender equality and women's empowerment in politics. The bill's journey can be traced back to the early 1990s when the issue of underrepresentation of women in Indian politics gained significant attention.

The idea of reserving seats for women in legislative bodies was initially advocated by women's rights activists, women's organizations, and various political leaders who recognized the need for increased female participation in politics. They argued that such a reservation would help address the glaring gender disparity in India's political landscape.

A significant precursor to the Women's Reservation Bill was the introduction of reservations for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions

(local self-government bodies) in the 1990s. This move, backed by constitutional amendments, reserved one-third of seats for women in rural and urban local bodies. It was a pioneering step that demonstrated the positive impact of women's participation in grassroots governance.

The formal introduction of the Women's Reservation Bill in the Indian Parliament happened in various forms over the years. The first official attempt to pass the bill in the Rajya Sabha (the upper house of Parliament) was made in 1996 but faced significant opposition and was not successful. Over the next two decades, the bill was reintroduced multiple times in Parliament, with several versions and amendments proposed. These efforts faced opposition from various quarters, with concerns raised about the potential implications of reservations on existing political structures.

The passage of the Women's Reservation Bill is a testament to the government's commitment to promoting women's empowerment in politics. The longstanding gender disparity in Indian politics has been a topic of concern for years, with women consistently underrepresented in decision-making bodies. This bill aims to rectify this imbalance by providing women with the much-needed platform to actively participate in shaping the nation's policies and future.

The decision to extend the reservation to the

women representatives in Panchayats and nagarpalikas across the country .On September 12,1996 ,the then Dave Gowda-led United Front government for the first time introduced the 81st constitution Amendment Bill in Lok Sabha for reservation of women in the parliament .After the Bill failed to get approval in Lok Sabha ,it was referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee chaired by Geeta Mukherjee .The Mukherjee committee presented its report in December 1996 .However the bill lapsed with the dissolution of the Lok sabha .Two years later ,the A.B.Vajpayee -led NDA government pushed the WRB in the 12th Lok Sabha in 1998.However this time too Bill failed to get support and lapsed again .It was subsequently reintroduced in 1999,2002 and 2003 under the Vajpayee government ,but with no success .Five years later ,the WRB again gained some traction during Manmohan Singh -led UPA government -1.In 2004 ,the government included it in its common minimum programme and finally tabled it on May 2008 this time in Rajya sabha to prevent it from lapsing again .The legislation was sent to standing committee on May 9,2008 .The standing committee presented its report on December 17,2009.It got the stamp of approval from the union cabinet in February 2010.The Bill was eventually passed in the Rajya sabha with 186-1 votes on March 9,2010.However the Bill was never taken up for consideration in the Lok sabha and eventually lapsed in 2014 with the dissolution of the Lok Sabha .Bills introduced /passed in Rajya Sabha do not lapse ,hence the WRB is still very much active .Dimple Vadav of SP,MP pleaded for giving reservation to Muslim women .But reservation on the basis of religion is against the constitution and it should not be given .Lastly the Modi government showed its courage and commitment to women empowerment and thus Law minister Arjun Ram Megwal introduced the women's reservation Bill titled as ,"Nari Shakti Vandan

Adiniyam.' 'in Lok sabha and the debates ,discussions and deliberations are going on the Bill and this time it is hoped that this legislation will be passed in both the houses of the parliament and it will become a law and the women will be empowered politically and the political empowerment will result in the social and economic empowerment of the women .in fact the new history is being created by the Modi when the women reservation Bill will be passed in the new parliament building as the very first legislation .The passage of the women's reservation Bill will be written in the golden letters in the history of the independent India .Thus Modi has created a history by tabling the reservation Bill and he is making serious efforts to get the Bill passed in both the houses of the parliament and the passage of this bill will be a master stroke of Modi and it will be a game changer in the general elections of 2024 and BJP will be the gainer in the five state assembly elections and ultimately in the general election .In short the myth of women's reservation is now turning into reality in the tenure of Modi government and he will definitely get the credit of women's reservation if the bill in this regard is passed by both houses of parliament .This bill shows the commitment of the Modi government to uphold the Sanatan ideology so far as it relates to the improvement in the status and representation of the women .The empowerment of the women is important and so the women reservation bill is all the more necessary .Our Shastras declare ,"Yatra Sitristo Samanta ,Tatra Ramante Deva ."meaning where women are respected ,gods travel there .Thus all the political parties without doing politics should support the women's reservation Bill introduced in the Lok Sabha by union Law minister and make the women's reservation a reality.

(The author is a columnist, social and KP activist).

cial issues such as healthcare, education, and social welfare. Their presence can lead to more inclusive and empathetic policies that address the diverse needs of the population. However, it's crucial to recognize that passing the Women's Reservation Bill is just the first step. To make it truly effective, we need to ensure that women from all backgrounds have equal access to political opportunities. This involves addressing socio-economic barriers, providing education and training, and eliminating gender-based discrimination.

In conclusion, the passage of the Women's Reservation Bill by the Modi government is a watershed moment in India's journey towards gender equality. It sends a powerful message that women's voices and perspectives are essential in shaping the nation's future. By extending this legislation to the Jammu and Kashmir legislative assembly elections, the government showcases its commitment to inclusivity even in challenging regions. As the Women's Reservation Bill becomes a reality, it is incumbent upon us as a society to support and encourage women in politics. With the active participation of women in governance, India stands to benefit from more balanced, empathetic, and inclusive policies that reflect the diverse needs and aspirations of its citizens. This is not just a win for women but a significant step towards a more equitable and just democracy for all.

Kashmiri Pandit Ritual of Punn Deun

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

Kashmiri Pandit culture is very unique and this segment of Sanatan Dharma performs different rituals, ceremonies and traditions which distinguish this microscopic community from rest of Hinduisam. One such ritual observed and performed by the Kashmiri Pandits is called in Kashmiri parlance as Punn Deun. The KP's have preserved their rites, rituals, ceremonies and traditions during their displacement or exile from their roots -Kashmir. But all the KP households do not observe and perform the pun ritual, but only those KP households perform the Punn ritual who from their ancestry used to perform Punn ritual .Held around Ganesh Chaturthi, the ritual of Punn is filled with nostalgia for Kashmiri pundits .Around this time of the year ,when summer is showing its last bout of strength and autumn starts making its felt in the valley, Kashmiri Pandits celebrate a ritual called Punn (Kashmiri for thread) .Held around Ganesh Chaturthi, called Vinayak Chorun by KP's ,deep fried wheat bread ,called roth ,is made and distributed among relatives ,neighbors and friends .The KP's have kept all their rituals and festivals alive even in their exile and so they celebrate and observe pun ritual away from their native land of Kashmir .Punn can be celebrated on any of the four-five auspicious days over the second bright fortnight of Bhadun and even those families who member had passed away in the year ,they perform this ritual of punn on the last auspicious day .In pre-militancy days ,before 1990 ,if you happen to walk through certain neighborhood of Kashmir at this time ,a heady aroma would waft from houses ,just like the scent

of vanilla which announces to that you are baking .This ritual of pun is celebrated and performed on the auspicious dates in the second bright fortnight of Bhadun and it culminates on punnimashi .This is a traditional celebration celebrated by Kashmiri Pandit families in the month of Bhadron(August/September) by preparing very delicious Roths of Wheat pan cakes which are fried in Desi Ghee .Some people consider it as a celebration of Bhagvan Mahavir Hanuman day .People in south India celebrate this day as Ganesh Puja celebration .Punn Duen and the distribution of Roth to the friends ,relatives and neighbors is a way to create and maintain social contact and link .The distribution of the Roth naaved among the people makes us aware about the well being of our kith and kin and thus it has great importance in connecting people .This day is celebrated with devotion ,to show respect to almighty God .The celebration also gives enjoyment in the form of get together for the family ,especially among children .For this celebration the whole house is cleaned particularly the kitchen and brass utensils are washed and cleaned thoroughly .The religious significance if this festival may have numerous interpretations but it has the same importance as our other festivals however pun deun remains at the top of the priority of the women folk .Actually the head lady of the family performs the puja with the participation of all family members .A thread is spun by an unmarried girl and the same is fastened with the ear by the head lady who performs the major role in pun deun.A utinsel of brass mainly Gudwa is kept full of water and green Dramun Grass is held by all the family members and after the

Katha of Punn the grass is immersed into the pot which is full of water and three four Roths are kept at the head of the pot .Then at the evening the water and grass of the pot is immersed into a river or laid at the root of a plant .The ingredients such as wheat flour ,brown sugar ,ghee ,salt, vegetable oil ,yogurt (Zamut Dud) ,Khashluskash seed ,cardamom etc are arranged in advance .For puja flowers ,Green grass i.e Dramun ,some fruits ,fresh walnut ,silver foil ,Nariwan and sindoor is arranged and all these things are used in puja .Kashmiri Pandits have a special place for Lord Ganesha being the son of Lord shiva and Parvati .He has been blessed by Shiva as the Siddhi Daata.According to Ganesh Purana ,the fourth day of bright fortnight of every lunar month is called siddhi Vinayak chaturthi .The fourth day of Badurapad Shukla bright half chaturthi is known as Maha Siddhi Vinayak Chaurthi (as it is on this day that Parvati ,spouse of Lord Shiva ,created Ganesha for her protection) When this chaturthi falls on Tuesday or Saturday it is termed as Varad Chaturthi or Shiva Chaturthi and its importance increases .We observe this great arrival of Lord Ganesha for 10 days from Chaturthi to Chaturdashi by preparing 'Roth '(sweet thick Pancakes fried in ghee) and Laddoos from wheat flour .On this day ladies of the household get up early in the morning and a bath and get to the business of preparing Roths at a specially cleaned up space.First of all ,roths made from 1 -1/4 kg of wheat flour mixed with ¼ quantity sugar are rolled and fried in boiling ghee .These are kept apart as Lord Ganesha's Prasad along with few Ladoo's prepared out of above mentioned material .Then additional roths are

prepared out of the above material .Then additional roths are prepared for all the family members ,daughter's family ,close relatives ,and neighbors .After roth preparation is completed ,a metallic pot (Gadda) is placed at a specially cleaned up place as a symbol of Lord Ganesh .A mixture of green grass ,barley, and flowers is prepared in a thali .A small quantity of above mixture is put in the pot .Then it is tied with mavli (Narvin) round its neck and using sindur tilk OM in Hindi is painted on this pot .Some milk and a coin are also placed on this pot .The ladies of the house put a small thread made from raw cotton (Hence the name punn) by an unmarried girl by the side of their Athahore or dehahor .All the family members assemle near this pot .A sindur tilak is applied on the forehead and senior household lady places the mixture prepared in the thali in the hands of all family members and gives blessings for their welfare. Everybody takes a seat and then senior lady recites a story of Bib Dharam Maej. After the story is narrated and listened to by all the family members with devotion, some prayers are offered to Lord Ganesha and then everybody puts the mixture in the pot as it symbolized Lord Ganesha. Roths are then distributed to all the family members along with a cup of Nunn Chai. Then roths are distributed to the married daughters inlaws, other near relatives, neighbors and friends. May Bib Dharam Mauj and Lord Ganesha remove all obstacles in the return and rehabilitation of KP's to valley and may we continue to keep live all rituals and festivals.

(The author is a columnist, social and KP activist).

YOUR COLUMN

Elderly people have the right to live a dignified life

Dear Editor,

Individualistic and opportunistic thinking has made the structure of society rude and insensitive in the present era. Now the essence of relationships remains only that people are maintaining relationships as per their need. As soon as the need ends, even the elders in the house start being considered a burden. Today, it is the same story in every household that the elders of the house are forced to live a life of loneliness, contempt, neglect and fear by the family members. In this era of modernity, consumerist culture and metropolitianDue to modern understanding, there has been a

change in the thinking of the new generation in the changing environment of social values. The integrated lifestyle has created many problems for the elderly. Article 21 of the Constitution gives every human being the right to live a dignified life, but what can one do when one's own right becomes an obstacle? Well, it is a great irony of our society that we have become so blind in our desire for sons that we are unable to give the love to our daughters that they actually deserve. Even today in our societyIt is filled with male chauvinist mentality. Even today we consider sons as Kuldeepak, while daughters are considered as someone else's wealth, but often these same Kuldeepak leave their own father in an old age home. We are the people of the country having the spirit of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'. Then how are they becoming so blind in the race of modernity that they are bent upon abandoning their own traditions. Is this modernity, in which we forget to respect our loved ones? Why do we forget that mother brought

us into this world by bearing the greatest pain of her life?Has given birth, the father has taught us to walk holding the finger, has made us capable of knowing the difference between right and wrong. Then when they need our support. So how can we turn back? We have to understand what our elders are trying to tell us. Today instead of listening to them, we have started telling our stories. This is the reason why criminal tendencies are increasing in the society in the present times. Today we want to preserve the old buildings, but leave the elders at home helpless and in tears.Are. Only if we give our elderly parents the right to live a respectful life, our present and future will be secure. Otherwise, the way we are making our parents homeless. Tomorrow we will also grow old and our children will also see and learn the same things that we do with our parents today. Have been.

Vijay Garg