

What ails SKUAST-Jammu?

Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST) Jammu , a State University established in 1999, should find no ground in not coming up to the expectations of all concerned and keep its levels of performance continuously improving. In fact, any institution for that matter, must strive for showing an upper graph curve of its achievements - and therefore, why should SKUAST Jammu not be so ? It could be in imparting education and necessary training required in various disciplines of one of the most important fields of education and forming a top priority sector of our economy, rolling out quality and talented professionals for whom lot many opportunities of various hues are never found to be in short supply in the country and the like, warrant above the average performance of this university.

It is, however, dismaying to learn that the University has, as if "vowed " to register its decline on consistent basis and project only downswing in its performance as revealed by its further slippage from its previous positions . Going through the ranking of these universities in terms of performance by the All India Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) New Delhi for the year 2019, its position has gone down 13 notches from its previous ranking which must be a cause of concern to the management of the said university . What needs precisely to be done is to go in and find out specific areas where more needed to be done and still those areas, where innovative improvements had a lot of scope which could be brought about to look forward for bettering its ranking.

Times are changing and since competition in every field is a part of the institutional culture , students now increasingly do make a survey as to which university carried a better tag of its performance so that once rolled out carrying certificates and testimonials of such a reputed institution , could brighten and add up to their prospects of getting absorbed in competitive and responsible assignments with better career ladders to climb . After all, consistently showing a nose diving pattern right from the year 2016 till the latest ranking of 2019 does not auger well for the university in fields of academics and research work in particular, while on the other hand , despite added constraints of different hues, SKUAST Kashmir has been showing satisfactory performance and has accordingly improved its ranking. Not only that, it is learnt that many newly opened Agricultural Universities and allied institutes have performed better than SKUAST Jammu which is functioning since 1999.

New vistas of Agriculture areas in matters of new breeds and varieties of fruits , vegetables etc have great potential in various parts of Jammu region which remain not only untapped but lack quality expertise and professionalism which could have been taken care of by this University . In areas of dairy and dairy products, much remains to be done in Jammu region where not only is the shortage of milk and milk products prevalent but most of these items are sold adulterated to meet the growing demand. SKUAST Jammu can make a breakthrough in its research and expertise so as to ensure a turnaround in dairy and dairy products in this part of the UT. The University needs to take a cue from ICAR- National Dairy Research Institute Karnal which has repeated its ranking in the top, consecutively for the fourth year. Likewise, other Universities in our neighbouring State Punjab have improved their rankings. Hope, next ranking of this University of 2020 shall see not only frog leaps but big strides in its performance to claim a better place in its ranking.

How long will chest disease patients suffer?

Agreed that in treating COVID patients, especially looking to their ever increasing number over the last four months , the Chest Disease Hospital Jammu was declared as level-2 COVID Hospital which caused relocation if not absolute dislocation to chest disease patients in terms of consultation, diagnosis and treatment facilities. They had, as a result, to keep shifting between hospitals although at SSH, the concerned IPD was shifted.

Most of the hospitals suspended their OPDs and the Chest Disease Hospital too followed suit which remained in strict force for over a month. While this decision was imperative as a novel type of emergency had crept in, the chest disease patients especially those suffering from the TB, had to suffer much for want of treatment facilities. Who else could be blamed excepting the authorities of the Health and Medical Education Department, the GMC Hospital Jammu for neglecting chest disease patients for whom otherwise the Chest disease hospital is exclusively meant. To treat one set of patients at the cost of other, augers not well for the Health care authorities.

Now, as if their woes were less, these patients have to visit different hospitals for diagnosis and treatment which most of the patients find difficult to cope up with. Gandhi Nagar hospital being not equipped with infrastructure of TB testing facility, these patients had to go Gangyal. Under these circumstances Medical authorities must consider to earmark one ward for such patients in GMC Hospital Jammu or at SSH till the pressure of COVID patients on CD hospital remains to enable them get timely diagnosis and treatment.

Harsha Kakar

The Galwan valley clash of June 15 led to the death of 20 Indian soldiers and many more Chinese troopers. A recently released annual report of the United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission (USCC) stated, 'Some evidence suggested the Chinese government had planned the incident (Galwan), potentially including the possibility for fatalities.' The report added that exact motivations behind the Chinese Government's provocative behaviour' on the LAC remain unclear', adding that the 'proximate cause' of the intrusion appeared to be construction of a 'strategic access roads.'

Officially the Chinese have never declared their reasons for the intrusion. The causes could have been multiple including warning India from moving closer to the USAnd/ or securing their investments in the CPEC.

The USCC report also stated that a fresh battalion was moved into Galwan, armed with hand held weapons, prepared for violence, though below the use of firearms, still adhering to the existing conventions. With confirmed reports that most casualties were caused by stone

US report on the Galwan clash

troops. Chinese has yet to officially announce and honour its casualties. There were reports that Indian soldiers, unmindful of Chinese hand held weapons, attacked them with bare hands and bayonets and were ruthless in retaliation. This shocked the Chinese who retreated from the post. The impact on the Chinese forces was such that the battalion involved in Galwan was immediately withdrawn and returned to its base location. There were reports that the withdrawal was because their soldiers had been demoralized by Indian retaliation and resultant large casualties.

The Galwan incident pushed India onto the offensive. Having suffered high casualties, China immediately sought a meeting of Lt Generals to disengage at Galwan and other friction points. Temporary disengagement did take place along most of the friction points, though these slowly lost relevance with passage of time and Indian occupation of dominating features.

China was aware that anger within the Indian forces was

building and another similar incident could result in greater fatalities. It also led India into realising that the Chinese have no intention of resolving the standoff and hence it should seek to regain tactical and strategic advantage. Further, the Chinese, by this action, had broken all existing agreements, thus the Indian army gave orders to its forces to use their weapons at the discretion of local commanders. This message was also officially conveyed to China.

Post Galwan it was China which stalled disengagement and de-escalation talks, seeking to ensure India accepted the changed LAC as perceived by them. India responded by a quid pro quo operation and occupied dominating heights on both banks of the Pangong Tso. Post this, it was India which displayed no desire to rush into talks. It also realised that it would need to remain deployed for a prolonged period. For China, this was a new stage in the conflict as its conscript PLA had never spent harsh winters in Ladakh. There are reports of

Chinese regularly evacuating casualties due to weather conditions.

India retaliated to Chinese actions by banning their apps and placing restrictions on their investments. Infrastructure projects given to Chinese concerns were stopped. It also adopted an anti-China stance by enhancing its strategic alliance with the US, a possible reason for the Chinese intrusion and pushed for upgradation of the QUAD.

India displayed, after decades of conciliatory moves, that it would now stand tall against China and its actions. The incident opened Indian eyes and made the national leadership realise that China and its leaders, despite all attempts at bonhomie, can never be trusted, and China will remain not just a competitor but also an adversary.

Indian defence spending, which was kept suppressed, based on the faith that the LAC is secure, was increased. The Indian government announced that while it desires peace, it is ready for hostilities and would not accede to any Chinese demands for change in the alignment of the LAC. China is currently checkmated and has no choice but to remain deployed in the areas where it currently is. It can neither move forward nor retreat as that would be projected as a defeat. Its intention to push India to accept its perception has been stalemated. Neither would India withdraw the economic measures it has imposed on China.

The report issued by USCC only confirmed what India had been stating all this time that Galwan was pre-planned, but at the end of the day, a failure. The incident pushed trust between the two nations to an all-time low. Currently, neither nation is willing to take the first step in pulling back as it doubts the intention of the other. Talks may continue but it is unlikely to yield any worthwhile results.

The current deployment, the closest to a conflict in decades, is likely to continue for a prolonged duration, with no end in sight. Galwan also ensured that Wuhan's and Mahabalipuram's are unlikely to take place in the future. It opened the eyes of the Indian Government that China will remain a serious adversary and it must plan for the future.

The author is Major General (Redd) feedbackexcelsior@gmail.com

Human Rights must for humanity

D R Bhagat

Human Rights are fundamental and basic rights which are possessed by all human beings irrespective of sex, caste, race or nationality simply because of their birth as human beings. These rights are not created by any legislation and hence they are not liable to be taken away by any legislation or any act of the Government. They can't be even amended by any legislation or any legal process. These rights are generally set out in the constitution of a country. They are interdependent, interrelated and indivisible. The basis for these rights is that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. The concept of these human rights is more than 25 centuries old but the oldest written document on human rights is Magna Carta of 1215 A.D. issued in England. The Petition of Rights Charter was passed in Europe in 1928. The US constitution of 1776 also recognized the importance of human rights. The urgent need of human rights protection was felt in the decades of 30's and 40's of the previous century when there were large scale persecutions and executions of Jews and other minorities in the Nazi Germany. A large number of human rights violations took place in the Second World War where millions of people were killed or executed for war crimes. The need for an international organization was felt which could take care of these grave violations along with settlement of other international issues. As a result the United Nations Organization was formed in 1945. The UNO gave the priority to human rights aspect and these rights were given a significant place in the UN charter. The preamble of the charter reaffirms faith in fundamental human rights and in equal rights to men and women. Giving the importance to human rights protection, some UN bodies were formed exclusively to promote and monitor the progress in the field. The UN commission for human rights was established in 1946. The commission was given the responsibility of preparing recommendations and reports on International Bill on Human Rights, International declaration on civil liberties, the status of women, the protection of minorities and the prevention of discrimination on the basis of race, sex, language and religion. This commission was replaced by the Human Rights Council in 2006. The sub-commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of minorities was established in 1947. Another Commission on the Status of Women was established in 1946. It has done a work for promoting the rights of women in political, economic, civil and educational fields and also in achieving the goal of women having rights equal to those of men. The UN High Commissioner for human rights was established in 1993 with head quarters at Geneva. The High Commissioner will promote and protect civil, cultural, economic and political

rights for all and shall also prevent the violations throughout the world. There were also some international conventions on human rights of different segments of international society. These conventions were held on Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination, Convention on Rights of Children, Convention on All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Convention on the Protection of Rights of All Migrant Workers and Convention relating to Humanitarian Laws on War etc.

The most important document which gave the reason for celebration of Human Rights Day is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This is also known as the Modern Magna Carta. It was passed by the UN General Assembly on December 10, 1948. There are total 30 Articles in this declaration which describe the human rights and the fundamental freedoms in detail. The human rights have been classified in three categories i.e. the General Rights, Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Under General Rights the Articles land2 state that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" and "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms without distinction of race, color, sex, language and religion." Civil and Political Rights include Right to Liberty, Prohibition of Torture

and Inhuman Treatment, Right to own Property, Right to Freedom of Thought and Religion, Right to Freedom of Opinion and Right to Nationality. Economic, Social and Cultural Rights include Right to Social Security, Right to Education, Right to Work and Employment. The concluding article also highlights the duties and responsibilities which the individual is required to be performed. Now almost all the nations have accepted and adopted it as a standard document on Human Rights and have agreed that all these rights

caste basis before constitution of Independent India came into force. A down trodden section of the society was deprived of basic human rights. They were deprived of their right to education, right to religion, right to use public utilities and right to have property etc. The women were also not treated as equal in rights to those of men. The makers of the constitution were having concern on this human aspect and they removed all these disabilities through the constitution and gave equal rights irrespective of caste, creed or sex. But still there are some odd incidents in our country where these sections are discriminated on the basis of caste or sex. Justice AS Anand, former chairperson of National Human Rights Commission once said "It is the obligation of the State to ensure every one the right to adequate food, education and enjoyment of highest attainable standards of physical and mental health. These rights have to be respected and made available to the citizens by the state". It is a known fact that about 20 crore people in India sleep empty stomach at night. According to JS Verma, another former Chairperson of NHRC, "It is often the state which is violator of Human Rights in maximum cases in the country. But the maximum responsibility to protect and safeguard the rights of the citizens also lies with the state". The cases of torture of accused persons in police custody often comes into light. There are recent cases of lynching of innocent people

including those of two Sadhus in some parts of the country and the Government failed to perform its duty to save these lives.

Children under the age of 14 are forced to work in factories and are deprived of their Right to Education. India has dubious distinction of having largest number of child workers in the world. Many laborers died on way due to fatigue and hunger on way after traveling hundreds of miles on foot during the outbreak of Corona and the government failed to provide adequate food and other facilities to them. The Human Rights of the women are violated frequently. Sexual abuse of female children, dowry deaths and rape cases are generally reported in news. The pitiable condition of the widows living in Vrindaban and Varanasi shelter homes is an example of violation of human rights of the women. Not much has been changed even after the Supreme Court instructions in 2012.

There are many NGO's who are working in the field of Human Rights. India has the distinction of having largest number of human rights NGO's in the world which are assisting the government in protecting these fundamental rights. However, the real progress can be achieved through general awakening which makes everyone understand the eternal values of life and dignity of an individual irrespective of caste, creed or sex. Respecting and protection of Human Rights is must for peaceful survival of humanity.

feedbackexcelsior@gmail.com

A decisive moment for Kashmir leadership

K N Pandita

The decision of the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration to participate in the grassroots election process viz. DDC, Local Bodies and Panchayats in the Union Territory, is a sensible and pragmatic one. What has made them break the jinx is the realization of the damage they chose to inflict on their respective political parties by adopting an indifferent attitude towards the democratic process in the past. By abandoning the negative approach the alliance partners have shown political maturity which the masses of people have appreciated. It also indicates lessening of pressure hitherto exerted by the separatists in the context of elections. The mainstream political leadership should feel emboldened to take a considered decision particularly at crucial stages like the one at present. That is perhaps the healthiest sign for the revival of democracy.

Some political analysts are of the view that the mainstream political parties have abandoned their earlier reticent and even non-cooperative attitude because of the lurking fear of the erosion of their popularity in a prospect of the boycott call. By leaving the political battlefield vacant for the BJP, as in previous Panchayat elections, the mainstream political parties in the Valley have unwittingly given space to BJP for upturning the turf to facilitate their game plan. The gunning down of no fewer than 18 BJP activists in the length and breadth of the valley during past one year by the gun-wielding "freedom fighters" and the unwillingness of the mainstream parties to share the grief of the victims of violence will take its toll in the impending elections.

We are aware that Kashmiris are eager to dovetail their cause to a wider Islamic resurgence phenomenon in the Asian region. Of course, most Muslims are conscious of various Islamic resurgence movements and the Arab Spring is its latest manifestation. On a psychological and historical basis, there is nothing wrong in that. But the point is that Kashmiri Muslims cannot underestimate that after independence India adopted the path of democracy, secularism and egalitarianism as the political arrangement of the Indian nation with a Hindu majority. The travesty is that some Valley-centric leaders, blind to the dynamics of history, would go to the length of accusing India for not talking to Pakistan because "the latter is a Muslim State." They forget that Bangladesh, a Muslim dominated region separated from Pakistan mainland by giving the sacrifice of millions of people.

For a country like India with immense diversities, the adoption of secular democracy is of utmost significance. It indirectly means conceding the rights and privileges of the minorities of various hues in the country. No Islamic country has any commitment of that kind with its minorities. Rather, the history of the Caliphate is clear about the State policy towards religious meaning non-Islamic minorities.

Apart from this, the political environment in the South Asian region at this point of time is not comparable to what it was during the previous elections for the assembly, or the parliament or the local bodies in our country. The fissures in the unity among the members of the OIC and the revolt of some non-Semitic Muslim nations spearheaded by Turkey, Pakistan and Malaysia pose a serious challenge to the influence of the OIC. Being a creation of Saudi Arabia, the centripetal force for the Muslim world, a revolt directed against the OIC cannot be expected to sail smoothly through the disturbed waters of the Middle East politics.

The expectations aroused by Pakistan for the Kashmir Valley majority group that the OIC's resolutions on Kashmir would bring solace and strength to their "freedom movement" are difficult to materialize in given circumstances. There is a new and realistic view of the Kashmir issue with many Arab Islamic States. Western powers, including the US, assess the Kashmir issue from a different trajectory after the UN and the US State Department slapped a ban on some terrorist organizations based on Pakistani soil. Osama bin Laden was found hiding in a residential complex not far away from the GHQ in Rawalpindi. Pakistan Prime Minister was honest in conceding that 30 to 40 thousand radi-

calized terrorists were roaming the length and breadth of that country. Moreover, owing to Pakistan's failure to contain and control illegal funding to the home-based terrorist organizations, she has not been able to escape from the "grey list" syndrome of FATF.

Perhaps the time has come for the ordinary Kashmiris to look around and also inwards rather than become euphoric about chasing an unattainable wild dream. Unfortunately, it has been the bane of most of the less developed West Asian and Middle East societies to remain glued to a politicized rather than a reformative religion. Though belatedly, even Saudi Arabia, the known bastion of orthodoxy, has begun to feel the necessity of keeping pace with the fast advancing scientific and technological achievements of the developed countries with tremendous impact on life.

Religious, emotional and social connectivity apart, the people in the Valley need to make a dispassionate and realistic appreciation of the evolving socio-political construct in the neighbouring country and dovetail it to their perceptions. The first onslaught of modernism or the age of advanced science and technology on the Islamic mind is that it throws a serious challenge to the exclusivist ideology of any community because of geo-economic constraints. Nations do not and cannot work with an exclusivist hanger.

The argument that by embracing inclusiveness, the Kashmirian or for that matter the Indian Muslims will lose their identity or distinctiveness is only a figment of the imagination. Democracy and openness are contrary to exclusiveness, rather its antithesis. Because the economy is the sheet anchor of survival for any society, Kashmiris need to think of long term policy particularly when the economy of the region is not only fragile but entirely dependent on external boost up.

Efforts are made in several Islamic countries to water down the fundamental criteria of the Westminster type democracy or at least to dovetail it to what is obtainable from the skulduggery of interpretation of the Quranic verses. The kid-glove treatment to the scriptural fundamentals seems difficult to succeed. Democracy, secularism and

egalitarianism are deskbook versions of long experience through which the political theoreticians have journeyed.

Often, a question is asked by the younger generation that if India was partitioned in 1947 based on religion, why the Muslims should continue to be in India and such large numbers? The answer is simple. Indian National Congress-led the freedom struggle against the colonial power not based on religion but on the basis of democratic rights of the people of India. The Muslims of India contributed to the national struggle as ardently as the people of any other faith did, the Sikhs, the Parsees, the Buddhists etc. How could they be ignored or sidelined if they desired to continue to live in India and not migrate to the newly formed Dominion of Pakistan? After all, Pakistan was the new avatar of colonial ideology where the landlords, either living in Pakistan or migrated from India, harboured feudalist mentality and the construct of that society. Kashmiris had waged a freedom struggle of forty long years to get rid of feudalism. How come they would find comfort and reconciliation with a feudalist system evolving after the British left India?

Unfortunately, Kashmiri mind has been polluted to the extent against democracy that it cannot think beyond a half-century or a century from now. It is very uncharitable on the part of the propagators of political philosophy to be on the wrong foot.

Democracy is a long and trying process. It has no quick fixes and no cut and dried solutions. Democracy is an experiment undertaken with patience and forbearance. After a thousand years of democratic rule, the UK continues with its history of bringing amendments, new laws, discarding the old ones and reforming the society just because they have a living, vibrant and result-oriented democracy. India is also pursuing the same path and expects the same results.

What Kashmiris need to do is to study the Islamic history dispassionately and find out if there was any Islamic regime at any point of time in the history when such regimes ruled in a democratic and secular manner? I don't think there was any. The Saracens, the

Turks, the Ottomans, the Timurids, the Mughals, the Safavids, the Mamluks, take any of them; none ever practised democracy and secularism as the loadstar of statecraft. Not only that. The non-Muslim communities called the dhimmis were treated outside the pale of ordinary subjects of the Islamic State. Numerous restrictions were imposed on their religious practices; they were to wear a specific black or green armband to distinguish them from the rest of the populace and hence entitled to a different treatment. The history of the Caliphate is replete with such sordid stories.

Islam polarized human population into two broad segments - the Ahl-e Imaan meaning the faithful and the kafirs meaning the heretics. The treatment meted out to the heretics was universally followed by the moments or the pious Muslims. Therefore, in such a prospect the question of giving equal treatment to non-Muslims in an Islamic State did not arise. Consequently, democracy and secularism were not choices.

A significant change ushered in by modernism is that the importance has shifted from religion to economy. The relationship among nations essentially depends on the quality and quantity of economic transactions that take place between or among them if the trade is multi-cornered. The Industrial Revolution of 1688 A.D in Europe is a landmark event in the evolution of modernity and the age of reason.

Secular and democratic India is making the greatest experiment ever made in the 14 century-old Islam. It is to bring about slow, silent, rational and hurtless reform in the very mindset of the Muslims of India. There are many takers and there are many who oppose it. However, the consolation is that all these changes though touching the bottom of social structure, are undertaken silently and without fanfare. That is the right way how the reforms can be absorbed and how their impact can be indisputable. We also need to learn from the Soviet experience in the Central Asian Islamic States. Of all Islamic countries, the Central Asian Republics have shown remarkable maturity in putting religion and politics in their respective compartments.

feedbackexcelsior@gmail.com