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A Monthly Newsletter by Jammu & Kashmir Policy Institute (JKPI)

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77,548 works worth Rs 511137.05 lakh executed in 2022-23 in J&K

“Janbhagidari Empowerment” portal reflects govt’s concern, resolve towards empowering people

Srinagar: 77,548 works have been executed in 2022-23 registering an expenditure of Rs 5,11,137.05 lakh, According to the government statistics.

Implementation of the “Janbhagidari Empowerment” portal in Jammu and Kashmir is a candid reflection of the concern and commitment of the Lieutenant Governor administration towards empowering people through more responsive, transparent, and accountable governance with vigorous public participation, an official press release said Wednesday.

It said the portal, a sequel to the government’s endeavor of facilitating people to the utmost through digital platforms, would enable the general masses have an insight into the status of development works being executed in their areas under schemes like MGNREGA, Swachh Bharat Mission (Rural), Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban), PM Awas Yojana and PM Gram Sadak Yojana.

The Empowerment (Enabling Monitoring of Public Overview of Works Being Executed and Resources for Meaningful Transparency) portal is a web gateway hosting all the works being executed under the capex component of UT budget and can also be accessed through BEAMS website of the Finance department.

The objective of this initiative is to ensure that every citizen should be able to view every detail about the nature and extent of works under execution in his or her area or any part of the Union Territory. This initiative would be reviewed continuously for incorporation of needed improvements based on the feedback of the general public.

The government has urged upon the people to utilize the information available on this portal to help the administration bring about greater responsiveness and accountability besides ensuring greater participation of stakeholders in the process of development taking place in their area.

The portal is an interactive and user-friendly platform which offers the public an opportunity to give their feedback about any of the works going on in J&K resulting in effective implementation of development works. Hence, this unique initiative launched by the J&K government enables the citizens to directly participate in the development of their area.

According to an official statement, any person can search for any of the work going on in the UT at village, block or

district level to ascertain the status of the development works. The name, cost and position of funds released and expenditure incurred against the said work could be viewed by simply accessing the BEAMS website of the J&K Finance department.

Moreover, the portal offers links to view the works under execution under MGNREGA, PM Awas Yojana, Swachh Bharat Mission Urban and Swachh Bharat Mission Rural. These works could be accessed from this portal itself and would include all the works executed throughout J&K under any scheme in the future, as was given out by the officers on the occasion.

Introduction of a slew of major fiscal reforms by the Jammu and Kashmir government has tremendously transformed the financial system in the Union territory paving way for enhanced growth and development in the region.

The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, continuing with its overarching digital push has hosted the ‘Janbhagidari Empowerment’ portal on a different server with higher bandwidth for its easy and ready accessibility to the general public. The intervention comes following the concerns relating to the slow speed/ bandwidth issues regarding the portal.

Following the movement of the portal on to a different server, the portal has begun to open quickly enough, improving the whole experience of visiting the portal. Worth to mention, around 70 thousand people have accessed the portal until now and with the increase in the bandwidth, the portal is expected to receive more hits in near future.

With the Empowerment initiative, the cost of execution of public works has also decreased significantly due to better supervision and participation of the public.

“This has freed more funds for execution of newer works and reduced the pressure on the budget.” an official of the Finance Department said. He added that with the launch of the Portal, the quality of works viz technology and durability has increased manifold.

The initiative has also contributed to the Right to Information by providing all the information related to the development of the area with just one click away.

According to the dashboard statistics of Empowerment portal, 77548 works have been executed in 2022-23 registering an expenditure of Rs 511137.05 lakh.



Govt approves Rs 39 cr project to boost commercial floriculture



Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir government has approved a mega Rs 39-crore project with an avowed objective of exploring the huge floriculture potential keeping in view the varied agro-climate and ecological conditions in the Union Territory for giving a boost to flower production, officials said.

“The project is expected to provide direct employment to 2000 besides the creation of 330 new enterprises,” said Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture Production Department.

He said Jammu and Kashmir has long been known for its rich and diverse agri-ecozones, making it an ideal location for the growth of a thriving floriculture industry. Abundantly endowed with natural wealth and scenic splendour, the UT is completely conducive for the cultivation of a wide range of flowers. The aesthetic value of flowers, their increasing use in social events and the potential of generating more money are attracting prospective entrepreneurs towards the floriculture industry.

Splendid gardens and parks in J&K are being enjoyed by tourists from across the globe.

However, despite this potential, the sector has not been able to make a significant contribution to the horticulture economy in the region so far. The main reasons for this are the small number of growers and enterprises, lack of aggregation platforms and weak post-harvest and branding efforts. And, to fill up these gaps the J&K government recently approved this ambitious project to boost commercial floriculture in the region.

“The Indian floriculture industry has been shifting from traditional flowers to cut flowers for export purposes. India has a dynamic Rs 15,000 crore domestic floriculture sector which exported produce worth Rs. 771.41 crore in 2021-22. Moreover, commercial floriculture has higher potential per unit area than most of the field crops and is therefore a lucrative business,” he said.

“One of the key focuses of the project is cluster-based area expansion of small ornamental nurseries, which will help to increase output and productivity. The project shall undertake protected cultivation

of cut flowers, aromatic plants, loose flowers, and bulbous ornamental crops, as well as annual flower seed production. The project also included technology upgrades for existing ornamental nurseries, building aggregation platforms and post-harvest interventions like on-farm distillation units, seed processing units, walk-in cold storage, transport, branding and marketing efforts,” he added.

The new project aims to address the challenges facing the floriculture industry in J&K through a number of the latest technological interventions and strategies. The objectives of the project included increasing output from the pre-COVID levels of Rs 28 crore to around Rs. 85 crore per year in the next four years, supporting each production cluster with end-to-end value chain, post-harvest and processing facilities, branding, and market access, and capacity building of human resources for increasing employment in floriculture and allied sectors.

The project shall restore 2.25 hectare of area under cut flower production apart from adding 24 hectare of nursery area, creating four clusters (85ha) for lavender cultivation, increasing the area under loose flower production, and expanding the area under seed/bulb production. It also included exposure visits and training for stakeholders and business development and contract farming agreements with breeder and seed companies.

The project’s key outputs included upgrading 54 nursery units to high-tech operations, re-operationalizing 150 units, adding an additional 400 hectare of area under cultivation (total 587 ha), creating 330 new enterprises and training 2000 new growers in aromatic flower and bulb/seed production. It also aims to produce over 27 crore ornamental nursery plants and 4000 L of aromatic oils worth Rs 4.8 crore annually (from 5th year) and undertake skilling of 4000 growers in cluster mode. The total outlay of the project is Rs. 39.03 crore.

Overall, the new project represents a major step forward for the floriculture industry in J&K. With a focus on cluster-based area expansion, technology upgrades, post-harvest and marketing efforts, the project has the potential to help establish a sustainable and profitable floriculture industry in the region. It is hoped that this project will help to create new opportunities for growers and entrepreneurs, and will contribute to the overall economic development of J&K.

“Promotion of Commercial Floriculture in UT of J&K” is one among the 29 projects, which were approved by the Jammu and Kashmir administration after being recommended by the UT Level Apex Committee for holistic development of Agriculture and allied sectors in UT of J&K. The prestigious committee is headed by Dr Mangala Rai, Former DG ICAR and has other luminaries in the field of Agriculture, Planning, Statistics & Administration like Ashok Dalwai, CEO NRAA, Dr. P. K Joshi, Secretary, NAAS, Dr. Prabhat Kumar, Horticulture Commissioner MOA & FW, Dr. H. S Gupta, Former Director, IARI, Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture Production Department apart from the Vice Chancellors of the twin Agriculture Universities of the UT.

Republic Day Celebrations-2023

Lt Governor Manoj Sinha unfurls National Flag at Republic Day function

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha unfurled the National Flag at the UT level function on the occasion of the 74th Republic Day, here at MA Stadium this morning.

The Lt Governor inspected the contingents of the Republic Day Parade and took the ceremonial salute.

The Republic Day Parade consisted of smart contingents from Army, BSF, CRPF, SSB, IRP (Women & Male), J&K Police, JKAP, UT Disaster Response Force, J&K Fire and Emergency Services, J&K Forest Protection Force, J&K Excise Department, J&K Ex-Services League, NCC (Boys and Girls), Bharat Scouts and Guides (Girls & Boys), besides several school contingents, Brass & Pipe Bands of Army, BSF, J&K Police, J&K Armed Police and Band Troops (Girl & Boys) of different Schools.

Various schools and departments on the occasion presented spellbinding performances and spread awareness on Nasha Mukta Jammu Kashmir, Digital Journey of J&K and Swachh Bharat Mission.

Acrobatics on Motorcycle by the dare-devils of JKP, dance performances representing different regions of the nation based on the themes of unity, integrity and national integration, the history and heritage of Jammu Kashmir and displays by J&K Fire & Emergency Services, JKRLM, Youth Services & Sports Department, remained the highlights of the Republic Day celebrations.

Earlier, the Lieutenant Governor laid wreath at Police Martyrs Memorial & Balidan Stambh and paid tributes to brave hearts & war heroes of Mother India who made supreme sacrifices while protecting the territorial integrity of the nation.

The Republic Day celebrations was attended by Chief Justice (A) Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court; Judges of the J&K and Ladakh High Court; Chief Election Commissioner of Jammu & Kashmir; Mayor, Jammu Municipal Corporation; Members of Parliament; DDC Chairperson, Jammu; Chief Secretary; DGP; Chairperson J&K Waqf Board; elected representatives of ULBs and PRIs; former Legislators; senior Civil, Police and Army officers; political and social leaders; prominent citizens, media persons and the citizenry.





J&K Startup Policy nurturing young entrepreneurial brains to pursue innovation, entrepreneurship

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Government is building an encouraging ecosystem for nurturing innovation and start-ups in the Union Territory with liberal funding.

Under the 'J&K Startup Policy 2018-2028', the UT administration aims to nurture and inspire the young and entrepreneurial brains of Jammu and Kashmir to pursue innovation and entrepreneurship by creating a vibrant and conducive start-up environment in the region.

Some focus sectors have been identified under this policy which inter alia included Construction and Engineering, Food Processing and Allied activities, Agriculture including Horticulture and Floriculture, Textiles, Apparel, and Fashion Technology, Renewable Energy, Handicrafts and Handlooms and their design element, Electronics System Design and Manufacturing besides Information Technology enabled services among others.

The main objective of 'J&K Startup Policy 2018-2028' is to facilitate and nurture the growth of at least 500 new start-ups in Jammu and Kashmir in the next 10 years. The objective also includes establishing at least 10 new state-of-the-art incubators including the private sector, facilitating access to early-stage investments for aspiring and existing start-ups, setting up innovation labs in selected Higher Secondary Schools and Colleges, and setting up at least three fabrication labs, one each in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh regions besides creating a strong institutional framework for effective implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of this policy.

The policy also focuses on innovative projects like ideas capable of introducing new or disruptive technology in the development of existing and new products, processes, or services, capable of addressing any of the present challenges before the society at large in an effective manner. The policy also provides a special focus on start-ups, the promotion of platforms like start-up hubs, incubators, angel investors, innovation labs, Entrepreneurship Development Cells, and Fabrication Lab among others.

The Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) has been declared the nodal agency for the implementation of the policy and Director JKEDI has been designated as the UT nodal officer.

The policy also provides various benefits and incentives to the entity recognized as a start-up. The government provides co-working space with uninterrupted high-speed internet to the selected recognized start-ups at a subsidized price through JKEDI at its campuses in Pampore and Bari-Brahmana and all the 22 district centres besides a monthly allowance of Rs. 10,000 (for a period of one year) is also being paid to the start-ups.

Similarly, startups are provided one-time assistance of Rs 10 Lakh for Product Research and Development/Marketing/Publicity. The scheme also has the provision of 100 per cent subsidy on the purchase and installation of a Diesel Generator set Solar/Wind Generator or Hybrid Solar Wind System to recognized start-ups.

Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, recently asked all stakeholders to focus on the affordability, and sustainability of innovative products, the creation of industry innovation clusters to encourage young entrepreneurs and drive job creation. "Under the guidance of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, India's Startups are making their place in the global market. India is now ranked third in the world in terms of innovation and start-ups after US and China," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Notably, J&K featured among the five 'top performers' in the start-up India States' ranking 2021, scoring high on parameters like incubation support, institutional support, and fostering innovation and entrepreneurship.

Considerably, the start-up ecosystem in J&K comprises of local versions or mimics of national players like Ola, Uber, Amazon, Flipkart, and Zomato as these unicorns have minimal presence in the region in terms of service areas or penetration level.

Govt approves project for revival of silk industry in J&K



Jammu: The Jammu and Kashmir government has approved an ambitious project worth Rs 91 crore envisaging revival and revitalization of the silk industry in the UT through technological interventions.

The project which contains end-to-end interventions, right from the availability of mulberry leaves to better seed and worm production and finally, augmentation of reeling facilities shall double the number of cocoons produced in J&K and boost value addition by establishing a state-of-the-art automatic reeling facility at Jammu, an official press release informed today.

Sericulture or silk production has a long-established history and market, local as well as foreign, in Jammu and Kashmir. The region is known for its high-quality bivoltine silk and has the potential to become a major silk-producing hub in the country. However, the industry has faced challenges in recent years and there was a need for its development and modernization in order to meet the growing demand for superior silk which can match and replace not only the silk being imported to the country but also compete in its export requirements abroad.

“Sericulture is the only cash crop that ensures significant returns in a short span of time, earning it a special place in the rural economy. Although the state produces high-quality bivoltine cocoons, productivity and total cocoon output are low,” said Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary Agriculture Production Department while highlighting the broad contours of the sanctioned project.

Similarly, cocoon yields are half of the national average and over the past few years the output from the sector has been shrinking. Improving seed quality, rearing facilities, and cocoon processing will provide a huge shot in the arm for the sector and improve income at farm levels, he added.

“Technological interventions to strengthen Sericulture in J&K” is one among the 29 projects, which were approved by the Jammu and Kashmir administration after being recommended by the UT Level Apex Committee for holistic development of Agriculture and Allied Sectors in UT of J&K, the press release informed.

It said the committee is headed by Dr Mangala Rai, Former DG ICAR and has other luminaries

in the field of Agriculture, Planning, Statistics and Administration like Ashok Dalwai, CEO NRAA, Dr. P. K Joshi, Secretary, NAAS, Dr. Prabhat Kumar, Horticulture Commissioner MOA &FW, Dr. H. S Gupta, Former Director, IARI, Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary, APD apart from the Vice Chancellors of the twin Agriculture Universities of the UT.

One of the main challenges facing the sericulture industry in J&K is the lack of access to modern technology. Many farmers still use traditional methods of silk production, which are time-consuming and labor-intensive as well as sub-par in terms of quality of output. This makes it difficult for them to benefit from the \$250 million export market for Indian Silk, said Manzoor Qadri, Director Sericulture J&K.

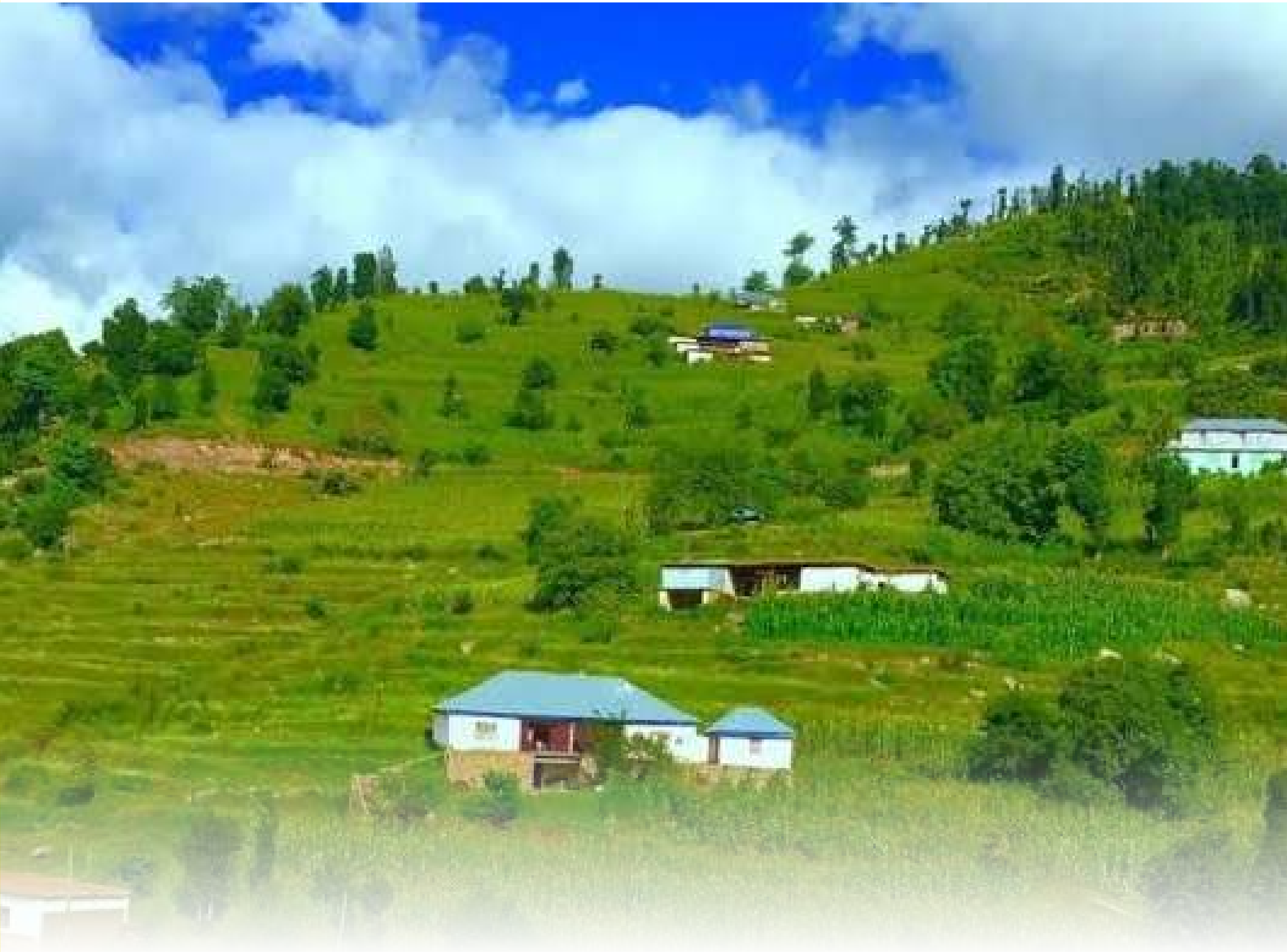
The project shall ensure that the global fame that silk from J&K had garnered will be regained, he added.

The major interventions that are being undertaken in the project included planting 10 lakh new mulberry plants in tree mode, doubling the silkworm seed production from 8 lakh to 16 lakh, increasing cocoon production from 700 MT to 1350 MT, establishing 100 new chawki rearing centers for supply of chawki worms to seri farmers, giving employment to 7000 new silkworm farmers and skill development of existing 15000 farmers.

Marketing and value addition support is also being created through the establishment of a high-value enterprise in the form of an Automatic Reeling Machine (ARM) which will directly benefit 2000 seri-farmers. The state-of-the-art machine will allow the production of international quality silk within the UT fetching better prices for our cocoons.

Dr Firdose Ahmad Malik, Assistant Professor, SKUAST-Kashmir, who co-drafted the project, said that the overall objective of the project is to strengthen processes that promote the economic development of sericulture farmers of UT of J&K and create an environment of growth and investment in the sector.

Overall, the project demonstrates Jammu and Kashmir government’s keen intent to revive and modernize the sericulture industry of the UT. With the predicted increase in production and quality of silk, as well as the improved livelihoods of those involved, the industry is well on its way to reclaiming its past glory and becoming a major contributor to the state’s economy.



Tourist Tribal village Prog to be a game changer for rural economy

Prog to transform 75 villages known for historical, picturesque beauty, cultural significance

SRINAGAR: The Tourist Tribal Village Programme (TTVP) initiated by the Government of Jammu and Kashmir is turning out to be the Game changer for the rural as well as tribal areas both economically as well as socially.

J&K Tourist Village Network under the Mission Youth initiative is aimed at transforming 75 villages of the UT known for historical, picturesque beauty, and cultural significance into tourist villages. The youth-led sustainable tourism initiative will strengthen the rural economy and community entrepreneurship, empowering youth and women by providing direct and indirect employment.

Jammu and Kashmir Government is adopting best practices recognizing the uniqueness of each village and showcasing the landscapes, indigenous knowledge systems, cultural diversity and heritage, local values and traditions, besides encouraging film shooting and offering financial incentives as well as ensuring a digital platform to all these villages under Tribal Tourism initiative.

A sleepy Sangerwani village in Pulwama presented a festive

look as the first batch of tourists arrived in the village to witness the beauty of the countryside which was recently declared as a Tourist Tribal Village by the J&K Government. The most enthusiastic on the occasion were the youth who say that it will uplift them socially and economically.

Emphasizing on harnessing the potential of the younger population and making them self-reliant, the government is committed to providing maximum and equal opportunities to youth from different backgrounds and enabling their involvement in policies that affect them.

This scheme can simultaneously address the challenge of global warming and unemployment besides Youth can be a brand ambassador for green tourism making the development more sustainable while bringing prosperity to the community.

The administration is working tirelessly for the holistic development of tribal communities, promoting entrepreneurship amongst tribal youth and women, transforming tribal schools, village development, tourism, and implementing Van Dhan for their empowerment.

J&K emerging as model of digital govt across country

IT interventions, digital initiatives bringing transparency in governance, streamlining public service delivery

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir is emerging as a model of digital government across the country with a focus on a transparent and accountable governance system.

IT interventions and several digital initiatives are bringing transparency to the system and streamlining the public service delivery system for the welfare of the common masses. J&K has achieved several milestones with solid technical architecture at the service of citizens with speedy development as the new identity of J&K.

The prime objective of the government is line to online and instead of travelling to Government offices, people just need to use digital mode for availing different government services. The Government aims to establish a system that enables people to access high-quality services anywhere, anytime, on any device.

Continuing its march on the path of providing E-governance to its citizens, J&K has been successful in providing nearly 444 services online including all the major services commonly availed by the people.

The government is working to usher the UT into an environment where its citizens would carry offices in their pockets and avail of any services without having to physically visit any of the offices.

Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta in a recently held meeting maintained that the contactless administration not only ensures transparency and accountability but swiftness also.

He observed that technology happens to be a panacea for all the evils and J&K envisages utilizing the IT/ITes for optimum empowerment of its population as per the vision of the LG administration.

Notably, the number of online services provided by the Planning Department shot to 411 in addition to 33 services integrated on Rapid Assessment System (RAS). Moreover, 195

services had already been integrated with the feedback system out of these 411 online services and some 103 more services are going to be made RAS complaints shortly.

Synchronization with auto-appeal for the services of a few departments has generated encouraging results with 99% of applications disposed within the stipulated time frame as per the Public Services Guarantee Act (PSGA) which not only ensures timely delivery of services but penalizes those officers/officials found failing in doing so.

The UT administration is soon going to integrate all its online services with the auto-appeal so that all the services are provided to its citizens as per the timelines specified in PSGA for these services for the benefit of one and all.

The government has directed the stakeholders to formulate short-term goals of 3-6 months and long-term vision statements to transform core ICT infrastructure, governance and services for ease of living, accessibility, and innovation to transform J&K into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy.

It is worth mentioning that 'Digi Dost' program launched by Govt is aimed at developing a strong network of digitally empowered young volunteers at the District, Block and Panchayat levels who can work as the brand ambassadors for Digital J&K and Digital India to achieve maximum mobilization and awareness on digital services.

'Digi Dost' volunteers assist in digital service delivery, data collection, training, spreading information regarding the Digital India campaign and making the people aware of cyber hygiene and cybercrimes.

As per official data, J&K is number one in the ranking of UTs in e-governance. Host of initiatives like e-office, BEAMS, Awam ki Awaaz, MyGov, e-Unnat, Digilocker, Aapki Zameen Aapki Nigrani have brought transparency and accountability in governance across J&K mad brought transformational changes in the lives of people.

ODOP scheme creating employment avenues in dairy sector in Rajouri

JAMMU: One District, One Product (ODOP), launched by the Union Ministry of Food Processing Industries to help districts reach their full potential, foster economic and socio-cultural growth, and create employment opportunities, especially in rural areas.

The scheme aims to identify, promote and brand a product from one district. The ODOP scheme aims to turn every district in India into an export hub through the promotion of the product in which the district specializes.

The initiative also plans to accomplish this by scaling manufacturing, supporting local businesses, finding potential foreign customers, and so on, thus helping to achieve the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' vision.

Under ODOP, Rajouri, a border district of the J&K UT, was chosen as a dairy district due to its enormous potential in the dairy sector. Effective measures are in place to help farmers become self-reliant, and steps are being taken to improve market access.

The Lam area of the Nowshera tehsil produces the majority of the district's milk, and the people of this area are heavily involved in dairy farming. Although the milk production in this area is very high, the main difficulty that the farmers face is market access, as they have to travel to Nowshera, Sunderbani, and Rajouri to sell their milk and milk-based products.

Sensing the gravity and the commitment of the district administration to provide market linkage, Deputy Commissioner, Rajouri, Vikas Kundal, advised that special camps be organised by the DIC and KVIB Departments in Nowshera to encourage farmers and unemployed youths to set up their own ventures in the fields of milk processing and manufacturing units.

Both departments worked tirelessly to encourage people

to start the milk processing and manufacturing units, and one, Punit Sharma, from Nowshera, expressed keen interest in establishing the unit, for which the KVIB and DIC Department provided the necessary financial assistance as well as technical guidance to him.

Puneet Sharma has now established his own milk processing and manufacturing unit in Nowshera, with the active support of the district administration Rajouri and financial assistance from the concerned departments. Now that the unit is so close to the people of Lam, the dairy farmers in the area sell their milk to Puneet Sharma and receive very reasonable prices for their product, removing the farmers' difficulty in gaining market access.

The majority of farmers in these areas are Integrated Dairy Development Scheme (IDDS) beneficiaries besides KVIB and DIC is also playing a major role in raising the socioeconomic status of the farmers.

The majority of milk processing and manufacturing units have been established in urban areas, but because dairy farmers live in rural areas and cannot afford to travel to urban areas daily to sell their milk, there has been a shift in trend, and the government is now focusing on establishing the said units in rural areas for the convenience of the dairy farmers. This will not only mitigate the farmer's difficulties but also create ample employment opportunities for the unemployed and educated youth.

The dairy farmers of the Lam area have highly appreciated this intervention by the District Administration, stating that their difficulties with market access has been alleviated to a great extent, and now they are getting very good prices for their milk at their doorsteps. They have also appealed to the district administration to keep taking such steps in the near future for their welfare.



THE INITIATIVE ALSO PLANS TO ACCOMPLISH THIS BY SCALING MANUFACTURING, SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES, FINDING POTENTIAL foreign customers, and so on, thus helping to achieve the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' vision.

Digital era commences in J&K

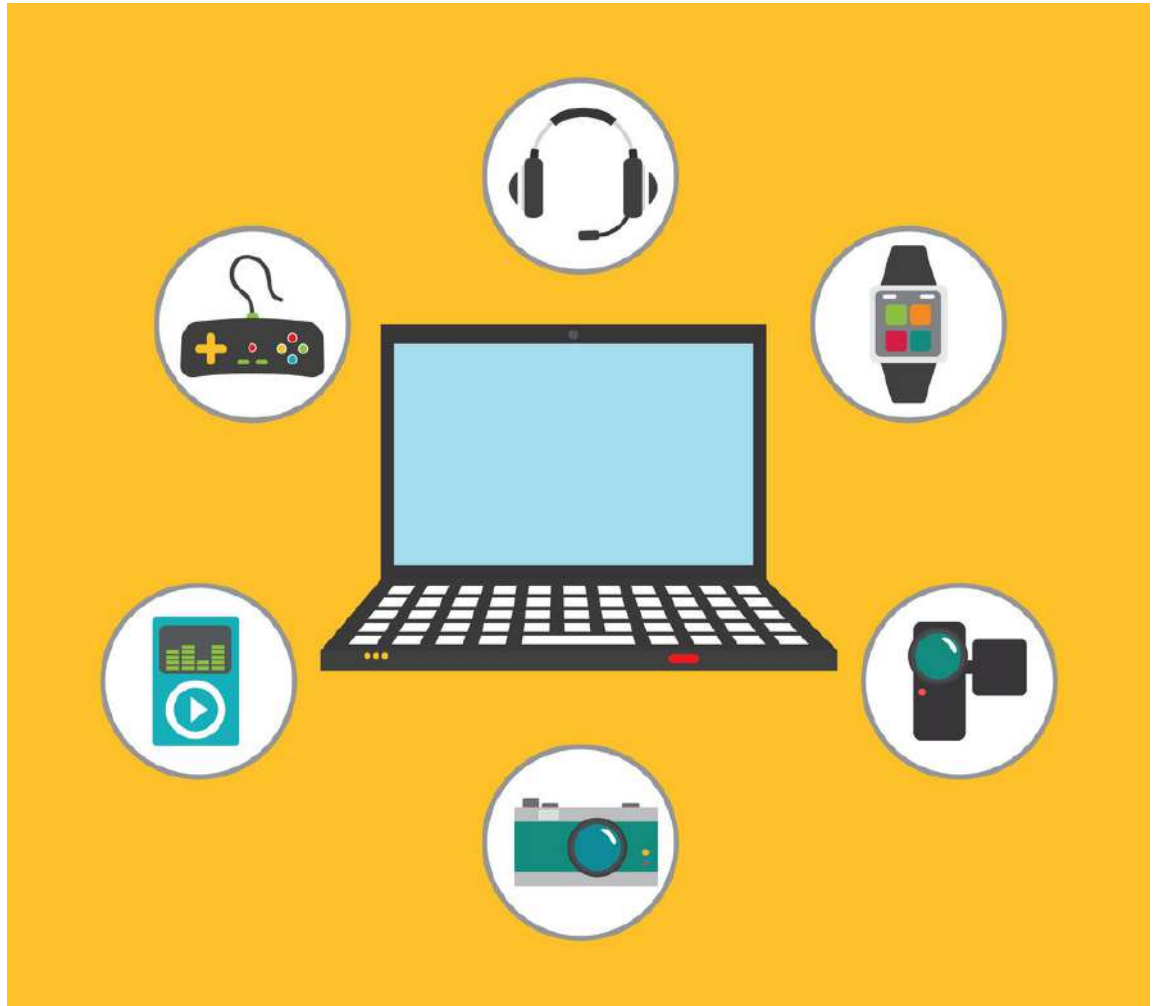
Jammu: J&K has decided to go fully digital from today. This was announced by the Chief Secretary, Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, in a meeting of the Committee of Secretaries (CoS) attended by all the Administrative Secretaries here today.

According to an official press release, Dr Mehta directed Commissioner Secretary, IT to ensure that all government services are only made available through online mode from today. He reiterated that no service shall remain offline and applicants need not to visit any government offices for availing any services.

The Chief Secretary enjoined upon all the Secretaries to monitor that the services are being delivered online in a hassle-free manner.

The Chief Secretary also advised them to constitute control rooms in Administrative departments as well as at HoD level and in the offices of Deputy Commissioners for providing support to the public. He asked them to run campaigns so that ample awareness is created among the masses. He told them to conduct awareness programmes in educational institutions and at the Panchayat level.

He stressed upon all the officers to take note of all the services provided by their respective departments and implement these orders.



The Chief Secretary was informed that over 400 services have already been offered in online mode across all the departments and many of them are integrated with the quality check and feedback-seeking mech-

anism of RAS. It was also revealed these services are also being onboarded on the digital portal of e-UNNAT, Service Plus, and DigiLocker for ease and free access to the general public.

Rs 879 cr food processing project launched in J&K



Jammu: The Jammu and Kashmir administration has launched an ambitious Rs 879 crore project targeted to revolutionize the food-processing sector and transform the lives of farmers in the Union Territory, an official spokesman said.

The UT-level food processing programme for the development of clusters for specific products of J&K is an initiative that aims to maximize farmer income and minimize post-harvest losses, the spokesman said.

He said the comprehensive project has been designed to increase the competitiveness of seven identified products across categories in terms of cost, quality, branding, and sustainability within five years.

“The government is investing in value-addition, logistics, marketing, and branding of various Agriculture, Horticulture, and livestock products to achieve this goal.”

“The project will focus on developing 17 districts in J&K with the establishment of processing and marketing infrastructure, providing

growth and development opportunities to stakeholders and facilitating suitable economies of scale in production and post-harvest activities,” the spokesman said.

He said the government has allocated a budget of Rs 879.75 crore for the project including a grant-in-aid of Rs 293.25 crore (33.33 percent) and a debt-equity of Rs 586.50 crore to be raised by entrepreneurs.

“The project shall create 7,030 direct jobs and lead to the establishment of 34 enterprises with expected revenue generation to the tune of Rs 1436.04 crore every year,” he said.

Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture Production Department Atal Dulloo said the project represents a beacon of hope for farmers in J&K, who have been facing challenges such as post-harvest losses that are generally in the range of 15-20 per cent and the wastage of 20 per cent of the total fruit produced due to non-availability of packaging and processing facilities and mismatch between production and post-harvest management.

“The government’s investment in this project is expected to address these issues and help farmers to better price realization and enhance their income by creating competitiveness across the entire value chain,” he added.

In the next five years, he said Jammu and Kashmir will have a dynamic food processing, food packaging, and storage infrastructure with dedicated support services including farm-level logistics and transportation, marketing infrastructure, and cluster branding.

“This project is a step towards a brighter future for farmers and the food-processing sector in J&K,” he said.

J&K adopting best dairy development practices to increase milk production

UT to generate 16k jobs in next 5 years in dairy sector

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir will produce around 16,000 jobs and 600 enterprises in the next five years in the dairy sector thus securing livelihood and assuring employability avenues for the youth.

The J&K government has proposed an amount of over Rs 350 crore in the next five years for the Development of the dairy sector across Jammu and Kashmir.

The Jammu and Kashmir administration has recently approved a project to increase milk production in the region by a significant 70 percent within the next five years.

According to the approved document among the strategies include securing livelihood through enhanced Jobs and income.

Livestock sector projects were cleared by the Apex Committee led by Dr Mangla Rai in Dairy Development in J&K.

Under the able guidance of the Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture Production Department, Atal Dulloo who says that these projects show the government's commitment to improving the livelihoods of the people living in Jammu and Kashmir.

Dairy development is a crucial aspect of the region's economy, as well as a vital source of nutrition for its residents. Livestock husbandry of which Dairy is the biggest component besides playing a pivotal role in sustaining the agriculture income of farmers acts as a growth engine for agriculture and allied sectors in J&K.

Atal Dulloo remarked that J&K can be a model for dairy development in the entire country by adopting farm policy reforms. The ACS said that dairying contributes positively and significantly to the income and employment of rural areas.

At present, the annual milk production in Jammu and Kashmir is 26 Lakh Metric Tons (LMT), but according to the project, the Jammu and Kashmir administration has set a target to increase this figure to 44 LMT. This increase in milk production is expected to be achieved through a range of measures, including the expansion of breeding coverage and increasing per-animal productivity.

One of the key elements of the project is to increase per-animal productivity from 2400 liters to 4300 liters, which is a significant increase. This will be achieved through a range of interventions, including the expansion of Artificial Insemination (AI) centers from 1389 to 2189. This increase in AI centers will be carried out through the involvement of 800 private AI workers or MAITRIs.

In addition to this, the government will establish a Murrah buffalo breeding farm and double the output from semen stations, with the aim of producing 19 lac doses annually.

Dairy Development in J&K is one among the 29 projects, which were approved by the Jammu and Kash-



mir administration after being recommended by the UT Level Apex Committee for holistic development of Agriculture and Allied Sectors in UT of J&K.

The committee is headed by Dr Mangla Rai, Former DG ICAR and has other luminaries in the field of Agriculture, Planning, Statistics & Administration like Ashok Dalwai, CEO NRAA, Dr. P. K Joshi, Secretary, NAAS, Dr. Prabhat Kumar, Horticulture Commissioner MOA & FW, Dr. H. S Gupta, Former Director, IARI, Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary Agriculture Production Department apart from the Vice Chancellors of SKUAST-Kashmir/Jammu.

Under this project, the government also plans to set up 400 satellite heifer-rearing units, which will help to improve the quality of new genetic material and enhance milk production in the region. This is expected to uplift the dairy industry in the union territory and make Jammu and Kashmir one of the leading milk-producing regions in the country.

Another important aspect of the dairy development project is the strengthening of milk chilling, processing, and marketing.

The government has decided to augment milk processing capacity and strengthen marketing and value addition. This will be achieved through a four times increase in milk collection & chilling infrastructure through the installation of 500 village-level AMCUs and 50 BMCs. To promote village enterprise at least 110 lakh liters of additional milk shall be value-added at village levels every year through Self Help Groups.

The government will also follow the Denmark model to increase milk productivity in the union territory.

To achieve these ambitious targets, the government will be working on various components including 70% Artificial Insemination coverage in five years. Milk value addition is one of the prime focus as milk products including ghee, butter, and cheese will be produced in bulk.

Similarly, the government is also working on another project to bring down the fodder deficit from 41 to a mere 8 per cent.

With a range of measures in place, including the expansion of breeding coverage, increasing per-animal productivity, and strengthening milk processing and marketing, the government is confident that it will achieve its target of increasing milk production by 70% within the next five years.

Joint efforts of Gram Panchayats, Social Forestry leading to creation of green assets in rural areas of J&K



SRINAGAR: The shared endeavors of the Social Forestry Department and Gram Panchayats has substantially proved of huge magnitude towards the creation of green assets in rural pockets of Jammu and Kashmir.

Pertinently, the Jammu and Kashmir government, after successfully establishing the three-tier Panchayati Raj system in the Union Territory, devolved powers and responsibilities with respect to various departments, which marked the beginning of collaborated working between the Department of Social Forestry and Gram Panchayats.

Vacant community/state lands under the control of Gram Panchayats are being utilized for taking up plantations maintained by Village Panchayat Plantation Committees (VPPCs). Various successful plantation units have been established in Gram Panchayats during the past 4 years under a new decentralized working setup.

“The plantation assets are yielding benefits to local people in the form of grass and leaf fodder, fuel wood and small timber on an equitable basis which is catalyzing the economic well-being of rural people,” stated Nazir Benazir, member of J&K Executive Committee, CAMPA. The Executive Committee sanctions and monitors various afforestation activities being funded under CAMPA in Jammu and Kashmir.

Benazir, who recently conducted an extensive field visit of Jammu, Kathua, and Samba districts along with senior officers of the Social Forestry Department, met members of more than a dozen Gram Panchayats of these districts and inspected the plantation works established in various Gram Panchayats. He interacted with members of VPPCs and local people.

The collaborative working between Social Forestry and Gram Panchayats is an apt example of responsive local self-governance which can help accelerate the pace of development in rural areas besides making GPs self-reliant.

Nazir was highly appreciative to note that afforestation activities are not only ensuring a continuous flow of free

benefits like fodder, and fuel wood to villagers but Gram Panchayats are earning substantial funds as proceeds of mature plantations which are being used for development works by Gram Panchayats.

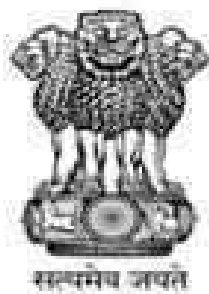
During the past nine months of this financial year, 27932.25 quintal fodder and 17982.855 quintal fuel wood has been distributed among 29043 households in 20 districts of the UT. An amount of Rs. 3.33 crore is expected to be transferred to the Village fund accounts of 45 Gram Panchayats as a 75% share of the proceeds of mature plantations.

The Sarpanchs and Panchs besides other prominent civil society members suggested increasing the development of Rain Water Harvesting Structures in the Kandi belts of these districts to ease the issues of water scarcity. People are appreciative of benefits that have started accruing due to afforestation and Water and Soil Conservation works. Benefits like an increase in agricultural productivity, enhanced supply of forest-based produce, and supply of water besides moderation of climatic conditions are the expected outcomes of these interventions.

The Department of Social Forestry has initiated measures to take up the plantation of fodder-yielding local plant species to augment and ensure a continual supply of fodder. Farmers are being provided multipurpose plant saplings including medicinal plants for taking up plantation under Agro/Farm Forestry on their farmlands. It plays an important role in increasing income, and supply of raw materials to wood-based industries, creating employment avenues besides mitigating the effects of climate change.

Also, the department has initiated measures to raise the plantation of commercially important species on government lands to motivate farmers for adopting this land use. During 2023-24, four mega pilot projects involving an area of 200 hectare is being taken as demonstrative plots in Jammu and Kathua districts.

E-Unnat ensures efficient, reliable services to common citizens



eUNNAT

Government of Jammu and Kashmir

215 services available on portal, 1472350 certificates issued till date

SRINAGAR: Keeping pace with the digital revolution taking place in the present era, E-Unnat has been successful in extending efficient, transparent, and reliable government services to common citizens fulfilling their basic needs in a more robust and responsive manner.

With this vital technological intervention, people now can easily avail all government services at the click of a button thus getting much-needed relief from unnecessary hindrances at different official levels.

Jammu and Kashmir's administration has made a remarkable achievement in the digital journey of Jammu and Kashmir with e-Unnat having 215 services available to the public. Besides, the portal is acting as a window for the government to obtain feedback from citizens on any subject related to service delivery to identify grey areas for further improvement.

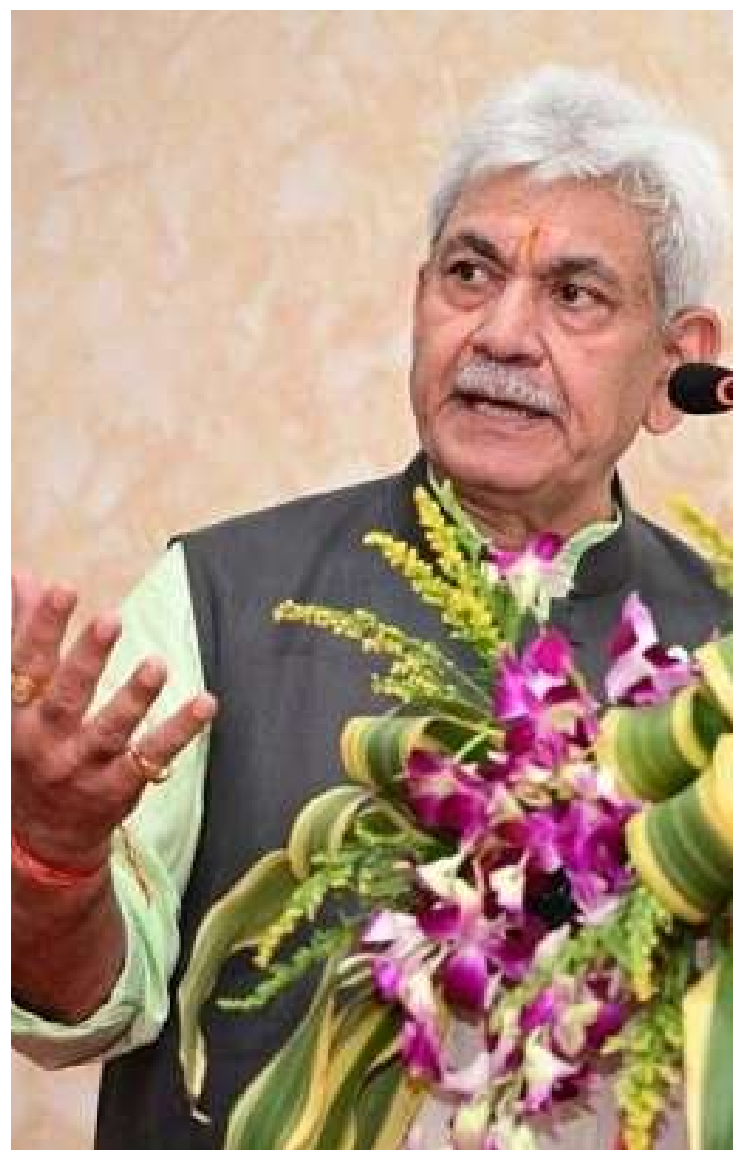
Through e-Unnat, citizens need to first register and apply for any service by filling out an application form. After that, they will receive an output certificate/report as the service deliverable.

Notably, Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta, inaugurated the integration of the Public Service Guarantee Act (PSGA) portal having an Auto-Appeal System feature with the e-UNNAT to provide a major impetus to transparent, citizen-friendly, and efficient governance. With this step, the J&K government has now integrated the online dashboard (<https://aas.jk.gov.in>) for all citizen-centric services available on e-Unnat Portal, as per the provisions of PSGA.

In the process, J&K has become the first UT in the country to implement such a robust system. This step of the government is expected to be a game changer as it empowers the citizens and would go a long way in curbing delays in providing services to citizens, weed out red tapism, inefficiency, lethargy, and a culture of apathy, and impunity. Under this system, the service delivery timelines, details of defaults, and penal provisions besides the generation of statistics and drill down facility together with auto-escalation/auto-appeal feature is available online.

The aim of the government in incorporating the auto-appeal and auto-escalation features in the portal is that the provisions of the PSGA get integrated into the online application processing and service delivery mechanism to be strictly adhered to.

Meanwhile, J&K has also become the first Union



Territory to launch its own Unified Citizen Services Portal (<https://eUnnat.jk.gov.in>) incorporating 'Meri Pehchaan' (National Single Sign-on) to make available Citizen Centric Services to the common man under a single portal.

The TEJAS Dashboard on the e-UNNAT portal would show, at a glance, the online e-service applications received, services delivered, applications pending, and applications rejected, with the delayed services delivery break-up further displayed based on time delay periods, less than a week, one to two weeks, more than two weeks, and so on.

At the same time, the e-UNNAT portal now also provides a glimpse into the My Scheme portal of the Government of India by mapping, initially, six schemes of the J&K government and providing access to information on those by re-directing through a single URL.

The statistics of response received on the platform has revealed that 1937127 applications have been received for the above services. Out of these, 1472350 certificates have already been issued digitally with just 464777 applications under process.



Govt to give big boost to beekeeping with Rs 47 crore investment

JAMMU: The J&K Apiculture sector is eagerly awaiting the launch of a mega project, approved by the UT administration, aimed at promoting apiculture with an investment of Rs 47 crore in the next three years.

The prestigious project is expected to significantly increase honey production in UT.

Efforts are underway to introduce apitherapy to a wider audience. The sector is projected to grow from its current annual output of Rs 69 crore to Rs 682 crore within five years, resulting in gainful employment for 8122 persons and the creation of 82 private sector enterprises.

The project, which is being carried out by the Agriculture Production Department, has been allocated a budget of Rs 46.65 crore with an avowed objective of increasing honey production three-fold, the bee population by 333 percent, and crop production of cross-pollinated crops by 20-25 percent.

“Beekeeping is an important source of income and livelihood for many rural youth, landless farmers, and small and medium- farmers in J&K. The honeybees not only produce honey but also play a crucial role in pollinating thousands of flowering plants, thereby contributing to food security,” Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture Production Department Atal Dulloo said.

The decline in pollinating bees poses a danger to the natural environment and agricultural sustainability, and the biodiversity of the Himalayan region can be restored through bee activity.

The “Promotion of beekeeping in UT of J&K” project is one of 29 projects approved by the J&K administration and recommended by the UT Level Apex Committee for the holistic development of



agriculture and allied sectors.

For this purpose, a committee has been constituted under Dr. Mangala Rai, Former DG ICAR, which comprises other experts in agriculture, planning, statistics, and administration.

The major constraints faced by the beekeeping industry in J&K included degradation and deforestation, the use of pesticides, lack of infrastructure, lack of standard migration practices, traceability, and changes in the blooming patterns of crucial forage plants. The project aims at addressing these issues by increasing the number of colonies through cluster formation, encouraging bee-preneurship and bee startups, besides developing infrastructure for post-harvest management, value addition, and marketing.

After implementation of the project, the number of bee colonies is expected to increase from 1.43 to 3.085 lakh, the number of beekeepers from 4526 to 7396, and honey production from 23050 to 66100 quintals. In addition to honey production, income from bee by-products such as royal jelly, bee venom, pollen, and wax worth Rs. 474 Crore per annum will also be realised. An amount of Rs. 4.4 Cr has been allocated for research and development.

The Agriculture Production Department will implement the project in collaboration with SKUAST-J/K, which will lead to the holistic development of apiculture, generate employment opportunities, provide livelihood sources, and create entrepreneurship opportunities for landless, small, and medium-sized farmers resulting in an overall improvement in their socio-economic conditions.

The implementation of this project is expected to bring a major change in the apiculture sector, providing a significant boost to honey production, bee population, and crop production. This will not only benefit the farmers but also contribute to the overall economic development of the region. The initiative of the government to promote beekeeping in J&K is a positive step towards ensuring sustainable agriculture and preserving the biodiversity of the Himalayan region.

Joint efforts of Gram Panchayats, Social Forestry leading to creation of green assets in rural areas of J&K

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Aapki Zameen, Aapki Nigrani portal revolutionizing revenue system across J&K

SRINAGAR: The J&K people are appreciating Aapki Zameen Aapki Nigrani move of the administration as a citizen-friendly measure bringing in transparency and accountability in the land record system.

Keeping pace with the innovation, Jammu and Kashmir government under the leadership of Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha launched a historic initiative of extending hassle-free online access to Land Records to people which revolutionized the revenue world of the UT.

E-governance, having immense importance in today's world, raises transparency, accountability, efficiency, and inclusiveness in the governing process in terms of reliable access to all information by the citizens.

Land Records Information System under the tag "Aapki Zameen Aapki Nigrani" allows public users to search and view copies of scanned revenue data online on CIS Portal <http://landrecords.jk.gov.in/> and reduces interference of revenue officials in land dealings and gives people the right to access their land records at a click of a button, thereby reducing manipulation and improving the efficiency of Revenue offices substantially.

Aapki Zameen Aapki Nigrani is a sequel to the national programme of the Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP) envisaging enhanced services to the common people in land matters. DILRMP was formally launched in the UT in April 2016 for improving online accessibility to Land Records System bringing an end to corrupt practices thereby ensuring quality services in Sub Registrar and Tehsil offices.

Lieutenant Governor's administration ensured that the land record programme which was being implemented at a slower pace is

speeded up and completed for the benefit of the common masses.

Under Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) activities on "Aapki Zameen Aapki Nigrani", the government organized special camps at Tehsil and Block level offices, Niabats, Patwar Khanas and Panchayat Ghars to educate the public about the digital platform where people can access their land records with one click.

Ghulam Muhammad Dar, a beneficiary of historic Aapki Zameen Aapki Nigrani says he is grateful to the present administrations at the Center and UT levels for launching such technological innovations for land ownership which is a big respite to the common man.

Another beneficiary of Rajesh Kumar of Jammu says Aapki Zameen Aapki Nigrani has empowered common people to check their land records on their mobiles getting rid of physically visiting revenue offices.

The government has also initiated the process of issuing trilingual land passbooks as a measure to fill the information vacuum and promote people's ease of access to the revenue records in the Jammu and Srinagar districts. The first-of-its-kind land passbook are being issued to the legal owners of land in Jammu and Kashmir in Urdu, English, and Hindi languages.

Showket Ahmed Rather of Tengpora Srinagar is all praise for the government's initiative, he said, "It is really a good step, everyone will be benefited." "Earlier getting revenue extracts used to take months. With the Land passbook, now everything is with the people. We have been relieved of the cumbersome process and nightmare of visiting revenue offices," he added.

For Khurshed Ahmed Reshi of Tengpora, the initiative will expose people who grabbed government land and built infrastructure on public land.



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Gram Panchayats earning substantially by raising green assets on vacant state land

Free supply of fodder, fuel wood, timber on equitable basis being provided to people through these assets

SRINAGAR: The active engagement of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in the planning and execution of developmental works and efficient delivery of Public Services is essential to achieve the essence of grassroots-level democracy and decentralized governance.

The government of UT of J&K after successfully establishing the three-tier Panchayati Raj System has taken many decisions to empower PRIs by devolving powers, responsibilities, functions, and funds to them. Various essential services having bearing on the 'ease of living' of common citizens are now being administered through PRIs. Gram Panchayats (GPs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) are getting fully involved and playing a meaningful role in collaboration with functionaries of the Government Departments.

One such important mandate which GPs have been carrying forward is raising plantations to establish Green assets by utilizing the vacant Village Common Lands/State lands in their respective Gram Panchayats in collaboration with the Social Forestry Wing under the Department of Forests, Environment, and Ecology of J&K.

The Village Panchayat Plantation Committees (VP-PCs) headed by respective Sarpanchs, identify land, and take up plantations of multipurpose tree species, with technical support of Social Forestry. These plantations are protected and scientifically managed jointly by Social Forestry officials and representatives of VPPCs. The households of Gram Panchayat play an active role in the protection of plantations and in return they derive benefits by getting a free supply of fodder, fuelwood, and small timber on an equitable basis.

During the 2021-22 year, 32112 quintals of Fodder, 16580 quintals of fuelwood was distributed free of cost amongst 20850 rural households of 1646 Gram Panchayats and thus rendering valuable support to the livestock-based rural economy. Jammu and Kashmir Government has enacted the provisions of transferring 75% of funds earned from the sale of mature plantations to Village Panchayat Funds. The money deposited in these funds is used by VPPCs for afforestation activities and part of it is also used for taking up other village utility works like village paths and roads, sports facilities, improvement of schools, health facilities, drinking water, and other works as per the decision of local VPPC.

In the last few years, many progressive Gram Panchayats have successfully raised plantations on available vacant lands and established 'Village Panchayat Funds' to finance such developmental activities as per the needs of their Panchayats.

In, July 2021, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha while handing over cheques to 41 such Gram Panchayats ranging from Rs. 5 lakhs to Rs. 30 lakhs, expressed his satisfaction on the successful partnership of the Department of Social

Forestry and Gram Panchayats and emphasised to involve more and more Gram Panchayats in this process.

During 2022, funds worth Rs. 30 lakhs were transferred to five Gram panchayats and in the current year the figure may go up to more than two crores benefitting more than 30 GPs as per the official statement of the department. This model of collaborative working is an important milestone in the journey of implementation of the Panchayati Raj Act towards the empowerment of PRIs and their active role in transforming the developmental landscape of Jammu & Kashmir.

As per Departmental Communique that after such success stories, many other Gram Panchayats have been coming forward and offering parcels of land to raise plantations and silvi-pasture models.

With the proactive participation of Gram Panchayats, during 2022-23 financial year, plantation of 32 lakh plants in 3500 GPs is being taken up which marks an increase of more than 60% percent over the average achievements prior to 2017-18 and it is expected that achievements would further increase in coming financial year, the official communique adds.

From these Village Woodlots, multiple benefits like fodder, fuelwood, and small timber have been accruing free of cost to village households on a continual and equitable basis. Harvesting of mature plantations yields raw-material for local wood-based industries, thereby generating new avenues of employment.

The establishment of plantations on lands outside natural forests is contributing to increasing the Forest and tree-cover in Jammu and Kashmir to achieve the goal of having 2/3rd of the area under Forest and tree cover which is around 50% presently.

The PCCF/Director of the Department of Social Forestry, J&K, Roshan Jaggi has expressed optimism and confidence in this evolving working relationship. He disclosed that the department in consultation with Gram Panchayats has drawn up a plan to establish 4 mega pilots to establish block plantations in the coming plantation season using commercially important clonal varieties.

The pilots are expected to motivate and inspire more and more progressive farmers to take up commercial plantations on their proprietary lands under farm forestry land use.

The promotion of tree-farming outside Natural Forests is a win-win situation as it would reduce dependence on imports and ensure a sustained supply of raw-material at cheaper rates to Wood Based industries, increase the income of farmers, meet the bonafide needs of local people, and will also help meet international obligations on account of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Climate Change by adding Forest cover and creating Carbon sinks.



JKRLM emerging as a ray of hope for rural women

Establishing strong grassroots institutions for the poor through UMEED

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Government is building strong grassroots institutions for the poor, engaging them in gainful livelihood interventions and ensuring appreciable improvement in their income on a sustainable basis through the UMEED scheme of J&K Rural Livelihood Mission (JKRLM).

JKRLM's mandate is to reach out to 66% rural population across the 125 blocks of Jammu and Kashmir and to provide them with sustainable livelihood opportunities and nurture them so that they come out of poverty and appreciate an honorable quality of life.

The core values which guide all the activities under JKRLM are the inclusion of the poor and the substantial role of the poorest in all the processes, transparency, and accountability of all processes and institutions, proprietorship, and the key role of the poor and their institutions in all the stages – planning, implementation and monitoring and lastly community self-reliance and self-dependence.

JKRLM is emerging as the ray of hope for rural women as the programme has brought self-sufficiency among them. The women have not only come out of poverty but their status has also been raised within their own families by this mission. The mission is extensively based on capacity building and strengthening community-based institutions by empowering rural women at different levels.

Several girls from Kulgam district of South Kashmir forayed into mushroom cultivation under the RLM scheme in collaboration with the agriculture department.

Tahira Bashir, an entrepreneur and beneficiary of JKRLM from Kulgam expresses gratitude to the department due to which she started the Mushroom unit. "Officials guided us, which is why our

unit is on the track. We had to deposit Rs. 15,000 which was refunded later. The profit from selling mushrooms entirely belongs to us," said Tahira with satisfaction.

Saima Jan, another entrepreneur from Kulgam appeals to other women to start their own units with the help of UMEED and become self-sufficient as well as job providers.

Notably, CLF (Bhaderwah, Doda) was awarded as the best performing SHG Federation during the 'National Conference on three Decades of SHG Bank Linkage Program and SHG Federation Awards Presentation' organised by APMAS, Hyderabad.

Meanwhile, JKRLM and Meesho, India's fastest-growing internet commerce company signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to support the growth of 1,800 Self-Help Groups (SHGs) by providing them with an online platform to launch and grow their business and empower the rural women entrepreneurs.

In the Pulwama district, 23-year-old Khairun Nissa became part of a women's self-help group under UMEED and started a milk collection business. Gaining experience she started a dairy unit which she has been running successfully.

Afterward, Nissa set up a fodder shop and high-tech poly house for growing various exotic vegetables. Nowadays, she is doing fairly well. All her family members have been engaged in the business in one way or the other.

Her business is also creating job opportunities for others. "I hire many labourers at my business units on a wage basis," Nissa said. With her hard work and dedication, Nissa has become an inspiration for many in the area.





Around 420 enterprises, more than 4000 jobs to be created across UT

JAMMU: Poultry farming in Jammu and Kashmir has a long history, with traditional farming methods dating back centuries. However, in recent years, the sector has undergone significant modernization and expansion.

The introduction of new technologies and improved breeding techniques has led to an increase in the production and quality of poultry products, transforming the sector from a source of supplementary income and proteinic foods for families to a major commercial activity that generates significant revenue.

This growth can be attributed to a number of factors, including changes in food habits, the rise of the middle class and their increased income, the presence of private companies in the industry, and increasing demand for poultry products in the market.

The UT government has played a key role in promoting the development of the poultry sector. It has implemented various initiatives and schemes to support farmers and encourages the growth of the industry like providing subsidies and financial assistance to farmers, promoting backyard poultry farming, establishing training and capacity-building programs, and encouraging the use of modern technology in poultry farming. However, with the increasing demands the sector has become dependent on imported poultry produce and raw material which has become a cause for concern and puts the local poultry industry at a disadvantage.

To put the poultry sector on the path of sustainability and self-reliance the Agriculture Production Department has approved a 'Roadmap for poultry development in J&K' under its mission for Holistic Development of Agriculture and Allied Sectors in the UT. "Every year the UT experiences a flight of capital on account of poultry imports to the tune of Rs. 1273 Cr. Among these table eggs account for Rs. 473 Cr, day-old chicks for Rs. 110 Cr, poultry feed worth Rs. 300 Cr, and broiler birds for Rs. 390 Cr," said Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary APD.

The ACS said that this flight, however, can also be viewed as an opportunity for generating local enterprises and creating jobs for our educated youth for which various interventions under the project are being implemented. He added that a total of 420 enterprises and 4250 direct jobs are being created under this project over the next five years.

'Roadmap for poultry development in J&K' is one among the 29 projects approved by the Jammu and Kashmir administration after being recommended by the UT Level Apex Committee for holistic development of Agriculture and Allied Sectors in UT. The prestigious committee is headed by Dr Mangala Rai, Former DG ICAR, and has other luminaries in the field of Agriculture, Planning, Statistics & Administration like Ashok Dalwai, CEO NRAA; Dr. P. K Joshi, Secretary, NAAS; Dr. Prabhat Kumar, Horticulture Commissioner MOA & FW; Dr. H. S Gupta, Former Director, IARI;

Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary, APD J&K, apart from the Vice Chancellors of the twin Agriculture Universities of the UT.

The project is expected to transform the Agriculture sector of Jammu and Kashmir with a specific focus on the poultry industry also. "The project encompasses all three verticals in the poultry industry including producing day-old broiler chicken to feed the broiler industry, establishing layer farms in intensive and free-range mode to meet the demands for eggs, and boosting quality feed manufacture through the establishment of feed processing units," said Dr Azmat Alam Khan, Professor, Poultry Sciences, SKUAST-K.

Currently, the UT imports 440 lakh day-old chicks every year worth Rs 110 crores. The birds are transported for over two days which creates stress and decreases their productivity. This takes a toll on the economy of the farmer too who has to spend more to counter this stress, thus increasing his cost of production and reducing the competitiveness of his produce.

To overcome this 125 parent breeding farms (each 3000-parent capacity), with hatcheries and in-house feed manufacturing plants will be established within a span of five years each having a production capacity of 4 lakh day-old chicks. This would facilitate achieving self-sufficiency in day-old chicks within a span of five years.

Similarly, the UT spends Rs. 473 crores on the import of table eggs annually. These eggs again are imported and on average reach J&K after 15-30 days of being laid. Eggs are an important source of nutrition for all age groups especially children and freshness is the most important component when evaluating the quality of an egg. Under the project 200-layer farms, each with 10000 bird capacities are being established to produce 60 crore eggs within a span of five years.

In addition, backyard and free-range poultry farming has also been covered under various incentives for which inputs are being provided through the establishment of 66 Mother Units, each of 1000 parent stock. These mother units shall provide birds to more than 2000 free-range farms housing 500 birds each.

One of the main challenges facing poultry farmers in Jammu and Kashmir is the high cost of feed, which can make production expensive. To address this issue, the project has put a target of producing 85000 Metric Tons of poultry feed within a span of five years by establishing 35 units (7 feed units per year) of 1 ton per hour capacity. Apart from this, the APD has implemented measures to increase the production of feed locally, including promoting the cultivation of maize and other feed crops under other projects.

All these interventions shall boost the gross output of the Poultry Sector in J&K from Rs. 709 Cr to Rs. 1982 Cr per year and ensure that the poultry industry is well-positioned for continued growth and development in the coming years.



JKIDFC achieves milestone of completing more than 1500 infra projects

IT WAS FURTHER REVEALED THAT A LOAN OF RS 2750 CRORE WAS RAISED BY THE CORPORATION OUT OF WHICH 2730.81 CRORE HAS ALREADY BEEN DISBURSED TOWARDS THE FUNDING OF SOME 1990 PROJECTS. A total of 180 projects of different departments had been completed this year.

JAMMU: In a review meeting to take stock of the progress made so far under Jammu & Kashmir Infrastructure Development Finance Corporation (JKIDFC) sponsored projects, the Chief Secretary, Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, today exhorted upon the Corporation to live up to its potential for accelerating the completion of projects in J&K.

The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary, PDD; Principal Secretary, H&UDD; Principal Secretary, I&C, Principal Secretary, PWD; Principal Secretary, Education; Commissioner Secretary, Information and IT; Commissioner Secretary, Forests; Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare; Secretary Health; Secretary, Tourism; Director Finance, JKIDFC; General Manager, JKIDFC and many other officers from various departments.

Some of the Kashmir-based officers participated in the meeting through a video link.

Dr Mehta exhorted upon the officers to achieve the targets given to them within the accepted deadlines. He urged them to use all their prowess in removing the bottlenecks so that each project funded by JKIDFC is completed at the earliest. He asked them to dedicate the completed projects to the public forthwith.

The Chief Secretary impressed upon the officers to work in mission mode for completing the remaining projects and raise bills to book the expenditure at regular intervals. He impressed upon them that the original purpose of this initiative taken by the government is to create public infrastructure without any undue delay. Therefore it should be our collective effort to realize this objective by giving our best to complete each of the projects in the shortest time as funds are readily

available to serve the purpose.

Dr Mehta asked each of the departments to furnish a list of non-initiated projects to be dropped out of corporation funding and a list of projects to be completed before 31 of March, 2023. He asked them to work out the final details of the projects to be carried forward for completion and the actual amount of funds required for them positively in a week's time.

The meeting was informed that the Corporation has achieved the milestone of completing some 1507 projects at an estimated cost of Rs 2504 crore till date. It was given out that the e-compendium of the same would shortly be put in the public domain. It was said that earlier also district-wise e-book of 200, 500, 600, 800, and 1100 completed projects has been made available to the public.

It was further revealed that a loan of Rs 2750 crore was raised by the Corporation out of which 2730.81 crore has already been disbursed towards the funding of some 1990 projects. A total of 180 projects of different departments had been completed this year.

The meeting was apprised that the Corporation envisages exploring some revenue-generating projects also for its sustainability. It will look into the possibility of a public-private partnership (PPP) mode for finalizing the expression of interest with different financial institutions for its funding, as was given on the occasion.

It was said that the Corporation has completed all the necessary compliances as per the Companies Act, 2013. Moreover, it has completed financial statements till the 2020-21 fiscal and the statutory audit for FY 2020-21 has also been closed, as was informed in the meeting.



Latest tech interventions employed to diversify agriculture sector across J&K

Srinagar: Agricultural diversification is key to reducing the risk in farming activities and the J&K government is constantly employing the latest technological interventions to diversify the agriculture sector across Jammu and Kashmir, officials said today.

Mushroom cultivation is one important tool in not only enhancing the agricultural income of the farming community but also securing it against rising changes in climate and soil resources.

With this in mind, the Government of J&K is implementing a full-fledged project on 'Promotion of Round the Year Mushroom Cultivation' (PRYMC) across the UT, said an official.

"The project to be implemented at a cost of around Rs 42 crore over the next three years by the Agriculture Production Department of J&K will increase the production of mushrooms by 3.5 times and revolutionize mushroom cultivation here," they said.

the project will also increase employment generation by three times and more than 768 new enterprises are also being created in the process to ensure the sustainability of the interventions.

"Mushroom farming generates revenue and helps to reduce poverty. The production of mushrooms creates a significant amount of direct and indirect employment opportunities in the fields of cultivation and marketing, as well as providing opportunities for processing businesses and labor-intensive management," said Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture Production Department, Atal Dulloo.

He added that mushroom farming requires little capital, and little technical expertise, and it is even possible to grow mushrooms indoors on a small scale and easily earn a high return on investment. He further said that women can grow mushrooms in their homes with little investment and as a result, mushroom farming not only gives rural women more power but also fights poverty at its source.

'Promotion of round-the-year mushroom cultivation is one among the 29 projects, which were approved by the Jammu and Kashmir administration after being recommended by the UT Level Apex Committee for holistic development of Agriculture and allied sectors in UT of J&K.

The committee is headed by Dr Mangala Rai,

former DG ICAR, and has other luminaries in the field of Agriculture, Planning, Statistics & Administration like Ashok Dalwai, CEO NRAA; Dr. P. K Joshi, Secretary, NAAS; Dr. Prabhat Kumar, Horticulture Commissioner MOA & FW; Dr. H. S Gupta, former Director, IARI; Atal Dulloo, Financial Commissioner (Addl Chief Secretary) APD apart from the Vice Chancellors of the twin Agriculture universities of the UT.

"Mushroom is an important cottage industry in rural areas. It leads to the economic betterment of small & marginal farmers, landless laborers, and women. Being a cash crop it is a good means of generating employment opportunities for the youth of the UT," said Director Agriculture & Farmers Welfare Jammu, K.K Sharma, who is implementing the project in collaboration with SKUAST.

He added that the lack of availability of pasteurized compost & unorganized market were the major constraints in mushroom production and this project is going to address them in a significant way.

Under the project 26 pasteurized compost-making units, 10 spawn production labs, and 72 controlled conditioned cropping rooms (2000 bags capacity), will be established in the span of three years. For the promotion of mushroom cultivation in non-traditional areas, 1.5 lakh subsidized pasteurized compost bags will be distributed among mushroom growers. Women empowerment through the establishment of 300 women Self Help Groups (WSHGs) will be undertaken.

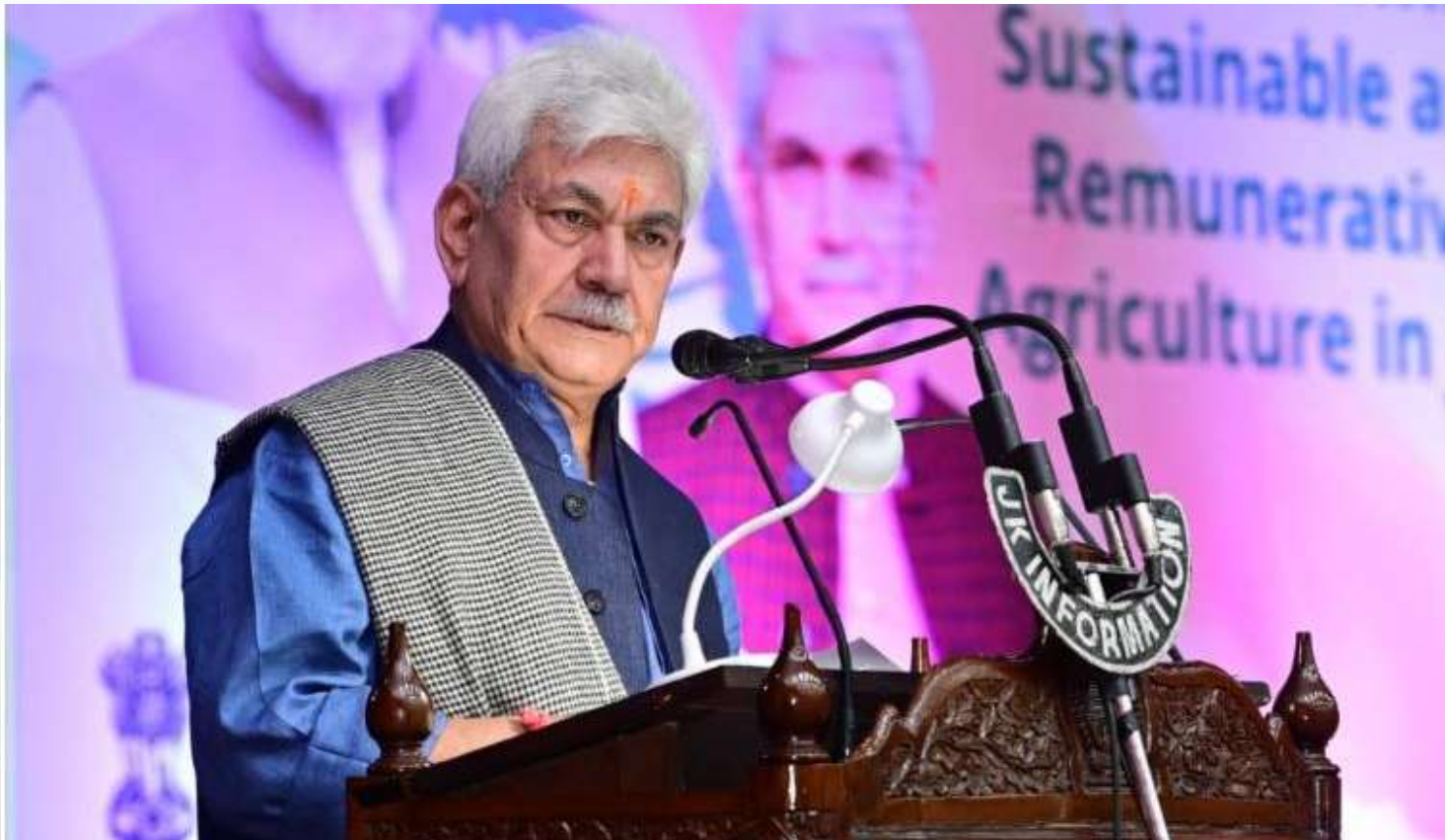
The project also focuses on the value addition of the perishable commodity through the creation of four canning units and the distribution of 60 solar dryers among mushroom growers. In addition to this, an amount of Rs 2.1 Crs has been earmarked for research and development. Under this emphasis will also be laid on the promotion of medicinal mushrooms and the introduction of new strains of mushrooms. It will also have a specific emphasis on standardization of locally available substrates and documentation of conditions for their optimal growth.

All in all, the mushroom sector in J&K is about to witness a resurgence in the form of unprecedented institutional and capital support which will boost production, productivity as well as export of mushrooms from the UT.



Aspirational Panchayat Development Programme

J&K govt all set to introduce Panchayat Development Index



SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Government is all set to introduce Panchayat Development Index to develop and replicate best practices that drive improvement across the socio-economic themes of the Panchayats under the newly approved Aspirational Panchayat Development Programme (APDP).

The identified Panchayats will be given special focus to saturate inclusive development schemes which would serve as model Panchayats, an official said.

He added that the J&K Government will select the most backward 285 Panchayats (One Panchayat per Block) under APDP for holistic development.

An array of key parameters for the preparation of the Panchayat Development Index to rate various Panchayats of the UT of Jammu and Kashmir on socio-economic indicators concerning the lives of the people residing in the rural areas has already been identified.

This exercise will be taken on the analogy of the Aspirational Block Development Programme being implemented by the UT of Jammu and Kashmir.

A total of 100 measurable indicators have been identified across 9 sectors namely Agriculture and allied Activities (06 indicators), Health and Nutrition (11), Education (13), Rural Development and Sanitation (07), Beneficiary-Oriented Schemes (04), Skill Development (04), Basic Infrastructure (17), Environment (05) and Good Governance (33), which shall give insight into the existing status and incremental progress over a period of time.

On the basis of the importance of these sectors, weights shall be assigned to each sector and sub-indicators as per relevance in the life of the rural population.

These Aspirational Panchayats shall be developed through the convergence of various ongoing District/UT Schemes and Centrally Sponsored Schemes /Programmes. Besides, additional financial assistance of Rs. 10 lakh shall be provided to the selected Panchayats un-

der the scheme for its further development after achieving saturation in several parameters like Soil Health Cards, Land Pass Books, Kisan Credit Cards, Shram Cards issued to eligible laborers, 100 percent Institutional Births, 100 percent vaccination of children in the age group of 9-11 months, Zero Percent Out of School Children, 100 percent Solid Waste Collection and Treatment, Aadhaar Seeding with MGNREGA Cards, Issuance of Golden Cards under PMJAY SEHAT, he further said.

About 285 most backward Panchayats shall be selected from 4291 Panchayats of J&K (One Panchayat per Block), on the basis of the least aggregate score obtained on the selected 100 parameters in the Panchayat Development Index in the concerned block.

The data shall be analyzed in PD&MD and the most backward panchayat in the block shall be identified, the details of which shall be shared with all respective District Development Commissioners for authentication.

Aspirational Panchayat Development Programme (APDP) Dashboard shall be developed by the IT department for uploading the data of all Panchayats on the selected indicators/parameters. Subsequently, APDP Dashboard shall be used to monitor the progress of these Aspirational Panchayats on Key Performance Indicators.

Aspirational Panchayat Development Programme will be implemented under the overall supervision of the District Development Commissioner (DDC).

For smooth implementation of the programme, a Nodal Officer shall be designated by the DDC at the district level from the Rural Development Department.

Moreover, access of people of these Panchayats to various schemes available for the development of the poor shall be improved/saturated which shall bring overall improvement in their living conditions. This will be a move forward towards inclusive development of these areas ensuring benefits to the last man in the last row.



Govt approves Rs 146 Cr project for promotion of niche crops in J&K

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir government has approved a prestigious project worth Rs 146 crore to promote the niche crops as the unique heritage of the UT, which will be implemented in the next five years.

“The project aims at diversifying and expanding the area of niche crops over an area of 11,100 hectare thus ensuring livelihood security for 111,000 targetted beneficiaries with a revenue realization of Rs. 2,238 Crore,” Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Agriculture Production Department (APD), Atal Dulloo said.

The initiative will focus on increasing production, improving livelihoods, and enhancing market accessibility. This will be achieved through the establishment of nurseries and seed villages, infrastructure development, and collaboration with various partners and stakeholders, he added.

Pertinently, Jammu and Kashmir is home to a diverse range of niche crops including Saffron, Kalazeera, Kashmiri Lal Mirch, Peanut, Anardhana, Bhaderwah Rajmash, hill garlic, Mushkbudhji (aromatic rice), Red Rice and Shallot (Pran). These crops are grown on an area of 32,000 hectare, with a total production of 24,000 metric tons making a substantial contribution of Rs. 945 crores to the UT GDP.

The main components of the project included the establishment of 5,226 nurseries/seed villages, which will generate 7750 job opportunities for unemployed youth working in the niche sector. Additionally, the project will take up the creation of one Mini Spice Park, two Modern Rice Mills, and eleven grading and processing units in target clusters, which will be linked with available NABL laboratories and e-trading centers of UT. This will facilitate quality promotion and value addition, leading to profitable accessibility to the market.

To promote these niche crops at the export level, the project shall also undertake tagging of identified niche crops, for which descriptors will be developed for their uniqueness. Likewise, the project will ensure human resource development for capacity building and employment generation. The project is being jointly undertaken by SKUAST Jammu and Kashmir besides the Agriculture and Farmer Welfare Department, Jammu and Kashmir.

Promotion of Niche Crops is one among the 29 projects, which were approved by the Jammu and Kashmir administration after being recommended by the UT Level Apex Committee for holistic development of Agriculture and allied sectors in the UT of J&K.

The prestigious committee is headed by Dr Mangala Rai, Former DG ICAR with other luminaries in the field of Agriculture, Planning, Statistics and Administration like Ashok Dalwai, CEO NRAA, Dr. P K Joshi, Secretary, NAAS, Dr. Prabhat Kumar, Horticulture Commissioner MOA, and FW, Dr. H S Gupta, Former Director, IARI, Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Agriculture Production Department (APD), apart from the Vice Chancellors of twin Agriculture Universities of the UT.

“There is a long history of cultivating these niche crops in J&K, particularly in heritage sites such as Pampore, Gurez, Padder, Kishtwar, Bhaderwah, Bandipora, Sagam, Tangdar, Ramban and Poonch,” Dulloo said, adding that these crops, including spices, aromatic crops, and underutilized horticultural crops, have a significant commercial value and potential to be awarded a GI tag, similar to the tag achieved for Kashmir Saffron.

Currently, spice niche crops are cultivated on 5525 hectare with a total production of 10163 metric tons. Similarly, aromatic crops are cultivated on 250 hectares, with a total production of 750 metric tons. However, heritage underutilized horticultural crops are scattered, with a very low area of 547 hectares, and a production of 81 metric tons.

The existing production scenario suggests a great scope for enhancing production to bridge the prevailing market deficit.

Diversification of niche crops in potential areas has been proposed on 11100 hectare of land in various districts of the state. Specifically, saffron will be grown on 290 ha in Kupwara, Baramulla, Ganderbal, Bandipora, Kulgam, Shopian, Anantnag, Doda, Ramban, Poonch, Rajouri, Reasi and Udhampur, Kalazeera on 300 ha in Bandipora, Kishtwar and Pulwama, Kashmiri Lal Mirch on 1000 ha's in Anantnag, Kulgam and Kupwara, Peanut on 410 ha in Doda, Rajouri, Poonch and Kishtwar, Bhaderwah Rajmash on 6000 ha in Kishtwar, Kathua, Poonch, Rajouri and Doda, Hill Garlic on 2000 ha in Jammu, Samba, Kathua, and Udhampur, Mushkbudji on 600 ha's in Anantnag, Kulgam and Kupwara besides Red Rice on 500 ha in District Anantnag, Baramulla, Kupwara and Budgam districts.

To meet the emerging market demand for niche crops as functional food, there is an immediate need to extend the area of cultivation in similar agroecological conditions in J&K, either as a sole crop or as an intercrop. The introduction of niche value chains in prevailing cropping systems will not only increase production but will also meet the goal of raising farmers' income substantially, ensuring livelihood security and stability. The expanded area of cultivation will include Kupwara, Baramulla, Ganderbal, Bandipora, Kulgam, Budgam, Pulwama, Shopian, Anantnag, Doda, Ramban, Poonch, Rajouri, Udhampur, Reasi, Samba, Kathua and Kishtwar.

One of the key challenges in expanding the area of cultivation is the lack of availability of quality planting material. The project aims to address this challenge through the establishment of 5182 registered nurseries on 408 ha and 44 seed villages over an area of 212 ha, particularly in heritage sites such as Pampore, Gurez, Padder, Kishtwar, Baderwah, Bandipora, Sagam, Tangdar, Ramban and Poonch.

The cumulative output from the nurseries/seed villages shall include 2159 MT of quality planting material, 40000 plants, and 10 crore seedlings. The outcome of the project will serve as a pilot module for area expansion for production enhancement of high-value crops as a long-term strategy in UT of J&K.

HAR GAON HARYALI: 90 lakh saplings planted in J&K during current fiscal

UT forest cover substantially higher than the national average

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir government's ambitious initiative 'Har Gaon Hariyali' has recorded a plantation of 90 lakh saplings during the current fiscal against the set target of plantation of 1.35 crore seedlings.

Pertinently, the government of Jammu and Kashmir launched this remarkable initiative in consonance with the vision of 'Green Jammu and Kashmir' to ensure sustainable development and promote climate justice across J&K. The Green Jammu and Kashmir drive itself is in consonance with the National Forest Policy 1988 and the Jammu and Kashmir Forest Policy 2011 which envisages afforestation on all degraded and denuded lands in J&K within and outside forests.

Green Jammu and Kashmir campaign aim at creating a people's movement at a massive scale with the involvement of all stakeholders particularly village panchayats, women, students, Urban Local bodies, NGOs, and civil society.

The aim of the department is to bring two third geographical area of Jammu and Kashmir under forest and tree cover, he said, "The forest and tree cover in Jammu and Kashmir is about 55 percent, which is substantially higher than the national average of 24.56 percent."

The J&K Government initiated the 'Har Gaon Haryali' campaign in November 2021. Under this campaign, forest and sister departments were vested with the responsibility to cover all the village panchayats and planting one crore saplings.

With an aim to realize the objectives and target set under the 'Har Gaon Haryali' campaign, the Social Forestry department is laying emphasis on providing hybrid clonal plants to farmers from its modern nurseries, so that farmer's income can be supplemented and sustained supply of raw materials to wood-based industries can be ensured.

In addition, the department is organizing such programs with multiple activities in all districts of Jammu

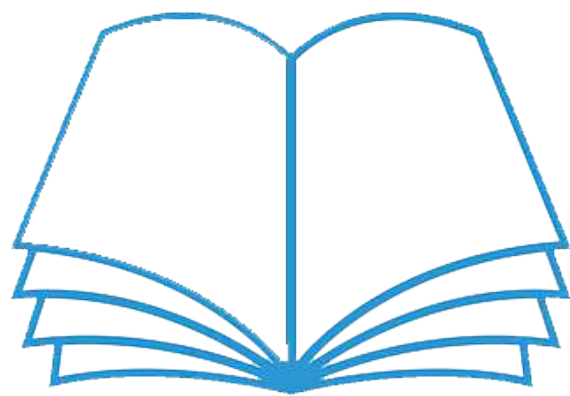


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and Kashmir to provide impetus to the J&K Green drive initiative with the participation of local communities.

The department has apprised the people in general and farmers, in particular, to avail the supply of plants from departmental nurseries to take up agro-forestry activities on their lands.

Also, Chief Secretary has released publications titled "Har Gaon Hariyali under Green Jammu and Kashmir Drive" and "Digitization of Forests: Strengthening of Forest Protection and Management" by Forest Department, "Pollinators: Nature's Miracle Workers" by J&K Biodiversity Council, and "Key Wildlife Species: Kishtwar High Altitude National Park" by Wildlife Protection Department.



JKPI Publications

Air pollution reaches dangerous levels during winters in Kashmir



ADEELA HAMEED

Winter usually begins in the last week of November in Kashmir and ends in February. During this time, the valley receives ample snow, rain, and sleet, in addition to increased incidences of frost, fog, and mercury dipping below zero. For quite a few days, even air traffic is suspended and the national highway closed. This is the norm that follows. However, the ground situation, which might not seem as important to many, is quite concerning. Climate experts have data that prove that the air quality of Kashmir deteriorates drastically during winter, leading to health concerns for its inhabitants. A 2018 study that examined the contribution of chronic respiratory diseases to deaths and disabilities in India, found J&K to be among the top four states with a growing prevalence of the chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. According to the study, around 4,750 people in 1,00,000 suffer from chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases, with air pollution being the leading risk factor.

Biomass burning, vehicular combustion, brick kilns, and cement factories emit pollutants that contribute to the high levels of particulate matter (PM 2.5, PM 10) in the air.

Co-relation of air quality and lung diseases in Kashmir

Smog is a familiar sight in Kashmir during winter now. The cold atmospheric conditions have the potential to trigger symptoms of respiratory tract infections. However, during summers as well, the quality of air has a significant role to play. Long-term exposure to respiratory irritants in the air is linked to an increased risk of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and other lung diseases.

COPD is a chronic inflammatory lung disease that blocks the airway and makes it difficult to breathe. Typically, it is caused by long-term exposure to irritating gases or particulate matter. According to WHO, it is the third leading cause of death worldwide.

Jammu and Kashmir has a high prevalence of lung diseases and is among the top four states in India with a growing prevalence of COPD, according to a 2018 study. Dr. Parvaiz Ahmad Koul, Director of the Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), while speaking on the sidelines of the launch of the Doctors for Clean Air and Climate Action, J&K chapter informed that around 10,000 people die every year in UT due to diseases attributable to air pollution. Dr. Koul gave a detailed presentation on air pollution and lung diseases. "Pollution is affecting every organ of our body. Srinagar city has the highest incidence of lung cancer in the country, and J&K has a high prevalence of lung diseases, and air pollution is a major risk factor for the ailments," he said.

The Chest Diseases Hospital in Srinagar also witnesses patients from pollution-prone areas like Khrew and Khonmoh villages of Pulwama, and Budgam districts of Kashmir frequently. Quarrying,

cement factories, brick kilns, and other activities carried out in these areas add to the number of patients suffering from occupational lung diseases.

The air quality of Kashmir with green meadows, high mountains, and forests is perceived to be pure and untainted. Yet studies have found that on certain days, pollution in the valley can be worse than that in a metropolitan city. It is important to note that Srinagar city was declared the 11th most polluted in the world, in 2016, by WHO.

Now there's another reason to stay indoors during winter in Kashmir

A study jointly conducted by a team of scientists from the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology and the University of Kashmir in 2018, titled Winter Burst of Pristine Kashmir Valley Air, has indicated that pollution in Srinagar hits dangerous levels during winter months. The air was found to carry five times more particulate matter (PM2.5) than the permissible limit.

The study indicated that emissions due to domestic coal usage account for 84% (1246.5 tons/year) of the total annual emission, followed by vehicular combustion which is 220.5 tons/year. The least emissions are from fuel wood burning to account for around 8.06 tons/year. The elevated levels of emissions from biomass and coal burning, fossil fuel combustion, and suspension of road dust increase particulate pollution in winter.

Because of an enormous increase in the land under horticulture, the pruning of trees takes place in October and November at a large scale. People burn foliage to make charcoal. The use of traditional fire pots (kangris) ignited by charcoal and coal-based heaters (bukharis) adds to the overall pollution as well. The high cost of LPG and a shortage of electricity in Kashmir, on the other hand, forces residents to continue the use of conventional sources of heat during winter. Researchers have, thus, observed a high PM2.5 and PM10 load during autumn and winter in the valley.

According to NASA earth observatory, Kashmir is enclosed by high mountain ranges on all sides. These ranges have the ability to trap air and create airflow patterns that concentrate smoke and other airborne pollutants close to the valley bottom. It results in outbreaks of haze. This situation usually develops more in winter when a layer of cool air at the surface is overlain by a layer of warmer air – a phenomenon known as temperature inversion in meteorology.

The combined effect of cold weather conditions and biomass and coal burning, fossil fuel combustion, vehicular emissions, etc., lead to the accumulation of particulate matter (PM) in the lower atmospheric levels. With a temperature inversion in place, the thick layer of warm air acts as a cap and prevents pollutants from dispersing. Thus, their concentration increases in winter.

Vehicular emissions increasing in Srinagar – Reports the JKPCC

The number of vehicles registered in Jammu and Kashmir is more

than 1.6 million, which has considerably gone up from 6,68,445 in 2008. These figures are according to the J&K traffic department. Officials at the Jammu and Kashmir Pollution Control Committee (JKPCC) have blamed the unplanned vehicular system for a noticeable impact on the quality of air. A considerable rise in the number of public and private vehicles operating in the city has resulted in a high concentration of pollutants in the air.

A 2018 preliminary study on the air quality of Srinagar revealed a higher concentration of NO₂ in the city center – Lal Chowk – a commercial area of the city. The study was conducted by researchers from S.P. College and G.D. College in Srinagar. Vehicular emission could be one of the reasons for a higher value of NO₂. However, a high concentration of SO₂ was seen in industrial areas. It could be attributed to the burning of fossil fuels in industries and the use of fossil-fuel-powered generator sets.

Recommendations

Under the National Clean Air Program (NCAP), Srinagar is one of the two capital cities in J&K that has been declared as a Non-attainment City (NAC) in the J&K Action Plan. Non-attainment cities are those that have fallen short of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for over five years.

JKPCC has been incessantly monitoring the ambient air quality to assess the level of air pollutants in Srinagar at different stations. It has also imposed a moratorium for a period of two years since 2020, after conducting a carrying capacity study, on the air-polluting cement industries in some regions.

Sensitizing the masses about air pollution and its causes and consequences by conducting awareness programmes.

Mandating the use of electric ovens at eateries, notifying brick kilns and other factories to adapt to smokeless and cleaner fuels to reduce particulate matter concentration.

There is a need to establish proper vehicular management to



The study indicated that emissions due to domestic coal usage account for 84% (1246.5 tons/year) of the total annual emission, followed by vehicular combustion which is 220.5 tons/year.

The least emissions are from fuel wood burning to account for around 8.06 tons/year. The elevated levels of emissions from biomass and coal burning, fossil fuel combustion, and suspension of road dust increase particulate pollution in winter.

reduce the levels of pollution in the city.

Now that climate change is already affecting every region on Earth, what awaits us is far more ominous and beyond our immediate control. What is seen today is just a glimpse of what could happen on a larger scale tomorrow. The time to take action with regard to adaptation and mitigation is now. We must prepare for undue climate variations, both economically and in relation to human health. The scientific community has time and again warned about the ill effects of climate change but people don't heed their advice. The pressing issues like CO₂ and Greenhouse Gas Emissions, deforestation, unreasonable use of resources, and hindering of ecological balance, whose outlines are far more clearly defined, need to be solved before the consequences could become far more deadly.



Untapped hydropower potential is key to socio-economic development in J&K



ZAHOOR AHMAD DAR

Hydro power is renewable electricity generated by water. With limited coal, lignite, and oil resources, hydro and nuclear power are becoming increasingly relevant. Water mills and small-scale hydroelectric units can effectively utilize the major rivers and their perennial tributaries for meeting domestic power needs. Hydropower is already a major source of power globally but there are limited places to build hydropower, and the Union Territory (UT) of Jammu and Kashmir being one of them has an estimated hydropower potential of 20,000 Megawatts (MW), of which about 16475 MW have been identified. This comprises 11283 MW in the Chenab basin, 3084 MW in the Jhelum basin 500 MW in Ravi Basin & 1608 MW in the Indus basin.

Electricity is the second most talked about issue in Jammu and Kashmir and has relentlessly figured to the extent that it is one of the most discussed issues during elections. According to the state Power Development Department (PDD), energy demand in J&K has gradually increased at a 5-6% annual rate over the last five years. As per experts, given the scope of development in the UT, the demand for electricity will exceed 4000 MW in the next four years.

Does J&K generate enough hydroelectricity to meet its own domestic consumption or does its true hydropower potential remain untapped? This commentary is an attempt to understand the situation and offer plausible recommendations.

What do we have?

Economic Survey Report 2017 says that the energy demand in Jammu and Kashmir has gradually spiked by 2% to 3% per year up to the fiscal year 2015-16. Energy demand increased by 1.6% over the previous year during the fiscal year 2016-17. Currently, the Valley has a 200-300 MW peak deficit during the winter months. According to the PDD, the demand in the early winter is over 1900 MW, and it peaks beyond 2000 MW in January while the supply is 1600-1700 MW. It is also important to mention here that local production in the UT is recorded at just 150 MW due to the reduction in water levels in the winter months and the rest of the power is bought from the central pool.

Uri Hydroelectric Dam (480 MW), Dulhasti (390 MW), Salal (690 MW), and Baglihar are the state's major hydroelectric power plants (450 MW). The Uri hydroelectric power station is located near Uri in the Baramulla district on the Jhelum River. This station is built primarily beneath a hill and includes a 10-kilometer tunnel. The Dulhasti hydroelectric power plant is in the Kishtwar district of the Doda region, on the swift-flowing Chenab River. With neighboring beneficiary states Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, and Delhi, this project provides peaking power to the Northern Grid. The Baglihar hydroelectric power project is a 1,800,000 m³ run-of-river power project on the Chenab River in the southern Doda district.

It is important to mention that improvement in transmission and distribution is visible on a comparative basis, however, in terms of revenue generation, the situation is dismal, and warrants immediate improvisation. Better infrastructure, as well as the replacement of worn-out and obsolete equipment such as voltage transformers, transmission lines, poles, and the like, would invariably result in

reduced wastage and losses. A recent article carried by Greater Kashmir published on February 16, 2022, states that the central government has not released a single penny for the construction of small hydropower projects in Jammu and Kashmir, despite announcing a Rs 2000 crore mega outlay under the Prime Minister's Development Package. With no allocation in the previous five years, no small hydropower project could be developed in J&K after the PM package was announced.

Harnessing hydropower potential

Jammu and Kashmir is naturally gifted with two abundant resources 1) enough water resources for generating eco-friendly hydroelectric power and 2) numerous tourist destinations to promote tourism as the main industry sustaining the economy. With proper and adequate investment for harnessing these natural resources, particularly water for producing electricity, backed by proper planning, relevant expertise, and a robust infrastructure, the UT could generate enough power and spare.

There are also many power projects, small, medium, and of national importance, which have been established, and currently work on them is underway, for instance, the 1000 MW Pakal Dul, which is expected to be the largest hydroelectric power project in Jammu and Kashmir after completion, and the 850 MW Ratle power project, both of which are run-of-the-river projects that will significantly change the power scenario in the UT. Furthermore, once the strategically important Ujh Hydroelectric Power Project is completed, it will usher Jammu and Kashmir to self-sufficiency in power generation.

The Union Territory government has set a goal of doubling power generation in the next three years by investing Rs 34,000 crore in power project development, with the goal of turning Jammu and Kashmir into a hydropower generation surplus. J&K plans to increase its current hydropower generation capacity of 3500 MW over the next three years. Five mega hydropower projects with a combined capacity of 4134 MW have been accepted for execution in collaboration with NHPC: Ratle (824 MW), Kirthai-II (930 MW), Sawalakote (1856 MW), Dulhasti-Stage II (258 MW), and Uri-I Stage-II (240 MW). These projects are expected to cost Rs 34882 crore when completed, and J&K will have a surplus of power.

Despite having enormous hydropower potential, J&K is one of the country's energy-starved regions. J&K relies heavily on hydroelectricity generated by rivers that run through the state to meet its energy needs. Although demand for energy has been steadily increasing, the estimated 20,000 MW of hydropower potential in Jammu and Kashmir has only been utilized to the tune of roughly 16%. 3210 MW of hydropower is currently being harnessed in the Union Territory. The state-run Jammu Kashmir Power Development Corporation (JKSPDC) uses 1211.96 MW from its 21 power projects, while the National Hydro Power Corporation (NHPC) uses 2,009 MW from seven projects.

The paucity of funds is deemed to be the primary reason for the inability to use its water resources to bridge its energy deficit. Apart from a lack of resources, another major impediment to harnessing hydropower in the erstwhile state is the "Indus Water Treaty," to which both India and Pakistan are signatories. The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), signed between India and Pakistan in 1960 with the World Bank as a guarantor, governs all water infrastructure development in the state. The treaty reserves Pakistan's western rivers, the Jhelum, Chenab, and Indus, except for specific use by India for various purposes such as irrigation, domestic use, run-of-river hydropower generation, and other non-consumptive uses subject to design and water storage conditions, and other features clearly set out in the treaty.

Pakistan has consistently objected to almost all hydropower projects being built in the country over the years. Pakistan has objected to India's proposed Kishanganga power project, as well as the 850 MW Ratle, 120 MW Miyar, 48 MW Lower Kalnai, and 1000 MW Pakal Dul hydro projects in the Chenab basin. Pakistan claims that building large reservoirs for electricity generation would deprive it of its share of water. Thus, the treaty prohibits reservoir storage of water on major rivers in J&K, limiting the scope of hydropower generation to only run-off river projects.

The way forward

The hydropower potential in Jammu and Kashmir has been largely untapped, leaving a significant energy deficit, but small hydropower plants may be the way forward. Given the region's environmental vulnerability and economic constraints, promoting large hydro projects to harness the entire identified hydro potential may not be a good thing. Small, micro, or mini hydro projects are more environmentally friendly than large and medium hydro projects because they require less reservoir and civil construction work. The state has a huge potential for Small Hydro Projects (SHP) up to 25 MW, a potential of more than 1500 MW, but the achievement in harnessing it has been particularly dismal.

In times when Financial Institutions (FIs) are hesitant to finance large and medium hydroelectric projects for a variety of reasons, including long gestation periods and slow returns on large initial capital investments. However, with a 30% commitment to power purchase under the SHP policy, independent power projects will be able to satisfy financial institutions about their loan repayment capacity. Furthermore, there is potential for additional profits from the Clean Development Mechanism, a UN body that promotes emission-reduction projects in developing countries. All of these initiatives will allow investors to loosen their purse strings.

Without a doubt, the government has made efforts to promote SHP, mini and micro-hydel projects in the basin, but they have not yielded the desired results to date, in the absence of any policy guidelines for expediting mandatory clearances from various state agencies. Power development agencies should act as active facilitators for promoters and establish a single-window system for obtaining timely clearances. Similarly, bottom-up community-driven projects will be a better option in this sector for harnessing

water resources.

Another critical factor is revenue realization. Despite a gradual increase in tariff recovery since 2002-03, the gap between targets and actual revenue realized has not been closed. In 2016-17, the revenue target was Rs 3860.36 crore, of which pure revenue was Rs 1,715.32 crore, and combined with miscellaneous revenue and electricity duty, the total revenue realized was Rs 1877.72 crore or 48.64 percent. To make the UT self-sufficient in power, the government must establish new generation capacity in a timely manner, provide long-term financing arrangements, exploit available hydro and solar potential, and build inter and intra-state transmission systems for power evacuation.

What is needed is massive investment in the power sector of the UT considering the UT Government's limited financial resources, preferring more joint ventures and target-oriented outputs, and project completion within fixed timelines. An increase in joint ventures and public-private partnerships can also provide the necessary impetus for the UT to reap the benefits of hydropower generation. This will not only directly improve the UT's power deficit, but it will also help in achieving the broader socioeconomic goals.

Conclusion

Jammu and Kashmir, which has abundant water resources, has the potential to generate enough hydroelectric power to meet its entire power needs while also meeting the needs of northern Indian states. However, due to a variety of political, economic, and administrative factors, this vital economic resource has not been utilizing to its fullest potential. One of the primary reasons for this is that the IWT has had a significant impact on water resource exploitation in Jammu and Kashmir. Secondly, as a result of administrative inertia and corruption, the Power Development Departments have devolved into complete loss-making enterprises that are a drain on the state budget. Thirdly, due to UT's poor economic situation, power generation has remained a very weak area. Above all, outdated machines and technology are still in use. With vast hydropower potential on one hand and rising power demand harming the UT's economy on the other, the government must chalk out a roadmap to handle both the opportunity and challenge.



J&K could become a clean energy giant but remains a pauper when it comes to harnessing



JK POLICY INSTITUTE

Smart energy measures, in the form of the installation of “smart meters” in Srinagar and Jammu, taken by the J&K Union Territory were met with resistance by the people of both cities. The consumers perhaps did not understand the technical concept of smart meters, as the Power Development Department put it, “they will prevent human intervention in billing/collection and subsequent reduction in Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C) losses”. And then after some time, there happened to be some sort of agreement within the circle of consumers that “smart meters” will ensure “smart electricity” and this comforting prospect comforted them, but the Novel intervention did not, in any way, solve the power woes, especially in the harsh winter. It could not, and it has not.

It goes without saying that the measures like fool-proof accounting of the electricity consumed by the people cannot be overlooked for long. But it is also true that the governments too will have to start keeping their promises of providing quality 24x7 electricity supply – something that successive dispensations have so conveniently reneged on continuously.

The big picture

A few years back the then Union Minister for New and Renewable Energy, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, had said that in the next ten years Jammu and Kashmir “will be generating 20,000 MW of power by harnessing solar energy alone”. And then he went on to explain the great promise solar energy had as a clean and lasting energy. On the face of it, whatever he said about the potential that the erstwhile state has regarding solar energy was entirely true, but thus far the region has hardly seen any worthwhile progress on the solar energy front. During senior Abdullah’s tenure as the central minister, his ministry may no doubt have helped some students’ hostels or shrines and temples here and there to set up solar water heaters, but nothing much was done to harness solar energy for generating power for the power-deficient Jammu and Kashmir. True to his character, Abdullah did grab media attention when he made the claims, but then everybody also knows that he was not the one who took his claims and promises seriously enough to follow them up with concrete action.

Jammu and Kashmir is one of the few places on the face of the earth that has the tremendous potential to become an energy giant. Its topography and climatic conditions have bestowed it with abundant water resources in the form of snow-clad mountains and frozen glaciers that are a perennial source of water for countless mountain streams and rivers in the Himalayan region. Together with the unique landscape here, which is generally mountainous, the erstwhile state (now a Union Territory) is ideal for the generation of what is by and large not only one of the cheapest forms of conventional energy but also relatively very clean – the hydroelectricity.

Understandably the successive state governments have all along informed people here about the great potential of this energy and promised the moon and stars that this energy, once harnessed, could actually bring them. Only an insane would doubt such assertions because energy is one of the most sought and marketable



‘portable economic commodities’. Several countries in West Asia and Africa and elsewhere, despite suffering a huge developmental and technological lag, are prosperous because they are gifted with potable energy sources in the form of natural oil and gas. Jammu and Kashmir too could have progressed and prospered if only it was able to tap and market its energy base. But it did not happen.

Why?

Well, this is something that needs a lot of explaining from all those people who have until recently occupied the echelons of political and executive power here. Today they may be crying helplessness, but this is not how they have been, always. When they were in a position to change the energy- and with and through it the economic landscape of Jammu and Kashmir, they busied themselves in proverbial beating around the bush, mastering rhetoric “...we have potential to generate over 20,000 MW of hydro-power”, but nothing substantial is being done to harness this potential.

Jammu and Kashmir also has enormous potential to generate power using solar energy. When Farooq Abdullah took over the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, those who knew what it could mean for the state, were upbeat and enthused that this could well bring a huge turnout to make Jammu and Kashmir energy surplus. But all those people have been proved wrong.

No wonder that people are not very hopeful if the region may, in near future as well, reach a stage wherein it could suffice even the local energy needs. Although J&K does generate a lot of hydroelectricity even today, instead of fulfilling the local requirements, the same energy is supplied to mainland India to light homes and drive super-engines of industrial development there. Blame it on the discriminatory 1960 Indus Waters Treaty as well as the state’s inability to invest in, and harness its energy potential, the fact of the matter remains that Jammu and Kashmir, which should have been an energy giant remains a pauper when it comes to harnessing.

In all these matters it is easy to point fingers at New Delhi’s “discriminatory” and “exploitative” policies, but the successive state governments too cannot escape the blame for their inabilities and inefficiencies. This is exactly where Dr. Farooq Abdullah must share the responsibility of failures because it has been his National Conference that has ruled J&K longer than any other party, and he himself remained in the driving seat for a long — first as Chief Minister, and then as Union Minister for New and Renewable Energy.

In the new scheme of things, Jammu and Kashmir, as a Union Territory, is directly administered by the Centre. The Lt. Governor-led administration too has been making very loud claims and promises – that “it would realize in few years what has not been achieved in the last seven decades” – it remains to be seen as to how this dispensation fares in terms of meeting not only the domestic energy needs but also leaving J&K with some surplus energy to take care of its other economic needs. Natural resources are there, in abundance, what is needed is the political and administrative will to harness this potential of these resources which could certainly change J&K’s socio-economic profile for good.

The changing nature of drug trafficking



ANIT KUMAR

Changing nature of drug trafficking

Although we have made astonishing advancements in terms of technologies & defense capabilities it is ironic that every day the world feels more insecure than the day before, somewhere in between all this progress we failed to recognize the importance of human security. Security has always remained contesting and historically revolved around the 'State' as a referent object. The advent of COVID-19 highlighted our ill-informed view of security, the pandemic made us mull over how pertinent non-traditional aka non-military issues have become in recent decades, the pandemic also proved that a threat may not remain confined to a 'source' country or region, rather have a global impact.

Throughout the 20th century, non-traditional threats were never given due importance & always considered 'secondary', but this state-centric approach to security has time & again proved to be redundant. New emerging non-traditional interstate challenges like the spread of terrorism, pandemics, climate change, and cross-border trafficking of humans and drugs are in a way causing more damage than traditional challenges. That being the case, this commentary explains the changing nature of drug trafficking and its interplay with technology, and the role of pharma giants like China & India and offers a way forward.

THE EMERGING OPIOID – PHARMA KNOT

A well-established research-driven pharmaceutical sector is an important asset for the overall development of human resources in any country, and in the last decade, India has rightfully emerged as a dominant player in this realm and with the unprecedented pharmaceutical rise comes other grave challenges. India produces certain controlled drugs and precursors (substances that are used in the manufacturing of illicit drugs) which has a lot of medical use but a good amount of supply is being diverted & consumed for non-medical purpose in the form of illicit drugs. The drug trade has evolved a lot, in terms of production and shipment in the last

quarter century, and has become a very serious security threat in the immediate present.

India is a leading producer of many potent opioids* like 'tramadol', 'fentanyl', and 'ketamine'. In the medical world, these are prescribed as pain medications that reduce the sensation of pain but are widely used for illegal consumption as well. In the Middle East and Africa, Tramadol is responsible for the opioid crisis of which India is the biggest supplier. Ketamine had similarly affected the South East Asian countries. Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that required precursor chemicals to be made, The United States is one of the worst affected by Fentanyl overdose, it is widely used as a substitute for heroin, but is 50x more potent than heroin, and its consumption is way more fatal if overdosed. According to the recent Annual Report of the US State Department, after China curbed its illicit synthetic opioid production, the production and distribution from India skyrocketed.

PRODUCERS ARE NOT THE ONLY PERPETRATORS

In Asia, the role of major illicit drug-producing giants — Afghanistan and Myanmar — has been consistently transformed and there has been the engagement of other regional players mainly India and China. Due to the pressure from International bodies like UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime), some half-hearted clampdowns were initiated by governments worldwide on naturally grown opioids (opiates)* but that was more symbolic than effective.

There has been a parallel rise in *synthetic opioid production, which doesn't require large farms & can be made in small clandestine laboratories, and due to government restrictions minor alterations are done to their chemical compositions to bypass regulating agencies. India and China are pumping a large amount of synthetic opioids and their precursors into the international market, also acting as transit countries for the same.

Rather than using those infamous terms like Golden Triangle and Crescent, it is better to call the whole region as 'Golden Arch' stretching from Afghanistan to China via Pakistan, India, Myanmar, Laos & Thailand, all these countries are unknowingly working in an interconnected manner which comprises of production, precursors

& shipment of both natural & synthetic opioids.

ROLE OF EMERGING TECH IN DRUG TRADE

With the advent of cryptocurrency, the dark web & social media platforms like Instagram there has been a replenishable supply of drugs, buying online via the internet, and e-commerce websites & on the other hand cryptocurrency provides secure end-to-end encryption for illicit financial transactions across borders. The dark web & Social media platforms have become a perfect marketplace for connecting buyers & sellers without revealing their identities. By the time security agencies come into action, the name & identities of drugs get changed and become available again by some other names.

EVADING LOOPHOLES TO SUSTAIN DRUG NETWORK

Most of the drugs are transported internationally via maritime routes (cargoes, mail, etc.). Container shipments which are used worldwide still rely on old ways of handling and frisking which consumes a lot of time & money, still the problem persists and drugs can't be stopped from getting shipped. There are options for smart cargo available but of course! not all countries are willing to invest in them at the moment. Different countries have different policies for combating the illicit drug trade and there is no universal blanket ban on the non-medical use of drugs, most drugs have medical use & a complete blanket ban won't be even possible, people who are involved in this trade exploit these loopholes.

INDIA'S NEIGHBOURHOOD

India's immediate neighborhood poses serious security concerns for the country, which are quite visible in drug addiction & deteriorating health conditions in J&K, Punjab & North Eastern states. According to a recent NATO report, the involvement of the Pakistan Army & Taliban in illegal drug trade constitutes one of the main financial sources for funding insurgency in the whole region including

Kashmir.

There is a lack of transparency on part of the governments to curb production due to very high margins. According to a recent UNODC report, Afghanistan accounts for 85% of global opium production in 2021. Taliban, even before coming to power used to trade opium to fund its operations, after coming to power they legitimized it further to assist their economy, Afghanistan's total opioid trade is 12-14 % of their GDP. A similar situation persists with Myanmar's military regime, which has taken half-hearted crackdowns earlier, but that was more of a symbolic gesture, as they too benefit a lot from the opium trade.

WAY FORWARD

The problem of the illicit drug trade is very complicated and its proper crackdown requires a robust multi-state intercontinental approach like real-time information sharing & a point of communication between states to intercept perpetrators & boats/cargoes carrying illicit drugs.

Rather than imposing a complete ban on drugs focus should be given to their proper regulations.

There is a strong state-centric approach used by countries due to which they have become more inward-looking in dealing with this problem but there is a parallel need for a localized & regional approach.

Drug trafficking should be included in the list of international crimes for which universal jurisdiction is afforded. Pertinently, during the draft of the International Criminal Court statute, a proposal to include drug trafficking in the court jurisdiction was rejected.

Lastly, India should alleviate its role as a net security provider in the region & should forge relations with other regional players to have a free & open Indo-Pacific.

* Opiates are derived from opium poppies & are naturally occurring, like morphine & opium, while opioids are either fully or partially synthetic, like heroin (semi-synthetic) & fentanyl, and tramadol (synthetic).

"Opioids" are generally used to refer to all opiates and opioids.



Nepali women in Maoist insurgency: Life after war



SHIVANGI SINGH

During the People's War in Nepal (1996-2006), many women joined the Maoist guerilla group, People's Liberation Army (PLA), for varied reasons but majorly for women's empowerment. Once the war was over, and the peace accord was signed in 2006, they started looking for an alternative from the Maoist group to (re) start their civilian life. Unfortunately, the State did not enroll everyone in their National Army, and many women were left behind to opt for civilian/mainstream life.

This article looks into the experiences of women ex-combatants and their life after the war in Nepal under the state and society that momentarily make rules that deepen the gender divide.

Quest for liberation

The life of Nepalese Women was affected in various ways due to the people's war. The conflict that accelerated during the 1990s between the Maoist group (CPN-M) and the Nepal Government ended with the proposed Comprehensive Peace Accord (women were not a part of the peace accord-making process). "CPN Maoist party declared people's war in 1996 because of the height of corruption, cronyism in public services and the larger aim of abolishing the monarchy and establishing a people's republic." CPN was actively promoting the importance of women's liberation and empowerment which became one reason why 30-40% of the Maoist group consisted of women.

Resurgence of archaic laws

Under new proposals by the department of immigration, any

Nepali woman under the age of 40 will soon need the permission of her family and her local government ward office – among other requirements – before she can travel abroad alone. The proposals have been sent to the home ministry for approval and could come into force soon (Human Rights Watch). It is not the first time that the Government of Nepal has come up with such rules; they banned women under 30 from working in Persian Gulf Nations amid increasing concerns over abuse and exploitation (2012). However, this proposal was introduced when women were still readjusting to the new lifestyle, and many were looking for employment opportunities abroad. This bill restricted them from getting the life that they couldn't find in their own country.

Why did women participate and joined the Maoist party and become combatants?

The Maoist party promoted gender empowerment and promised to bring peace, equity and empowerment once the monarchy is overthrown and Nepal becomes a republic. As a result, many women joined the party; some joined due to increased police, and state atrocities on them for supporting and participating in the anti-state protest during the 1990s.

Women Guerillas who joined the Maoist resurgence against the State were at the beginning seen as crusaders of women empowerment and the ones who can change the patriarchal society, but how post-war their lives became much more complex and discriminatory, which was caused by the community.

Current situation of women ex-combatants

Even after the progression and inclusion of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCF 1325), women's participation in local and national politics and decision-making is limited as their role as political agents is still not fully recognized (Avoine, P. A., 2021). These groups' limited political participation and representation have affected and domesticated the marginalization and prejudices regarding them, such as the women combatants in Nepal. "Female combatants since the end of the conflict have seen disempowerment and marginalization." They had to face discrimination because they were a part of the Maoist group that



The Maoist party promoted gender empowerment and promised to bring peace, equity and empowerment once the monarchy is overthrown and Nepal becomes a republic. As a result, many women joined the party; some joined due to increased police, and state atrocities on them for supporting and participating in the anti-state protest during the 1990s.

put them under society's divisiveness and alienated them from the general masses. Women guerillas also had to face stigma because they defied the normalized notion of how a woman should be.

Society did not accept them when these women tried to come back to day-to-day civilian life. They got segregated and alienated from society; this segregation made it more challenging for them to readjust to civilian life. An ex-combatant while reflecting upon the post-war situation of women in Nepal mentioned – “When women came out of their homes to join the revolution, they came for freedom. What do we say when we go back? We have no economic means; the gender inequalities and oppression remain the same.” (See: Goswami, 2015).

The struggles and the life of women ex-combatants turned out differently than one would have imagined them to be in the post-war. They were perceived as ‘monstrous’ which can be explored in Michel Foucault’s concept of the genealogy of the abnormal individual (Foucault’s lectures on Abnormal at the College de France, 1974-1975). If one does something against the prescribed social norms and nature of things, then that becomes monstrous.



Giving it a name like that creates fear about a particular thing or person in the minds of the masses. One needs to be ‘normal’ to be accepted, and that can be done by following the prescribed notions that each social gender group is supposed to follow.

“The post-conflict setting reproduces the discrimination in a different form for these women who were fighting against it.”

Many had to look for employment opportunities while performing their nurturing and caring duties and dealing with the stigma. Their struggle with how hard it would have been to readjust to the new environment, women who used to train like armed soldiers were now supposed to come to motherhood and leave behind the soldier life. Even in the Maoist group, which promoted women’s liberation and empowerment, women were not given equal positions as their male counterparts. They did the same training and got the same assignments but were still below a male soldier. “Maoist women ex-combatants have encountered an extreme transition back into the highly patriarchal social structures that they had imagined to be changed.” (K.C.2011; K.C., Van Der Haar, and Hilhorst2017).

Gender framework in policymaking

A gender-neutral administration is required to eradicate gender-based discrimination that women face in political, social, economic, and educational aspects of their lives. Women ex-combatants deal with stigmatization because they were part of a resilient armed group and discerned it as something women should never delve into. The traditional marginalization of Women from public and political life is evident in South Asia. The State’s lack of response to that or to improve the situation is quite apparent in most of the region.

The Government of Nepal should be required to promptly resolve the crisis of ex-combatants (women) struggling in “readjusting to civilian life” and implement measures to enhance gender equality. A common framework for Gender Equality & Social Inclusion (International Developed Partners Group, Nepal, 2017) is developed to help build a common understanding between Development Partners (DPs) regarding gender equality and social inclusion, the approaches, tools, and methods mentioned in this report, taking out the best practices and taking more effective measures towards the inclusion of marginalized and discriminated groups from the rest of the society would be helpful in actually achieving the GESI.

As suggested by Roshmi Goswami in the UN Women Case Study of the Maoist women in Nepal, 2015, “To avoid perpetuating the same pre-war conditions and situation, and to work towards a peace that is sustainable, it is critical that consultations are held with the women ex-combatants to identify the skills they want to acquire, rather than just offering skills that reinforce gender stereotypes.”

Furthermore, collective efforts are required to bring the best interests of Nepal and its people a constitution that is “enshrined by common ownership” and includes meaningful participation and representation by each citizen.

Patriarchy and intellectual feminism: A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS



MALVIKA

“Because I am a woman, I must make unusual efforts to succeed. If I fail, no one will say, “She doesn’t have what it takes.” They will say, “Women don’t have what it takes.” – Clare Boothe Luce

Although intellectual feminism is very important when it comes to identifying the pedagogy and mechanism of patriarchy it is very complex and often unavailable to the masses. All of us have been born into a patriarchal society and inherit traits from the family and institutions to uphold and live by it, even if the next generation brings about some meager changes in it to adapt according to the contemporary world, its patriarchy nonetheless.

According to the All India survey on higher education, the share of girl students is lowest in institutes of national importance, followed by deemed universities under the government, and state private universities. The survey also found that female participation in professional courses is lower in comparison to academic courses.

Very few of us are privileged enough to get accepted in institutions and courses with an excellent faculty to be introduced to feminist and Marxist theories (as I type this the word Marxist is autocorrected to the capital letter while the word feminist remains in small letters) theories to understand how exactly patriarchy works and we feel enlightened. You have been weakly questioning many things and there, you find answers to the reasons for your subjugation and subordinate position. The ones who start questioning the authorities from that group of “privileged” ones are very few and the rest merely take it as a syllabus that needs to be crammed up and passed to get good grades and offer themselves promising career options hardly questioning or even acknowledging the problem of women inequality (specifically talking about feminist theories).

Digression

Employment does offer independence in terms of money but it does not guarantee freedom from oppression. In fact, a working woman faces immense pressure and stress to balance her domestic and professional life. Working women especially married working women have to tackle the office work pressure along with the domestic work pressure while their male counterparts offer little “help” when it comes to domestic chores and child-rearing.

India’s female labor force participation has dropped from 35% in 1991 to 27% in 2014, a rate below the global average of around 50% and the East Asian average of around 63%, according to a 2015 IMF study. As incomes rise, women’s labor force participation often falls, only to rise again when female education levels improve; consequently, the value of women in the labor market increases, the IMF study said. That is not happening in India.

95 percent of the very few left are intellectuals and they would have answers for everything, they would have questions for everything. They would write articles and a thesis that would show the profundity of their knowledge and it would be widely circulated amongst their circle, read in it, and passed on in their fairy circle with esoteric terminologies that is Greek even to the moderately educated individuals. Period.

The problem is that they do not have solutions for anything

outside their circle, most of the articles are not even translated into the native tongue for better access. They would talk about the privilege of men, savarna society, capitalists, and government the worst of all is criticism for the ones who did not have the same prerogative. Talking in the context of women they would be very right in the objective classification of the superstructures of patriarchy BUT they would fail to impact the lineaments of the structure and instead of working within it to change it they try to abscond it, which again is a privilege that most of the women do not enjoy. Their presence has little to no impact on the actualities of the system and are instead seen as a threat because the masses feel threatened by whatever they do not understand.

Now, who is responsible for educating the masses, specifically women? This is where feminist activism steps in, you have to work from within the system to change it though it is easier said than done. There is a particular need to reverse the clock and see how did it all start for you, the struggles that a feminist intellectual have to go through to be where they are numerous and inescapable, and yet when they reach the position they tend to do nothing but be cynical and catastrophic is the criticism for another woman without taking into account the realities of an Indian Woman. Realities that worked on you before you stepped out and everyone may never get that lucky. It is not very different from the criticism faced by the #metoo campaign when the question posed was why did you not do this or that when it happened? It is always more complex than that and an intrinsic active option or action is often unavailable. Very much like the theories that everyone understands but very few practically apply.

Feminism has different definitions for different women, it will be different for a savarna woman juxtaposed to that of a Dalit woman, same goes for a tribal or a Muslim woman. It’s impossible to fight the system until we unite for some common grounds. This may seem not very radical in approach but bringing together women from all over the country to protest against male domination is the need of the hour. One step at a time and soon things will go to a different level but the main point is unity. One cannot unite a movement until and unless minorities are in inclusion. The intellectuals have to learn not to digest but have patience with things that are obviously patriarchally imposed.

Beginning a fight for some of the following elemental needs for Indian women and then moving on to more radical demands is the key to the growth of a mass movement.

- RESERVATION FOR HALF THE SEATS FOR WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT AND THAT TOO WITH INCLUSION OF THE MINORITIES ACCORDING TO THEIR PERCENTAGE IN POPULATION. (India ranks 20th from the bottom in terms of representation of women in Parliament)
- INCLUSION OF MEN IN DOMESTIC WORK AND REARING OF CHILDREN, EQUAL WAGES, FLEXIBILITY IN MATERNAL LEAVE, AND MENSTRUATION LEAVE FOR WOMEN.
- INCLUSION OF GENDER STUDIES IN SYLLABUS RIGHT FROM PRESCHOOL OF EVERY STATE AND CENTRAL BOARD, ABOLITION OF DRESS CODE IMPOSED ON GIRLS.
- ZERO TOLERANCE FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT HOME OR AT THE WORKPLACE. SAFER PUBLIC SPACE FOR WOMEN IRRESPECTIVE OF TIME AND PLACE.

These are some of the basic demands that we need to get fulfilled before aiming for more radical issues. If we are able to bring the women of the country together to fight patriarchy it will also fend off casteism and Brahmanical hierarchy.

Criticism for an educated feminist woman who gets arranged married to a brahman is a housewife, bears children, puts a bindi and sindoor, and keeps karvachauth fast seems like an antagonism of the entire idea of feminism but blaming the person

is like blaming the rape victim for getting raped. It is much more complex than that taking into account the different situations and circumstances that every individual is put forth to. An intellectual feminist would criticize this action but an activist would try to comprehend the ambiguity of “choice” in her action and what can be done in society to minimize such examples and their impact on the particular individual. Likewise, a Muslim feminist wearing a burqa quoting it as her “choice” seems inedible. Did they really have a choice, was the annihilation of everything an option that they could or should have taken?

While an intellectual would take the mother-in-law as a perpetrator of patriarchal norms, an activist would see her as a victim of such patriarchal norms and would try to empathize and understand her psychology and what can be done to emulsify it.

I would like to quote an example of the idea I’m trying to put forth by following an extract from an essay by Kristie Brewer called “The day Iceland’s women went on strike” on the “day” which saw a mass protest of almost 90% of woman population quoting the experience of an Icelandic professor of that time. “The Red Stockings movement had caused quite a stir already for their attack against traditional views of women – especially among older generations of women who had tried to master the art of being a perfect housewife and homemaker,” says Ragnheidur Kristjansdottir, senior lecturer in History at the University of Iceland.

But when the strike was renamed “Women’s Day Off” it secured near-universal support, including solid backing from the unions. “The programme of the event itself reflected the emphasis that had been placed on uniting women from all social and political backgrounds,” says Ragnheidur.

Things went back to normal the next day, but with the message that women, as well as men, are the pillars of society,” she says. “So many companies and institutions came to a halt and it showed the force and necessity of women – it completely changed the way of thinking.”

Five years later, Vigdis beat three male candidates for the presidency. She became so popular that she was re-elected unopposed in two of the three next elections.

While an intellectual tends to work in an isolated manner an activist would try to work on the grassroots level by bringing small baby steps towards change that would come with empathy and without gaslighting the said perpetrator/victim.

“If you want to go fast go alone but if you want to go far move with a group”

It is very difficult but the only way to bring changes in the superstructures of patriarchy is by questioning, empathizing, explaining, and uniting. The woman in the house needs to side with the woman in the house. There is no fighting patriarchy without unity among women and that is something absolutely impossible to achieve without reaching out to the grassroots level of society and its psyche. We need to start a wave that reaches every household and every woman. One absolutely cannot keep the housekeepers, Dalits, Muslims, Adivasis, and yes not even the savarna women out of it. While all three waves of feminism have been led by intellectuals working on individual level goals of a woman this time we need the activists to take over and work like Savitri Bai Phule and Fatima Begum Sheik keeping aside the differences in society for a bigger cause to emulate the structures without discrimination. Instead of working on the top, we need to work on the roots. The first goal of such a wave is to unite the mothers and daughters, savarna, Dalit, Adivasi, and Muslims, women of the lower, middle and upper class,

and mothers and daughters-in-law.

Patriarchy would come crashing down on its knees once we enable the mother and the in-law mother to become the shield of their daughters. The solution always lies in the problem, the men were able to establish their supremacy by dividing and ruling, and to annihilate patriarchy the women need to UNITE AND REIGN.

This is where the role of intellectual feminists comes in, the intellectuals need to unite with the activists and the former would produce a framework on the feasibility and requirements for a mass protest while the other would work on those parameters to accomplish it. Of course, an intellectual can work as an activist.

I would categorize myself as an activist still working on elemental levels of my family and surroundings. But we really need our comrade intellectuals not to judge us with why but unite with us and tell us how.

History has it that when women unite for a cause in a movement the chances of its success improve.

- Protests are more likely to remain nonviolent when women participate, according to a United Nations report.
- Women effectively take on many roles during protests and mass movements, from organizer to caregiver to protector.
- Women playing visible roles in protests have become symbols of freedom and progress.

Some practical examples to justify the aforementioned points:

The Chipko movement: With the help of activist Chandi Prasad Bhatt, women mobilized in large numbers across various villages. From Gaura Devi, who organized the women of Lata village, to the women of Dongri Paintoli and Gopeshwar, there are many examples of this eco-feminist movement led by women in the 1970s. Chipko Movement sparked similar protests in India in the 1980s leading to a ban on cutting of all trees in the forests of Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Bihar, Western Ghats, and Vindhayas for 15 years.

Times, the metro edition of The Times of India, invited women from all walks of life to the campaign #NoConditionsApply to break the patriarchal practice of allowing just married women to celebrate Sindhur Khela. The #NoConditionsApply hashtag and the two-dot selfies became viral, showing support for the shunned part of society that they too belong and that they too can celebrate, coming together as one.

Will Go Out Since the New Year–2017 celebration came to a stop, newspapers and TV channels were filled with the news of mass molestation that happened in Bengaluru, Karnataka on the Eve of the New Year. What started as a celebration, turned into a nightmare for the women in the crowd who were molested, as their cries fell on deaf ears. The Nation shook when the news fell into their ears, and the women were not taking the blame upon themselves for celebrating. Abu Azmi, a politician from Maharashtra, ignited the anger in women by commenting on the media blaming the women for getting molested in public. On 21st January 2017, a march was organized by a group of people who thought that women had equal rights to public places as men, and with the help of social media, thousands of women joined the march across 30 cities and towns to reclaim the public places. The movement slashed the idea that some public places are not for women, especially after sunset. #shaheenbagh#metoo#farmersprotest show that there is nothing more threatening than women in solidarity with women.



Goodbye Chilla-i-Kalan

