

## POLITICS CANNOT BE ABOVE THE NATION

In contemporary society, the relationship between politics and national interest has become increasingly complex. While political discourse is essential for a functioning democracy, it is imperative to recognize that political agendas must never supersede the welfare of the nation. The consequences of placing political aspirations above national interests can be dire, leading to division, weakened governance, and a loss of trust among citizens. At its core, politics serves as a mechanism for organizing society, enabling citizens to express their values, interests, and aspirations. However, when politicians prioritize personal gain, party loyalty, or short-term victories over the broader interests of the nation, they undermine the very foundation of democracy. History offers numerous examples of leaders who have pursued political expediency at the expense of national unity and stability, resulting in long-lasting repercussions.

Consider the political climate in various countries where leaders have exploited divisions for electoral gain. Politicians often engage in identity politics, emphasizing race, religion, or socioeconomic status to rally their bases. While mobilizing support can be a legitimate tactic, it can also create an "us versus them" mentality that fractures national unity. When political parties prioritize winning elections over fostering social cohesion, the nation's fabric begins to fray.

In many cases, political maneuvering results in legislative gridlock, where essential policies-such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure-are delayed or blocked due to partisan conflict. This failure to govern effectively harms citizens who rely on these services, fostering a sense of disenchantment and disillusionment. When citizens perceive that their leaders are more focused on political battles than on addressing their needs, trust in government erodes. This mistrust can spiral into apathy, disengagement, and even civil unrest, destabilizing the nation.

Moreover, the prioritization of political agendas over national interests can lead to detrimental foreign policy decisions. National security should always be a top priority; however, political leaders may engage in risky behavior to bolster their standing at home. For instance, decisions made in haste or driven by political pressure can jeopardize diplomatic relationships, weaken alliances, and endanger national security. Leaders must prioritize long-term national interests over short-term political gains, ensuring that the nation remains safe and respected on the global stage.

A poignant illustration of this principle is the response to climate change, a challenge that transcends borders and requires collective action. Yet, political leaders often struggle to unite behind meaningful climate policies, with some prioritizing economic interests or voter approval over environmental sustainability. This approach not only endangers the planet but also jeopardizes future generations' quality of life. The political discourse surrounding climate change should focus on solutions that benefit the nation as a whole, rather than being mired in partisan disagreements.

To ensure that politics serves the nation rather than dominates it, citizens must remain vigilant and actively engage in the democratic process. Voter education is paramount; understanding candidates' platforms and holding them accountable for their actions is essential. Furthermore, citizens should advocate for transparency in political processes and demand that their representatives prioritize national interests over party loyalty or personal ambition. Grassroots movements can serve as powerful catalysts for change, pushing for policies that promote unity and long-term benefits for society.

Political leaders, too, must embrace a sense of responsibility that transcends party lines. Statesmanship requires a commitment to the greater good, with leaders willing to engage in difficult conversations and make compromises for the nation's welfare. Collaborative governance can help bridge partisan divides, fostering a culture of respect and mutual understanding. When politicians prioritize collaboration over confrontation, they can address pressing issues effectively and restore faith in democratic institutions.

Ultimately, the principle that politics cannot be above the nation is fundamental to the survival of democratic societies. As citizens and leaders alike navigate the complexities of contemporary governance, it is crucial to remain committed to the shared values and aspirations that bind communities together. Acknowledging the importance of unity, empathy, and the common good is essential for building a resilient and thriving nation.

The health of a democracy hinges on the relationship between politics and national interest. Politicians must prioritize the welfare of the nation above personal and party ambitions, while citizens must hold them accountable. By fostering a culture of collaboration, transparency, and civic engagement, societies can ensure that politics serves as a tool for progress rather than a source of division. When the interests of the nation take precedence, democracy can flourish, creating a brighter future for all.

### Strengthening Food Safety Systems

Food safety is paramount to public health, economic stability, and consumer confidence. As globalization increases food trade and production complexities, ensuring that food safety systems are robust and effective is more crucial than ever. Strengthening these systems requires a multifaceted approach that encompasses regulatory frameworks, technological advancements, education, and international cooperation.

The consequences of inadequate food safety systems can be dire, ranging from foodborne illnesses to widespread outbreaks that can cause severe health crises and economic losses. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), foodborne and waterborne diseases are responsible for an estimated 600 million illnesses and 420,000 deaths annually. These alarming statistics underline the urgent need for comprehensive food safety measures.

Effective food safety systems protect consumers, bolster food trade, and support the agricultural economy. When consumers trust that their food is safe, they are more likely to purchase local products, benefiting regional economies. Additionally, countries with strong food safety protocols can enhance their export capabilities, as international markets increasingly demand stringent safety standards.

To strengthen food safety systems, countries must develop and enforce robust regulatory frameworks. This involves creating clear standards for food production, processing, and distribution. Regulatory bodies must be adequately funded and staffed to ensure compliance and enforcement. Regular inspections and audits of food facilities can help identify potential hazards before they affect public health.

Moreover, regulations should be adaptable to emerging risks, such as those posed by climate change or new technologies. Policymakers need to engage with industry stakeholders to ensure that regulations are practical and effective while maintaining high safety standards. Technological advancements play a vital role in enhancing food safety systems. The adoption of traceability systems, powered by blockchain technology, allows for better tracking of food products throughout the supply chain. This transparency helps identify the source of contamination quickly, facilitating timely responses to foodborne illness outbreaks.

Additionally, artificial intelligence and machine learning can be employed to analyze data and predict potential food safety risks. By monitoring trends and patterns, authorities can proactively address issues before they escalate. Investments in research and development are essential to harness these technologies effectively.

An informed public and well-trained workforce are crucial components of effective food safety systems. Educational programs targeting consumers, food handlers, and producers can significantly enhance awareness of food safety practices. Public health campaigns that promote safe food handling, cooking, and storage can reduce the incidence of foodborne illnesses.

## AIIMS Jammu: A Transformative Journey towards an Epitome of Healthcare Institution.

■ PROF (DR.) SHAKTI KUMAR GUPTA

AIIMS Jammu's journey, right from its inception, is guided by our "Trinity of Mission", Medical Education & Training, Healthcare Research, and Comprehensive Patient Care. We firmly believe that medical education must be rooted in strong values, research should aim for the highest quality, and patient care must be driven by evidence-based practices. At AIIMS Jammu, we integrate clinical and community care to impact lives profoundly, ensuring our healthcare initiatives reach every corner of society with dedication and excellence.

Our commitment to these principles has led to significant advancements in these areas:

- Medical Education & Training

In three transformative years, AIIMS Jammu has become a beacon of excellence in medical education, starting with 50 MBBS students in 2020 and 100 students in 2024. The B.Sc. Nursing program has also commenced with 60 students enrolled this year.

In July 2024, 45 Post Graduate seats across Medicine, Surgery, and Dentistry have been introduced and we are poised to launch Super Specialization courses (DM/MCh) in January 2025.

Our exceptional educational environment includes state-of-the-art lecture theatres, advanced laboratories, and labs. We also offer a unique 24/7 digital library, and dedicated mentors who guide students throughout their academic journey, ensuring their success.

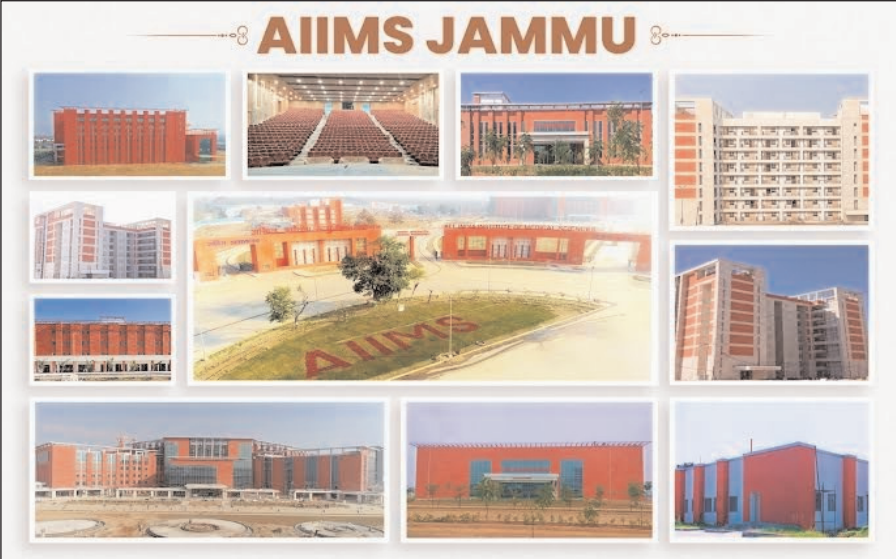
### Research

It is noteworthy that AIIMS Jammu, in a remarkably short span of time, is leading a multi-centric research project involving nearly six AIIMS, with funding of 25 crores from ICMRA total of 81 research projects are currently in progress.

### Clinical Care

AIIMS Jammu has commenced its OPD, IPD, OT and Emergency services.AIIMS Jammu has been serving nearly 800-1000 patients daily since the launch of its OPD services, with the number expected to rise to around 2500 patients in the coming months, drawing patients from Jammu, Kashmir, Leh, and neighbouring states like Punjab and Himachal Pradesh. The IPD facility, which currently has 100 beds, is already addressing the needs of the community, with plans to increase capacity to 250 beds within a month and to reach the full 750-bed capacitywithin six months. OT services have also begun.Immunization services have been initiated in the OPD.

The Institute has functionalized 24X7 lab services and a 3 Tesla MRI, with a state-of-the-art 128-slice CT scan, Digital X-ray services, Endoscopy and Colonoscopy Services, Jan



Aushadhi and Anrit Pharmacy and Night Shelter.

The digitalization of AIIMS Jammu is underway, with an Indoor Patient Navigation System already implemented in the OPD and set to expand to other areas.The Indoor Patient Navigation System at AIIMS Jammu exemplifies our dedication to patient-centric care. It provides the Real-time location tracking via user-friendly maps, ensuring patients can easily find their way to various area. It also provides Voice-guided navigation for visually impaired individuals and efficient route calculation for patients with mobility limitations. It provides detailed directions to departments, wards, and facilities, minimizing the need for staff assistance, and information about nearby amenities like restrooms, cafeterias, and waiting areas to enhance visit planning. Additionally, our Patient Assistant services, Patient Care Coordinators, Patient Care Managers, and upcoming Smart Payment Cards are designed to further enrich the patient experience, affirming AIIMS Jammu's commitment to being a truly "Patient-Centric Hospital".Our goal is to achieve complete healthcare digitalization within a year, with progress marked by identified key milestones.

### Community Care

AIIMS Jammu extends its impact beyond institutional boundaries through a variety of outreach activities, telemedicine services, and the Poison Information Centre, reaching even the most remote corners of society.

In the digital age, AIIMS Jammu leverages platforms such as YouTube and blogs to conduct informative talks, sharing valuable knowledge and insights with a diverse audience. These efforts are complemented by on-ground camps that offer hands-on experiences, further

extending our reach and impact within the community.

### Collaborations

Integration of AYUSH with modern technology is supported through collaborations with prestigious institutions like IIT, IIM, and IIIM, as well as partnerships with Naturopathy and others. These alliances are essential for creating a responsive, adaptable, and globally connected healthcare ecosystem.

Internationally, we have established a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), USA, focusing on innovation, entrepreneurship, and start-ups in the healthcare sector.

Additionally, we are making significant strides in enhancing our research and innovation capabilities. This includes establishing an Industry-Academia Interface to foster collaborative research, creating a Centre for Predictive Medical Technology to drive advancements in precision healthcare, and developing cutting-edge centers for Robotics and Techno Surgery to integrate modern technology into medical practice.

### Environment Friendly Initiatives

AIIMS Jammu is dedicated to fostering a green and eco-friendly environment as part of our commitment to sustainability and minimizing our ecological footprint.We have adopted green building practices and energy-efficient systems to support our vision of a sustainable future like use of electric vehicles, "Parikrama Seva".

Key initiatives also include Tree plantation drives, with a goal of planting 13,500 trees and 5,00,000 shrubs, Installation of a solar panel system to harness renewable energyand a comprehensive waste management system.

AIIMS Jammu's dedication to environmental care was recognized with the "Best Project" award during the 170th CPWD Annual Day, presented by Hon'ble Union Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, Shri Manohar Lal Khattar.

### Job Opportunities for Locals

Our recruitment strategy at AIIMS Jammu is thoughtfully designed to align quality healthcare delivery with opportunities for local residents. Currently out of our total staff of 1,476 members, 857 (58%) are local residents.

### Unity in Diversity

As we celebrate our achievements, it is with immense pride that we highlight AIIMS Jammu's evolution into a cosmopolitan institution. Our faculty, Senior Residents. Nurses, administrative staff, technicians, and others represent a rich tapestry of India's diverse regions. With staff hailing from 20 states and 3 Union Territories, and the highest representation from J&K, AIIMS Jammu exemplifies-the "Unity in Diversity" that is a cornerstone of our nation.

### Gender Equality

Our gender-sensitive policies and specialized leadership programs reflect our commitment to creating a balanced and inclusive workplace. Currently, our workforce comprises 1,476 staff members, with 671 (45%) females. Excluding outsourced staff, we have 821 members, where 67% are female.

### Future Vision

AIIMS Jammu is embarking on an ambitious journey to establish itself as a "Global Village" with several 'Centres of Excellence, aimed at ensuring the success and impact of our healthcare and educational endeavors. Our vision encompasses a multidimensional approach, featuring specialized centers in areas such as Institute of Traumatology, Telemedicine and Telecare, Nursing, Comprehensive Cancer Care, Advanced Studies in Hospital Administration, Ophthalmology, Dental Sciences, Forensic Sciences, and Comprehensive Community Outreach Services.

We express our sincere gratitude to the Honorable Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, for his vision and invaluable support to AIIMS Jammu. We are alsograteful to the Minister of Health & Family Welfare, JP Nadda, andto the Lt. Governor of the Union Territory of J&K, Manoj Sinha, for their continuous and exceptional motivation and guidance. AIIMS Jammu is thankful to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, for their unwavering trust, and faith. The institution is also proud of its healthcare team for their relentless dedication and commitment.

(The Writer is CEO and Exeuctive Director AIIMS, Jammu)

## Maharaja Hari Singh- The Reformist Ruler

■ RAVI ROHMETRA

Maharaja Hari Singh also remarked that "as a ruler I have no religion, All Religions are mine and my religion is justice.

Maharaja Hari Singh was a great visionary, Progressive thinker, true patriot, economic reformer and social who brought many reforms for the welfare of the general public, like banning of social evils, such as child marriage female infanticide, Sati Pratha, untouchability, smoking at public places etc. For economic and social uplifting of the status of women in society by promoting widow re marriages and women health and education. He treated everybody equal irrespective of their religion, caste or colour and preached brotherhood among all the communities viz Hindu, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and others. It is pertinent to mention that Maharaja Sahib was so far-sighted that he decided to annex Jammu and Kashmir with India for the welfare of the general public. He knew that India is the country where people have ability to prosper in every respect, live peacefully and extend brotherhood to people of all religions. It is needless to day that Maharaja Hari Singh's reign heralded sea of reforms and people friendly policies which endeared him to all his subjects , irrespective of their religion class or gender and have relevance , importance and usefulness even today . Maharaja Sahib was ahead of many princely states to introduce reforms in social , economical and educational reforms which improved the condition of residents of the erstwhile state. He worked for all the segments and groups of the society. He opened the doors of schools, temples and other common utilities for untouchables. To encourage education he opened about twenty thousand Primary schools, immoral trafficking in women was stopped. Peasants were given proprietary rights of land. Practice of sati was stopped . The practice of child marriage and killing of female infants was stopped. Established Jammu and Kashmir Bank and High Court of Jammu and Kashmir, established Maharaja Hari Singh Hospital in Srinagar. In short his contribution towards the welfare of his subjects was immense.

"Maharaja Hari Singh" a patriotic darling, dignitary and dynamic personality of the royal family. Most renowned ruler of British India as well as Indian Union as ruler of geographically largest and strategically most important empire of Jammu & Kashmir which continues to remain in the lime light for several political and historical reasons. He ascended to the throne of Jammu & Kahsmir State in 1925. He gained acclamation for being

"The Last Ruling King of Independent India". Since he continued to be Maharaja of Jammu & Kashmir till 5th November 1952 while all other rulers of princely states accessed by the Kings by 1948. He was born on 23rd September 1895 in Amar Mahal Jammu. Son of Raja General Amar Singh and Nephew of the then highness of Jammu & Kashmir State Maharaja Partap Singh. Maharaja Partap Singh discarding the right of his only adopted son Raja Jagdev Singh of Poonch considered the all-round brilliance, suitability and competence of his highly qualified (from Britain) Nephew Hari Singh, who had already become the senior member of the State council at the age of 27th then he was declared his successor. When he was 13 years old he was sent to "Mayo College of Princes" for studies. Soon after his admission in the Mayo College his father Raja Amar Singh died. After his father's death British Govt. in Delhi took keen interest in his education and bringing up. A British Army Officer was deputed as his guardian with the responsibility of ensuring proper education and training with the aim of grooming him to be a good ruler. After completing his education in Mayo College he was sent to "Imperial Cadet Corps" at Dehradun to imbibe in him military and martial traits as well as polishings his English language. Maharaja Hari Singh married Maharani Tara Devi in 1928. Yuvraj was born to them on 9th March 1931 as the next Heir apparent. In 1915 he was appointed Commander-in Chief of Jammu & Kashmir State Forces when he was only 20 years old. On assuming command of the State forces he introduced lot of reforms in the training and welfare of officers and Soldier. He was sworn in and bejeweled with a dignity of "King of Kingdoms" of Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit and Baltistan bordering with Afghanistan, Russia and China in 1925. Maharaja Hari Singh being a moderate and enlightened ruler took a number of steps of redress to aggrieved Muslim Community and mitigated their grievances after the agitation of 1931. He constituted Grievances Enquiry Committee under the chairmanship of B.G. Glancy and in consequence top its report the religious places of Muslim which had been rescinded by "AKBAR THE GREAT" were restored to them and adequate representation to Muslims in the State services was granted. In 1934, there erupted "Roti" and "cow" agitation in Jammu which was handled by Maharaja Hari Singh with utmost care and caution. Hindu Temples were thrown open to Harijans in spite of opposition by the priests. Flesh Trade by the women was

banned and remarriage by the widows was allowed. There are numerous instances worth mentioning but few of them such as making Primary Education compulsory for all subjects, men and women, prohibiting child marriage and opening all the places of worship for his low caste subjects are most remarkable. He opened lot of new schools and colleges to promote education. He managed to check corruption in the administration by adopting unique ways of detecting corruptions, finding culprit officials and punishing them. He banned beggar and it is said that during his rule none dared to accept bribes or deny wages for any services rendered. He was made a member of the imperial war council from 1944 to 1946 during the world war-II. During the war he visited Middle East where he Joined his units which were fighting against Axis Powers. He lived with them in their temporary trenches and bunkers which encouraged them and boosted their moral. Showing his solidarity with forces in the battlefield camed him lot of respect not only of his men but also of the Allied Powers particularly of the British Army. Maharaja Hari Singh was the first Indian among the rulers of Princely States of India who locked horns with global mighty British rulers in Round Table conference in London by advocating the independence of India. The attack of Pakistan on the entire Border of the state being unable to face the invader and ultimately he decided to accessed to India and the contents of the accession wrote by Maharaja Hari Singh to Governor General of India Lord Mountbatten of the letter is as under in original:

THE ACCESSION

In the letter to Lord Mountbatten with the conditions obtaining at present in my State and the great emergency of the situation as it exists, I have no option but to ask for help from the Indian Dominion. Naturally they cannot send the help asked for me without my state acceding to the Dominion of India. I have accordingly decided to do so, and I attach the instrument of accession for acceptance by your Government. The other alternative is to leave my State and the people to free booters....."if my State is to be saved, immediate assistance must be available at Srinagar. In haste"

Reply to the Maharaja

"In the circumstances mentioned by your Highness my Government (India) have decided to accept the accession of Kashmir State to the Dominion of India".

### Lord Mountbatten

India however following the invasion by Pakistan on 21st October 1947, he appealed to the Indian Union for help. India refused unless he acceded to the

Indian Union. He signed the instrument of accession with the Govt. of India on 26th October 1947, acceding his Country to the Indian Union which included Jammu, Kashmir, Northern Areas, Ladakh, Trans Karakoram Tract, POK and Aksai Chin. He was fond of Polo and Shikar. However difference of opinion emerged between Maharaja Hari Singh and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, the then Prime Minister which ultimately ended up with forced abdication of the former in favour of his son Dr. Karan Singh. He spent his last Days of his life in Bombay, never to return to his State thereafter, from 1949. He spent rest of his life in Bombay. His passion for Polo, Horse Racing and Reading Kept him occupied for the remaining period of life. He breathed his last on 26 April 1961 at Bombay. As per his will his Ashes were spread all over Jammu & Kashmir and immersed in River Tawi at Jammu. He donate most of his property to the Arya Samaj under the advice of his Prime Minister Sh. Mehar Chand Mahajan before his death which occurred in 1961.

### REFORMS:

\* Maharaja Hari Singh was member of the Imperial War Council from 1944 to 1946.

\* Allowed entry of Harijans in Temples and Places of worship.

\* Three main hospitals with ultra modern equipment were constructed in Jammu, Kashmir and Mirpur.

\* Banned Child Marriage and smoking among children.

\* He gave freedom of speech and expression and permitted news paper to be published from the State.

### Monuments Of Maharaja In J&K

\* In the memory of Late Maharaja Hari Singh his Statue unveiled by Ghulam Nabi Azad Union Minister for Helath & Family welfare and Dr. Karan Singh Member of Parliament (RS) in presence of Tara Chand Deputy Chief Minister J&K on 01-04-2012 near Tawi Bridge Jammu.

\* Maharaja Hari Singh Zanana Park.

\* Maharaja Hari Singh Higher Secondary School.

\* Hari-Tara Charitable Trust.

\* Maharaja Hari Singh Agricultural Collegiate School Nagbani.

\* Maharaja Hari Singh Tawi-Bridge

\* Hari Singh High Street Srinagar.

\* Hari Niwas Guest House Srinagar

\* Hari Niwas Hotel, Jammu.

The above mentioned Monuments of Maharaja Hari Singh and his highness whose Kingdom extended from Lakanpur to Askradu to Tibet which reveals from the Stamp Paper of that time

(The writer is Social Worker & Writer)