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



सत्यमेव जयते

HIGHEST-EVER INFLOW OF ABOUT **₹9000** **CRORES** INTO UT UNDER CSS FOR FY 2022-23

Full story on page no. 03

read INSIDE

- Budget 2023-24 to strengthen e-Gov ecosystem in J&K
Page no. 04
- Meet Rubina Tabasum, a successful florist from Budgam
Page no. 07
- Basohli Painting gets GI Tag
Page no. 13



JKPI Publications

**What is the significance
of holding a G20 meeting
in Kashmir?**

Page No.: 16



Tele-MANAS helpline receives more than 10,000 calls since its launch in J&K

Cell instrumental in addressing stress, drug addiction, anxiety-related issues

SRINAGAR: In a significant achievement towards providing quality mental healthcare for all, the UT level Tele Mental Health Assistance and Networking Across States (Tele -MANAS) cell, established at the Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (IMHANS) Srinagar, has received more than 10,000 calls since its inception in Jammu and Kashmir.

The first-of-its-kind mental health helpline, launched on November 4, 2022, is a three-tier system that has mental health counselors, clinical psychologists, and psychiatrists available for patients' calls.

Doctors at IMHANS informed that since its launch, they have received 10,000 calls including those related to stress, drug addiction, suicidal tendencies, and anxiety.

Secretary of Health and Medical Education (H&ME), Bhupinder Kumar, while elaborating on the significance of Tele-MANAS cell in the UT, said that telemedicine is a broader concept and tele consultation is part of it. "People can call on the toll-free number and seek advice on mental health issues. Since its launch, the number of calls has increased and the quality of calls also. People who took the first consultation are calling for follow-ups also with psychologists and psychiatrists," he said.

Secretary added that Tele-MANAS would also be linked to the e-Sehaj portal where doctors can prescribe the medicine. "We want people to use this facility and Tele-MANAS is the way forward. It is more important for remote and far-off places where there is a shortage of doctors and specialists," he added.

Mission Director, NHM J&K, Ayushi Sudan, said there is a lot of stigmas attached to mental health issues adding that with Tele-MANAS, people are coming forward with these issues. "The individual calls reach one or two hours and it is 24/7. A lot of mental health issues occur during

nighttime. We have been able to cover a lot of people. It is accessible and free. We want to expand it in the future at the district level as well," she said.

Ayushi Sudan said the NHM J&K is also planning to expand mental health coverage across the districts to cover mental health issues, however, the approach may be different from Tele-MANAS. "We will be having district mental health plans. Tele-MANAS is beginning our initiative. We are also planning to integrate the suicide helpline," she said.

As an extension to the service delivery framework of the existing Tele-MANAS Helpline, we have developed a Tele-MANAS Chatbot, the first of its kind in the entire country. It will enable the users to chat directly about their basic mental health problems for a solution and subsequently patients can be referred to Tele-MANAS Cells.

Dr Qazi Haroon, State Program Manager Mental Health J&K, said Tele MANAS is being linked to the District Mental health program across all the districts of JK UT. A comprehensive communication strategy/IEC formulated has actually helped us to reach so extensively to common people in such a short period of time, he added. He said that in the near future, more and more people suffering from mental health will find refuge in Tele-MANAS.

Pertinently, J&K stands at rank 2 in the whole country as far as daily calls received by Tele-MANAS Cells are concerned.

The toll-free number of Tele-MANAS Cell J&K is 14416/1-800-891-4416 and for Tele-MANAS Chat Bot is 9797600601. The cell is open for the general public for providing mental health services and drug de-addiction service 24x7.

Highest-ever inflow of about ₹9000 crores into UT under CSS for FY 2022-23

More than 2.6 lakh jobs created under various SE schemes during this period

JAMMU: In a major achievement this year, the highest-ever funds have been spent under the flagship Central Sponsored Schemes (CSS) by J&K in the previous financial year 2022-23.

Moreover, employment for 2,63,595 persons was also generated in the UT under different schemes during this period.

The same got revealed after reviewing the overall performance of the UT under different parameters of registering growth and progress during the year 2022-23.

It also came to the fore that during the year 2021-22 the total amount received by the UT under CSS was Rs 7655 Cr which got enhanced to Rs8938 Cr during the previous fiscal registering a growth of nearly 15% for the recently concluded financial year. The figures for 2022-23 are further subjected to reconciliation with RBI and the office of the Accountant General, J&K.

In addition, the UT had been successful in providing employment to 2,63,595 persons under different self-employment schemes. The number during the year 2021-22 was 2,53,158

which also saw an increase of 10,473 livelihood opportunities for the youth of J&K this year.

The schemes under which the employment opportunities had been created include 167932 under PMEGP, 35564 under Mission Youth, 34200 under JKRLM, 8457 under JKWDC, 5331 under Handicrafts & Handloom sector, 2834 under Himayat (DDUGKY), 2818 under Sheep Husbandry, 2193 under SC/ST/OBC Corporation, 1576 under NULM, 2668 under Animal Husbandry and Agriculture Production besides dozens of others under different sectors.

With respect to the collection of revenue under GST for the month of March 2023 J&K registered a growth of 29.42% much more than the States/UTs of Punjab (10.37), Chandigarh (10.09), Delhi (17.72), Rajasthan (15.80), Himachal Pradesh (8.11) and Haryana (16.93).

All these achievements have been possible only due to the efficient mechanism in place after taking a plethora of reforms during the past few years besides ensuring transparency and accountability under the LG administration in the UT.



Budget 2023-24 to strengthen e-Gov ecosystem in J&K



Govt to extend e-office to all offices, create online census management system

SRINAGAR: The budget for the 2023-24 fiscal will further strengthen the e-governance initiatives of the J&K government with an emphasis on extending e-offices to all offices besides the creation of an online census management system.

J&K's e-Governance policies have shown tremendous improvement elevating the citizen satisfaction level regarding the implementation of schemes and programmes being launched by the UT administration for their socio-economic emancipation.

The accelerated digital transformation and adoption of emerging technologies by the UT dispensation has greatly helped the administration become more open, and transparent and develop new delivery models to ensure people can access e-Services conveniently.

The government has kept a provision, in this budget, for introducing an intelligent framework for ensuring an amazing Intelligent Ticket Management System by JKRTC for the smooth, hassle-free journey of passengers.

The budget also proposed the creation of an e-invoice system of GST, GST Data Triangulation, and the transition of GST IN into GST Prime besides the extension of the E-Bill system in PWOMAS to other departments. Besides, 445 services have already been offered in online mode across all the departments and many of them are being integrated with the quality check and feedback-seeking

mechanism. These services are also being on-boarded on the digital portal of e-UNNAT, Service Plus, and Digi Locker platforms for ease and free access to the general public.

In another milestone towards e-governance, the e-way bill would be linked to Fastag and VAHAN for the smooth journey of commuters on the national highway.

According to an official spokesperson, the government will create a single unique helpline to address the concerns of the people of J&K.

Jammu & Kashmir tops among all the Union Territories of India in e-Governance services delivery, which has also enabled the UT to save around Rs 200 crore annually that were used to be incurred in the carriage of physical files during the annual durbar move between the two capital cities of Jammu and Srinagar.

J&K has become the first UT in the country to have Good Governance Index and was also the first to launch District Good Governance Index for 20 districts of the Union Territory.

In a short span, the government has taken a giant leap in creating a user-centric service delivery system and paperless administrative functions through e-Office.

Technology has redesigned the rules and procedures bringing accountability and transparency in the system and enabling us to provide services more effectively and efficiently.



PROGRESSIVE FARMERS OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Haseena Begum Kupwara leads the way in organic farming



SRINAGAR: Haseena Begum, of Hyhana Village Kupwara, has become a role model in organic farming for aspiring women entrepreneurs of Kupwara with her success as an empowered agripreneur.

Haseena Begum, the wife of Mohammad Shafi, was earlier running a small hotel on a rented building in village Hyhama and living a hard life.

After being encouraged and motivated by the officials of the agriculture department to start organic farming, Haseena embarked on this new venture with all her devotion and vigor which ultimately transformed her life.

She says after being introduced to the concept of organic farming, she started vegetable cultivation to cater to the daily requirements of her hotel. She had very poor financial health and had to borrow Rs18000 for purchasing seeds for the vegetable farm.

She also sought guidance from Agriculture Department to maintain the farm under constant supervision. And, in the first year, only she had produced 18 quintals of vegetables including Squash, Beans, Cabbage, Tomatoes, and Garlic which she sold for Rs 1 Lakh.

Haseena Begum is now happy with her vegetable farming venture and has saved enough to even own the hotel building. She has now emerged as a role model for other women

in the village and is leading a self-help group of 25 women engaged in organic farming in Hyhama.

An official of the agriculture department says that the area under organic farming of vegetables has grown from 15 ha to 85 ha spread across 5 villages with the enthusiastic participation of farmers.

Notably, Hatmulla-Deedikoot has been certified as Model Organic Village by PGS India in December 2019. The development opened the doors of these progressive women to national markets and helped them to fetch better prices for their produce.

Organic farming has been gaining currency all over the world as it is considered vital to the concept of sustainable development.

Agriculture Department in Kupwara has introduced organic farming of vegetables initially on 15 hectares of land after launching extensive IEC campaigns to convince the Farmers to limit the use of synthetic inputs and instead use organic fertilizers, crop residues, organic farm waste, and animal manure.

The department is providing additional support to farmers through Vermi-Compost Units for the production of organic fertilizers and marketing of the produce through Refrigerated Vans.



Meet Rubina Tabasum, a successful florist from Budgam



SRINAGAR: Rubina Tabasum of Chadoora Budgam takes pride in being a successful florist and an inspiring face of Kashmiri women.

Rubina got married at a very young age and completed high school from her in-law's home and later she did her graduation from the District College and MBA through IGNOU.

In 2006, Rubina acquired training in the cut flower business from JKEDI and started her venture of growing a variety of flowers, vegetables, and aromatic plants in two farms in the year 2006 with support and assistance from the Floriculture department.

"The department provided 50 percent assistance for raising the structure for my farms besides facilitating me with varied species of high-value plants," says Rubina.

"I am extremely happy with my employment-generating venture and it is my fervent appeal to all unemployed youth to start their own small business units by optimally utilizing the abundantly available agriculture resources," she asserted.

Initially, Rubina started her business by growing

flowers in her own patches of land and selling cut flowers at the Delhi flower market. Now, she has expanded the wholesale dealer network in local markets and Jammu as well.

She added that the Technology Mission of the Floriculture Department encouraged and enabled her to start a new project on essential oils on hundreds of kanals at Bugroo Budgam.

She now wants to help other unemployed youth particularly women to grow essential oil flowers on their lands and she will provide free-of-cost planting material and technical help to marginalized farmers.

After many years of hard work and tough toil, Rubina now preparing essential oils including lavender oil, rose oil, rosemary oil, geranium oil, thyme, and clary sage oils.

Rubina with support from the government has forayed into growing exotic vegetables to produce seedless cucumbers and other vegetables in poly greenhouses through high-tech technology. She has also adopted organic vegetable farming which is receiving good response.

MANJEET KUMAR: A successful entrepreneur from Samba



SRINAGAR: Manjeet Kumar, a progressive livestock farmer of Trindi village of Ramgarh block, Samba district, embarked on his odyssey as a successful entrepreneur with the implementation of the Integrated Sheep Development Scheme (ISDS) in Jammu and Kashmir.

Little did he know that his visit to the Sheep Husbandry Department would change his fortune forever. Kumar says that he has all appreciation for the cooperation and support he got from the officials there who guided him towards becoming a successful entrepreneur. He was provided with 25 ewes and 2 rams under ISDS with which he began his vocation as a flourishing entrepreneur.

“I earned Rs 1 lakh in the first year of my business by selling ten male sheep (Ram) and afterward my trade never looked back giving me increased incomes every year,” Kumar asserted

In a message for the youth of J&K, “Kumar makes a fervent appeal to all the unemployed youth of J&K particularly of Samba district to take benefit of government schemes and establish their own business ventures.”

Pertinently, the Jammu and Kashmir government launched Integrated Sheep Development Scheme in 2020 with a sanctioned

budget of Rs 10 crore with an aim to promote the establishment of sheep and goat units in the Union Territory.

Kumar added that many people in his village are reaping huge profits through this ambitious scheme which has ultimately transformed their living standards.

The villagers are coming forward with high spirits to procure sheep and goats under the Integrated Sheep Development Scheme, which is also in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s mission of doubling farmers’ income.

The Sheep Husbandry Department aims to garner enormous production of wool and mutton through this initiative and put an end to unemployment among youths.

The scheme envisages enhancing livestock productivity in a sustainable manner by exploring the potential for export and ‘value-added’ products.

The sheep-rearing industry is witnessing overall improvement and the socio-economic status of the vast majority of livestock producers is also getting a push. This has been attributed to the introduction of high genetic potential sheep breeds, exotic breeds for crossbreeding, marketing facilities, and preventive mechanisms for endemic ailments.

Kathua's retired soldier emerges as victorious Agriprenuer



SRINAGAR: Dheeraj Kumar of Kathua district, after proving his mettle as a soldier in the Navy, has emerged as a victorious Agriprenuer setting an inspirational example for others to adopt the farmer profession as a successful vocation.

Kumar has all praise for the Department of Horticulture Kathua for providing him financial as well as technical assistance and support besides acquainting him with their schemes.

According to an official of the Horticulture Office Kathua, progressive farmer Dheeraj Kumar hailing from Haripur village of Kathua, cultivates 3 different strawberry varieties including Camarosa, Winter Dawn, and Nubila on 22 Kanal of land.

Kumar says, out of the total investment of Rs.6 lakh, the department provided him a subsidy to the tune of Rs. 2.86 lakh which is nearly 50 per cent of the total investment. He is expecting to produce a yield worth Rs. 15-20 lakh which is in line with the PM's vision of doubling the farmers' income. He added that the department has also provided him with a subsidy on the purchase of power tillers and the installation of a drip irrigation system.

Expressing gratitude to the present dispensation for launching such pro-farmer initiatives, Dheeraj Kumar said that the help from the horticulture department has come as a beacon of light for him enabling him to become a successful farmer. He termed the initiative of enhancing the amount of subsidy from the earlier ceiling of Rs. 3125/Kanal to Rs. 13000/kanal as a great morale booster for the farmers.

"This is a huge relief for the farming community as it will make the sector more lucrative for the aspiring agriprenuers," he asserted.

From being an employee to a successful entrepreneur, Kumar has come a long way. He has employed around 10 people for leveling, picking, packaging, and transport purposes, which he termed as a satisfying experience

Kumar's quality produce has huge demand from Big Malls and prominent business houses like Jammu Basket, Easy Day, Big Bazar, Markets in and around Pathankot, and areas in the periphery of Punjab adjoining Kathua.

"Encouraged by the success in local markets, I am exploring the option of selling my produce online as well," he said.

The unique entrepreneurial skills of this agriculture champion has been recognized by the government and he won the prestigious Horticulture Expo Award.

Dheeraj Kumar said that there was no looking back for him after he opted for the State of the Art technology viz drip irrigation which besides lowering the water dependency ensures More Crop Per Drop. He advocated for adopting best practices and deviating from the traditional methods of single-crop cultivation which offers better dividends.

He also suggested the use of Neem-based pesticides which are organic in nature and rule out the chance of carcinogens in the produce.

Kumar says over 200 farmers from different parts of the J&K have visited him to have first-hand information and to use his experience to turn their fortunes as well.

He made a fervent appeal to J&K youth to optimally utilize the revamped schemes and subsidies being offered by the government in agriculture and allied sectors.

J&K govt to invest Rs 560 cr on agriculture, allied sectors under HADP

Initiative to boost market ecosystem, benefit farmers, consumers

JAMMU: The agriculture and allied sectors in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir are poised for significant growth and boost with the launch of a slew of technological advancements and extension programs.

These interventions, incentivized through various schemes and projects, have already led to improvements in the quality and quantity of produce in the region.

However, the challenge remains in integrating smallholder produce with market systems that are both effective and transparent. This will ensure that farmers receive a fair price for their goods while consumers get good value for their money.

To tackle this issue, Jammu and Kashmir is implementing a project under the Holistic Agriculture Development Program (HADP) that aims to strengthen the existing market infrastructure and create a robust market ecosystem that caters to the needs of all stakeholders.

Additional Chief Secretary Agriculture Production Department, Atal Dulloo, emphasized that the proposed project will be segmented into several key areas. These included market reforms, infrastructure development, institutional and capacity building, branding, digital marketing, and market research information systems. The project aims to achieve its objectives through an investment of Rs 560 crore, which will be spread over a period of five years.

Dulloo expressed confidence that this project will bring about significant improvements in agriculture and allied sectors in Jammu & Kashmir, providing a boost to the region's economy and benefiting farmers and consumers alike.

The project aims to improve the Terms of Trade (ToT) in favor of farmers, improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the market ecosystem and minimize the value loss while maximizing societal welfare. The proposed activities or areas of intervention will strengthen the existing agricultural marketing system in Jammu & Kashmir, bringing long-term dividends across stakeholders, particularly farmer-producers.

The proposed project also envisages significant growth in agriculture and allied sectors through various activities. The market reforms included the implementation of an open auction system, a single license



for trading in all mandies, and institutionalization of post-harvest infrastructure with the eNAM network. Infrastructure development will involve converting mandies into value chain parks, creating new mandies and installing composting units. Besides, institutional building and capacity development will focus on the formation of Niche Product Marketing FPOs.

Branding activities will include the creation of two Agriculture Branding Centers, mapping of existing branding practices, farmers/FPO brand building training and workshops, and integration of branded niche products with the tourism and hotel industry. Lastly, rural business and service hubs will be established in production areas.

The Directorate of Horticulture, Planning & Marketing will be responsible for the on-ground implementation of the project and will serve as the nodal agency for providing unified licensing to potential traders.

The government of Jammu & Kashmir is set to implement this new project that aims to transform the agriculture sector through a multi-faceted approach. This approach includes market reforms, development of infrastructure, and promotion of institutional building and capacity development of Niche Product Marketing FPOs.

Market reforms will bring transparency and fairness in trading practices, genuine prices for produce, increase the number of buyers, and fair competition. This will result in an increase in producers' share in the



consumer rupee. Infrastructure development will create an efficient and effective market ecosystem, minimize value loss, overcome distress sales, improve logistics, adhere to quality standards, ease of doing business, target unattended geographies, waste to wealth, and minimize environmental pollution.

Private entrepreneurs will be responsible for the development of infrastructure, including CA stores, grading lines, mini cold stores, reefer vans, and pick-up vans. The Directorate of Horticulture, Planning & Marketing will establish composting units at potential mandies, and also create new mandies in collaboration with the respective District Administrations.

The promotion and support of institutional building and capacity development of Niche Product Marketing FPOs will be done in collaboration with allied departments and Agriculture Universities of the UT. The emphasis will be laid on the branding of agricultural produce to promote marketing and competitive advantage of Niche crops. This will also result in scale economies in input and output marketing, operations, bargaining power, contract farming, better terms of trade (ToT), self-reliance, and confidence.

The project will also include the identification, capacity building, and promotion of Rural Business & Service Hubs (RBSHs) across all districts of J&K. This intervention will provide quality inputs/services, improve logistics in management operations, improve yield and quality produce, technology outreach, an extension of improved varieties and machines, and market information

A dedicated Market Intelligence Cell will be established at SKUAST-K in collaboration with concerned Departments. The establishment of this Cell will result in the creation of a decision support system, improved marketing strategy by stakeholders, fairness in trading, more competition, and better policy outcomes.

Digital marketing will play a pivotal role in doubling farmers' income. It will increase the visibility online and enable potential customers to find agricultural businesses online. The digital marketing strategy will be more effective in the case of niche products from UT of J&K to reach potential customers across the country and the globe.

In order to facilitate online marketing of niche-based agri/horti/livestock/fishery/NTFPs, a dedicated web portal may be made operational for online marketing under PPP mode. The portal will be customized for J&K Niche Products for an effective marketing strategy.

The proposed project will have both direct and indirect beneficiaries. Direct beneficiaries will include farmers, market functionaries, potential entrepreneurs, employable masses in infrastructure development, and employable masses in value creation. Indirect beneficiaries will include consumers/customers, importers/

buyers, outsourced sector/industry, and indirect employable masses.

The Government of Jammu and Kashmir has announced a range of incentives aimed at strengthening the state's market infrastructure. Under the initiative, a 50% capital subsidy will be offered for the establishment of 11 Controlled Atmosphere (CA) stores, each with a capacity of 5000 MT, at a unit cost of Rs. 30.00 cr. In addition, a 50% subsidy will be provided for the establishment of 12 hi-tech grading lines, 275 portable grading lines, reefer vans, pick-up vans, and mini cold stores. Four mechanized windrow composting units, 16 simple composting units, and four new mandies will also be established at a cost of Rs. 49.00 cr.

The Institutional Building and Capacity Development component of the project will see 55 Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) established with an investment of Rs. 11.00 cr, and 35 capacity building training programs arranged for FPOs, costing Rs. 1.05 cr. Additionally, two Agriculture and Branding Centers will be established in each division at a cost of Rs. 5.20 cr.

A 50% subsidy will be provided for the establishment of 400 Rural Business and Service Hubs, with a ceiling of Rs. 15.00 lakh on each hub. Finally, the infrastructure for digital marketing and market intelligence will be established at a cost of Rs. 11.30 cr. The implementation of these interventions is expected to have a significant impact. The government anticipates that farmers' income will double from 45% to 90%, while the reduction of value loss is expected to be between 20% and 50%.

The off-season availability of fruits and vegetables is also expected to improve. Value creation is anticipated to increase by 25% to 75%, and there will be an increase in income, value output, employment, reduced food wastage, and an efficient decision support system. As a result, this investment is expected to be highly beneficial.

The project will result in several key outputs, including the establishment of 11 CA stores with a capacity of 55,000 MT, 12 hi-tech grading lines, 25 mini cold stores, four new mandies in Samba, Reasi, Kishtwar, and Bandipora, 400 Rural Businesses & Service Hubs, two Agri Branding centers, and one Market Intelligence Cell. This project is also expected to create 6,000 jobs and 629 enterprises in the next five years.

In conclusion, the government of Jammu & Kashmir plans to implement a project that aims to transform the agriculture sector through a multi-faceted approach. It will bring transparency and fairness in trading practices, create an efficient and effective market ecosystem, promote institutional building and capacity development of Niche Product Marketing FPOs, and improve digital marketing strategies.

Rs 1522 cr budget to focus on full implementation of NEP, digital transformation, infra creation

1000 classrooms with LCD facilities, high-speed internet proposed

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir's education sector would be witnessing a major transformation

"Also, 1000 smart classrooms with LCD and high-speed internet connectivity will be established in High and Higher Secondary Schools for imparting quality education to students," the budget document reads.

To keep students fit, Yoga Training will be introduced for all the students as part of co-curricular activities.

The Budget also proposes to create sports infrastructure including changing rooms for players in 100 High and Higher Secondary Schools.

To strengthen the School education sector in J&K, 500 additional classrooms would be provided in high and higher secondary schools benefitting more than 20,000 students. Besides, free textbooks and uniforms would be provided to all the students of elementary classes belonging to weaker sections.

As an important step towards ensuring that girls are able to attend school without any barriers, drinking water facilities and gender-based toilet facilities are to be made available in all Schools.

The budget has also proposed the establishment of 2000 Kindergartens during 2023-24 for providing quality pre-primary education. Besides, 10 Residential Schools would be established during 2023-24 with preference to tribal students and students from weaker sections for accommodating in these residential schools on a merit basis for providing them quality education.

The J&K government, which has already taken the lead in the implementation of National Education Policy (NEP)-2020, is likely to get a boost with the new budget allocation which has a specific focus on "full implementation" of NEP-2020.

The Budget also proposes to fully implement Samarth's "ERP eGov Suite" in 2023-24 besides making Higher Education Council functional during 2023-24. Also, NAAC accreditation of 32 colleges would be completed in 2023-24.

with a budget allocation of Rs 1522 crore for 2023-24 with a focus on full implementation of the National Education Policy, digital transformation, and infrastructure creation.

The budget also provides scope for strengthening digital infrastructure with the establishment of 188 Virtual Reality Labs in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir (one lab in each zone) to inculcate scientific temper among students. Besides, 40 robotic labs would be established (Two Labs in each district) to improve the school's digital equity, literacy, and economic development besides promoting new teaching methodologies. About 500 schools will be provided with ICT labs and 100 Vocational Labs in the schools of Union Territory.



THE J&K GOVERNMENT, WHICH HAS ALREADY TAKEN THE LEAD IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY (NEP)-2020, is likely to get a boost with the new budget allocation which has a specific focus on "full implementation" of NEP-2020.





Basohli Painting gets GI Tag

JAMMU: The world-famous 'Basohli Painting' from Kathua district has obtained the Geographical Indication (GI) Tag following approval by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) Jammu.

Pertinently, Geographical Indications (GI) is a form of Intellectual Property right that identifies goods originating from a specific geographical location and having distinct nature, quality, and characteristics linked to that location.

The process for GI tagging of 9 products of Jammu region products was initiated by NABARD in consultation with the Department of Handicrafts and Handloom in December 2020, during the difficult times of COVID. The GI tags have now finally been granted to these products after a long legal process.

Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, congratulated the country on getting 33 GI tags, the highest ever in a single year, by tweeting through his official Twitter handle. The products from UT of Jammu and Kashmir have been included in the list of 33 products that received the GI tag on 31 March 2023.

This is the first time in the history of GI

registration that the Jammu region got a GI Tag for handicrafts.

Basohli painting of Kathua district is the first independent GI-tagged product from the Jammu region. Now, only an authorized user has the exclusive right to use the Geographical Indication in relation to these products. Due to this, no person can copy it from beyond their geographical areas.

This will prevent unauthorized use of these registered Geographical Indication goods by third parties besides will boost exports and promote their brands at the international level, thereby promoting the economic prosperity of producers and related stakeholders including contribution to the GDP of the country.

Dr. Ajay Kumar Sood, Chief General Manager, NABARD, thanked the concerned departments of the UT government, all the GI applicant organizations, and especially the skilled leadership of the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha. He further informed that post-GI development projects will now be taken up for the product for training and capacity building, brand building, improving marketability, etc.

Development of industrial estates, promotion of Ease of Doing Business, export hubs creation to get focus in 2023-24 budget

Policy framework to support private investment, Samadhaan 2.0 to be implemented



SRINAGAR: Development, expansion of new industrial estates, promotion of ease of doing business, and creation of export hubs will receive a significant push in the budget earmarked for the 2023-24 fiscal.

This year's budget elaborates that the Jammu and Kashmir government has identified 29 projects for the development of new Industrial Estates during 2023-24.

The investment proposals for setting up of Medicities in Jammu and Srinagar had been received for the creation of health infrastructure in the private sector. In this regard, Medicities at Sempora, Srinagar, and Meeran Sahib, Jammu are being established to provide better healthcare facilities to the ailing.

The main aim of "One District One Product" is to promote local products for export. In this regard, Jammu and Srinagar districts have been selected among the 75 districts across India for the export of local products.

Similarly, 1500 units under Jammu and Kashmir Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP) are being targeted to be established in 2023-24 involving margin money of Rs 30 crore with employment to 9000 persons.

The Budget has a provision for conducting exhibitions for showcasing the industrial potential of the region besides organizing workshops on capacity building and start-up promotion. The budget has also earmarked funds for providing Turnover Incentives to boost industrial development entailing an increase in employment.

Introduction of quality certification with branding under the Handloom and Handicraft sector will also be done in 2023-24 and steps will be taken for the popularization of local products.

Significantly, Jammu and Kashmir Government has already taken a slew of measures towards the promotion of ease of doing business in the UT which has received tremendous

response from various potential investors. Besides, further steps are being taken up for reducing compliance on "Ease of Living" and "Ease of Doing Business".

The Budget will also facilitate the conduct of mock drills to be carried out across the Union Territory. Besides, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) development policy would also be notified.

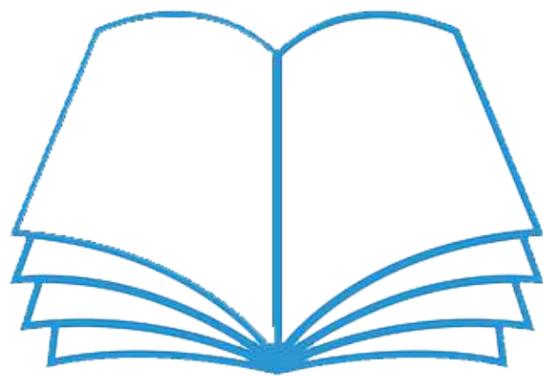
Similarly, Samadhaan 2.0 would be implemented this year and the government would facilitate a tie-up of MSMEs with e-commerce platforms to boost sales of products of local units. Jammu and Kashmir would also introduce a Policy framework to support private investment besides the implementation of a unified logistic interface platform.

To facilitate the export of local products to international markets, export hubs will be created under this year's budget. The government is also encouraging officers to give an active push to exports, marketing promotion programmes for handicrafts focusing global market, and development of industrial estate connected to significant economic nodes to maintain the momentum of growth.

The Budget has also kept a provision for the adoption of plug and play model for key development sectors including the manufacturing sector.

Notably, the handicraft and handloom sector of the Union Territory has recorded unprecedented growth in the last three months and registered Rs 729 crore worth of exports despite instability in the global market.

Under the guidance of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, Jammu and Kashmir has set a new record in the establishment of village industrial units. In the last financial year, 1.73 lakh new jobs were generated under PMEGP (PM's Employment Generation Programme) alone.



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Kashmir and India's G20 Presidency



ANAMITRA BANERJEE

Introduction of G20 and its working

The G20 comprises the majority of the biggest economies, both in developed and emerging nations representing approximately 90% of the world's GDP, 75%-80% of world commerce, two-thirds of the population of the world, and nearly half of the planet's landmass. Originally formed in 1999 in reaction to several global financial downturns, the prominent confederation has organized a summit annually since 2008. The choice to institutionalize the confederation at the Pittsburgh Summit held in September 2009 demonstrates a major transformation in the nucleus of the command structure. Emerging stakeholders, discussion groups, and challenges have emerged at the forefront of global decision-making.

The G20's capacity to mobilize relevant parties outside of its affiliation, collaborate significant reforms of the international financial institutions, create translucent provisions for consensual evaluation, and guarantee cohesiveness in policy creation and execution is critical to the G20's recurring legitimacy. However, the gateway impression should always be assessed in addition to its "squad" facet, but also by its "connectivity" attribute, considering that the G20 is far more comprehensively trying to define and distinguish its obligations from those of various bodies, like the IMF. In doing just that, the G20 has assisted the IMF to restore the slump from the Asian meltdown. This correlation also solidifies the G20's role because the World Bank and IMF generate the symposium with additional expertise. The G20's three principal objectives are to demonstrate coordination and collaboration in policy frameworks among its members so that they can achieve global financial

reliability and robust, viable, stable, and equitable growth; to create capital controls that mitigate dangers and avoid prospective global recession, and to modernize the world banking infrastructure.

How important G20 grouping is for India

India assumed the G20 Presidency on the 1st of December 2022 from Indonesia and will convene the G20 Leaders' Summit for the first time in 2023. India's G20 Presidency would be a watershed moment in her history as it seeks to play an important role by finding pragmatic global solutions for the well-being of all.

India's aim in staging the G20 in 2023 is to elevate the 'global south's voice'. For India's G20 Presidency, the government has opted for the theme of "One Earth, One Family, One Future", which is coherent with Indian cultural and moral ideology. India's dedication to countering the impacts of global warming and trying to support and assist emerging nations in meeting their strategic project goals and priorities is through expertise and product assistance. To foster global interdependence and a sense of unity for developing countries, India has also implemented programs like International Solar Alliance, the Coalition for Disaster Resistant Infrastructure, and One Sun, One World, One Grid.

With more than 120 developing nations, India has highlighted that the global south has the most significant stake in the coming years because it is the home to three-quarters of human civilization. As a result, economies in the third world must attempt to mold the burgeoning world order. India's presidency asserted how most international struggles were not generated by the developing world yet it adversely impacts human lives. The Indian representatives backed this by citing the COVID pandemic, climate variability, violent extremism, and the ongoing Ukraine-Russia war. India has often communicated this expertise in the Sub-Saharan region and spans all territories and sectors of the economy. The developing world should never rebuff the success of progress and innovation. Countries in the global south should work together to endeavor international fiscal, social and bureaucratic governance. It will reduce the disparity, broaden prospects, encourage investment, and propagate advancement and overall holistic well-being. To re-energize the realm, we must collectively resolve a broader global strategy of response, recognition, respect, and reform.

What is the significance of holding a G20 meeting in Kashmir?

Holding the G20 summit in Jammu and Kashmir would be an adventurous, and ambitious step, an opportunity to recognize Jammu and Kashmir at the highest level. Numerous states' delegations have visited J&K regularly over the last twenty years. The list included American Special Envoy Robert Blackwill taking the lead to forge a strategic and operational trail to both Srinagar as well as the Siachen Glacier.

It's for the first time in the past 70 years that J-K would be hosting an international event like G-20.

With India officially adopting the G20 chairmanship, it is Jammu and Kashmir's chance to rise to the occasion of exhibiting its market prospects, ecotourism ventures, and cultural assets to the leading global nations. India has issued a significant strategic assertion to the international society, primarily to Beijing and Islamabad by strategizing to organize a few G20 summits in Jammu & Kashmir. The G20 offers a chance for the administration to solidify the benefits it claims resulted from repealing Article 370. There are some organizational as well as other challenges to overcome, however, they are not unattainable. One is to begin holding primary elections, which have been on hold because the state Legislature was dissolved in November 2018. There is no greater opportunity to put actions, strategies, and stated aims in place to exhibit future proposals and be diplomatic. Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha declared that the summit in J&K would convey a message of tranquility and civility to the rest of the world. Quoting him "If there is no peace, then rest assured no power on earth can bring development to the place. Some people do not like this. They do not want peace here, they want violence. J-K's welfare is in this, we can progress and come closer to or overcome other nations only when there is peace here." He stated that if peace and order is restored in J&K, evolution isn't going to be further behind.

Response from China & Pakistan

Both China and Pakistan seemed to be prompt to display resistance when it was reported that Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh would host a portion of the G20 happenings. The international community, notably the G20 representatives, has remained silent in the face of China and Pakistan's opprobrium of wanting to hold international events in the Kashmir Valley and Ladakh. The G-20 symposium or associated discussion groups in Srinagar would represent the most formal geopolitical devastating blow for Pakistan, which has calcified its stance on J&K following the repeal of Articles 370 and 35-A and the division of the former state into two separate Union Territories in 2019. The European Union, which formerly referred to J&K as "the world's biggest internment camp", is also a partner of the G-20.

The Pakistani government just not objected to New Delhi's course of action, but also allegedly asked its allied countries – China, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia – to blacklist and stop showing support for the conference. China echoed Pakistan's reason to object, saying it repudiates India's intention to host the G20 leader's meeting in the union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh. As reported by Pakistani news outlets, Islamabad would therefore seek advice from G20 member governments like America and the British Isles to confront Indian strategies. By sponsoring the meeting in Jammu and Kashmir, New Delhi has asserted its claim to the Indian Himalayas stating India would have no tolerance towards forced occupation in international credibility. If the symposium takes place, the

Indian Government will score a serious international triumph while the Pakistani government will suffer a mishap. Because Pakistan is not a member of the G20, it's going to be challenging for Islamabad to persuade numerous different advanced nations to abandon the idea of holding the summit.

How is it beneficial for Kashmir to have this event?

Numerous corporate leaders, expats, businessmen, and diplomats, from Middle Eastern countries, have indeed toured Jammu and Kashmir in the past few months to investigate opportunities to invest in the UT, much more to Pakistan's chagrin. There had been a large amount of attention in Jammu and Kashmir during last year's regional and global summit throughout the Emirates. Motivated by multinational economic interests in investing in J&K, India anticipated hosting the G20 summit in the UT this year. It gives rise to an experimental method of willingness to host the symposium: involving locals. Representatives could be chosen from the corporate sector, the political sphere, scholars, and the community. This strategy will guarantee the summit's accomplishment. The large tourist influx must have stimulated the Indian government to choose J&K. If foreign visitors are being leveraged to draw attention to the issue, the community ethos that is responsible again for the summit's accomplishment must also be harnessed.

The G20 Summit has the possibility of having a major effect on the world and thus on the J&K economy. Actions taken at the symposium, for example, can influence market mechanisms, the balance of trade, and fiscal measures, each of which has a long-lasting effect. Furthermore, the G20 Summit can be an opportunity for Western democracies to collaborate in addressing global financial dilemmas, which will eventually improve Jammu and Kashmir's status. Global support has grown and with the G20 summit, Kashmir will have a bigger presence on the world platform and it will be able to empower and shape significant international economic and commercial decisions. Also, among the 15 institutions in the country chosen to host Youth-20 and Civil -20 events which are being organised in connection with India's G-20 Presidency, the University of Kashmir (KU) is one of them.

Conclusion

Prime Minister Narendra Modi earlier during his two-day special virtual summit titled 'Voice of the Global South Summit,' asserted, "We have concluded our reflections on another challenging period that saw war, dispute, violence, political turmoil, soaring fuel, and fuel prices, anthropogenic global warming, catastrophes, and the long-term financial consequences of the COVID the world is unequivocally in a long haul of emergency. It's hard to predict when this flux will last."

G20 discussions will lead to favorable results for undeveloped nations as well as regions. The growth of a country as well as the sustainability of its natural resources are two crucial components that cannot be overlooked.

While innovation is necessary for the residents of Jammu & Kashmir to live in dignity, biosphere retention and preservation of natural resources are also essential for keeping the balance of nature. To diminish disparities and make a significant contribution to the equality and improvement of people's lives, government initiatives must be inclusive and long-term. The importance of the Development Agenda for the Indian G20 Presidential term is bolstered by the fact that it carries a broader connotation for developing nations than for the industrialized world. India's assumption of the G20 presidency from Jakarta is noticeable because it places India in the middle of the global south's triad (Indonesia, India, and Brazil) to exert control over the Summit.

Understanding Recent Trends in Violent Crime in Kashmir



ADEELA HAMEED

From petty theft, sexual abuse, cyberbullying, drug trafficking, and organized gangs to the alarming rise in homicides, Kashmir Valley is seeing a surge in violent crime.

According to the National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) report, the overall crime graph in Jammu and Kashmir increased by 24.6% in 2021 as compared to 2020. The report also marked that crimes committed by juveniles showed an increase in 2021. The numbers jumped to 323 in 2021 with 2020 registering only 171 cases. Additionally, J&K recorded 1,681 cases under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. The NCRB report claimed that 79.9% of the murder culprits were charge-sheeted.

Using the available data, this analysis seeks to set out a clear and accurate summary of what is known so far about recent trends in violent crime in Jammu and Kashmir, which is extraordinarily complex.

Crime rates and crime reporting are on the rise even now

Several cases of horrific crimes have come to light in the valley in just a couple of months. The recent cases of a young woman cut to pieces in Budgam, an alleged drug addict killing his mother in Baramulla, or the body of a minor girl with her throat slit in the Lalpora area of Kupwara point towards the fact that society's values are deteriorating.

It is likely that multiple factors are contributing to this trend in the region, which may include:

Drug Abuse: Drug addiction is a major problem fueling criminal activities. The easy availability of drugs has created a vicious, hard-to-break cycle of addiction and crime. One study has suggested that the valley has around 67,000 drug addicts, out of which 85% use heroin daily.

Unemployment: Unemployment has made the situation even worse. According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), the current unemployment percentage in J&K reads at 17.1%, holding the fourth spot of the unemployment graph in India. This severe unemployment crisis has pushed many youths towards drugs and crime.

Poverty: Poverty can lead to desperation and criminal behavior as people struggle to make ends meet. Kashmir has seen much economic distress because people lost their means of livelihood, which has resulted in an overall increase in the poor among the valley's population.

Political Instability: Kashmir has experienced political instability and conflict for several decades now. This instability has the potential to create a sense of lawlessness, making it easier for criminal activities to spring up.

Lax Law Enforcement: Law enforcement in the valley is criticized for being ineffective. And with corruption, nepotism, and abuse of power in tow, it becomes easier for criminals to function without the fear of being punished.

Unidentified Agencies: Kashmir has been a hotbed of insurgency. Different groups of unidentified agencies have been carrying out attacks on residents and security forces. This type of raw violence can create a sense of insecurity and lawlessness that may have the potential to contribute to an increase in other types of crimes.

Nevertheless, apart from these factors, more research and analysis are needed to fully understand the complex dynamics of crimes at play in Jammu and Kashmir.

Recommendations

Controlling crime is a challenge that requires a comprehensive and multifarious approach. While researchers have begun to identify some of the factors that may have contributed to this upward trend, it is far too soon to say with certainty why crime rose over the last few years. Thus, policymakers need to take into account the following factors for easy crime-solving and an overall reduction in the crime rate in the valley.

Addressing the Cause of Crime: Robustly addressing poverty, drug abuse, and mental health issues can help prevent criminal behavior. This involves investing in social awareness programs, providing easy and bias-free access to mental health and substance abuse treatment, educating all sections of society irrespective of economic status, and providing job opportunities to the unemployed.

Providing Education And Employment: Education can help reduce poverty and unemployment, both of which are associated with higher crime rates. A good job would prevent individuals from turning to criminal activities as a means of livelihood. This can be done by promoting entrepreneurship and creating job opportunities in sectors such as agriculture, tourism, and handicrafts.

Community Policing: This approach involves collaboration between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve. It can help in building trust and improving communication between the parties. This could make it easier to solve crimes by encouraging people to shun fear and report crimes, eventually leading to the prosecution of criminals.

Preventing Drug Addiction and Abuse: The problem of drug addiction needs to be dealt with stringently and with immediate effect. This can be done by launching robust awareness campaigns and rehabilitation programs past any photo-op event.

Strengthening Law Enforcement: Providing law enforcement agencies with the necessary resources and relevant training can help in improving their effectiveness to prevent and solve crimes. This includes investing in technology and introducing applicable innovations in police departments to improve their crime-fighting capabilities.

Pinpointing High-Crime Areas: Aiming for high-crime regions by strengthening law enforcement in the lawless nests can help in reducing crime rates. This approach can also prevent criminals from committing crimes in those areas.

Awareness on Cyber Bullying: Young children and youth need to be made aware of and helped through cases where cyberbullying might be in question. Parental guidance and monitoring should be made a priority when children are active on social media.

Providing a Nourishing Environment: As a society, we need to accept that certain social deficiencies could become a catalyst for crimes. Starting from negligent families to an overall impoverished milieu, we have to be involved in events happening around us. Broken support systems lead to weak familial connections, fostering feelings of helplessness and frustration among young adults.

Violence against women has a diverse morphology and should not be included in the general list of crimes such as those arising from lack of education, unemployment, or impoverishment. Heinous crimes against women could and have stemmed from abusers who are well-educated, employed, and/or of elite economic status including those who lack the aforementioned assets. Thus, this violence has to be addressed in a critical manner, with a thorough understanding of the nature and motive of the abuser. The most effective adaptation strategy, in this case, would be to provide awareness in all institutions and herculean security to the females, and a prejudice-free environment to the unfortunate victims.

Different strategies may be more effective in different contexts. However, a comprehensive-collaborative approach involving multiple stakeholders such as community leaders, law enforcement agencies, civil societies, and social service providers, is absolutely necessary to effectively control crime, of any nature, in the valley.

School Infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir – An Analysis



AIJAZ AHMAD DAR

Introduction

The success and economic development of nations are determined by their educational systems. Since independence, India has been continuously progressing in the education field. There is a direct relationship between school infrastructure and educational performance. People’s access to education depends crucially on the educational infrastructure in place. Therefore, the government continuously invests in educational infrastructure to improve educational outcomes in the school education system. The school education system in India is one of the largest in the world, comprising more than 14.89 lakh schools, 95 lakh teachers, and over 26.52 crore students from varied socio-economic backgrounds across 28 States and 8 Union Territories (UDISE+ Report, 2021-22).

In India, the “Unified District Information System for Education Plus” (UDISE+), an application developed by the government under the Ministry of Education, collects information from all recognized and unrecognized schools that impart formal education from pre-primary to higher secondary level.

Using the data available at Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) for the year 2021-22, this article aims to understand the state of available infrastructure in the school education system in the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Distribution of Schools and Enrolments by Management

The school education system of Jammu and Kashmir comprises

28.80 thousand schools, 1.67 Lakh teachers, and 27.18 Lakh students. Figure 1 provides information about the distribution of schools by different types of management. In the Indian education system, schools are categorized into four types of management; government, government-aided, private unaided, and others. Government schools are run by the government, government-aided schools are run by private management but with rules and regulations of the government, and private unaided schools are entirely governed by private management. In the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir, “government” schools account for 80 percent, and “private unaided” schools constitute 20 percent of total schools. The “government-aided” and “other” schools are negligible in the Union Territory. Compared with the distribution of schools in the country as a whole, the UT is ahead of the country as a whole in the share of government schools and behind in the privatization of school education, though by a small margin in the latter case.

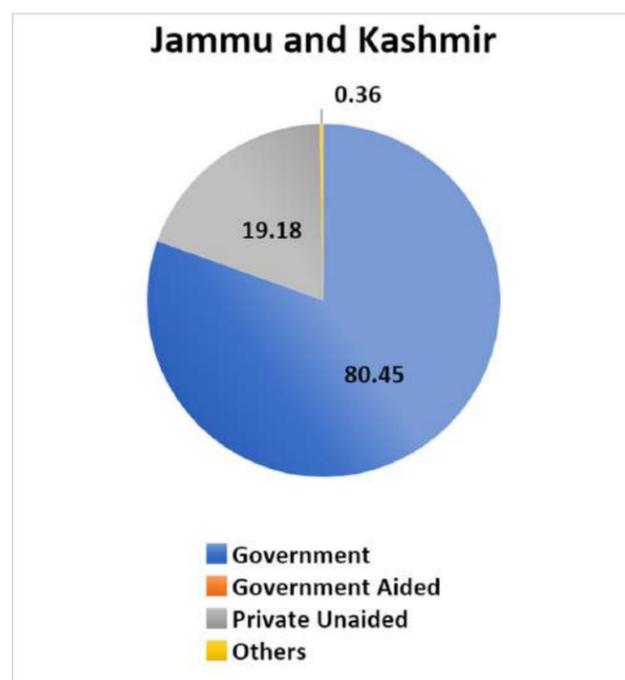
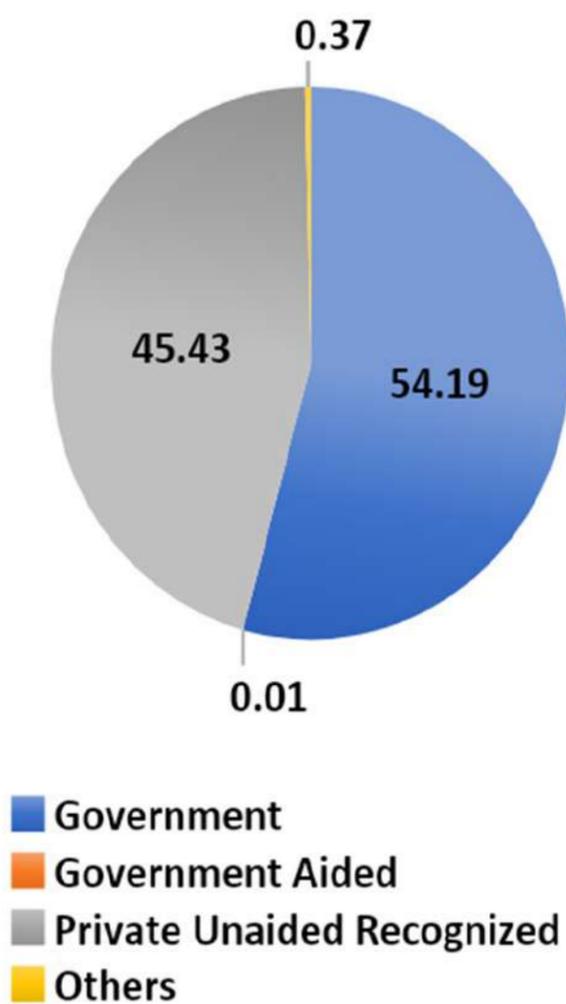


Figure 1: A comparison of the percentage distribution of schools by different types of management in Jammu and Kashmir and India, 2021-22.

Figure 2 shows the distribution of enrolments by type of management. It is clear from Figures 1 and 2 that in both the country and UT, the share in enrolments of government schools is less than their share in total schools, and the share in enrolment of private schools is higher than their share in total schools. However, in the Union territory, the differences are very high. The share of private schools in enrolments (45%) is more than twice their share in total schools (19%), and though government schools account for 80% of schools, their share in enrolments is 54% only. Therefore, in the country and more significantly in the UT, there are preferences for private schools among the people.

Figure 2: A comparison of the percentage distribution of enrolments by different types of management in Jammu and Kashmir and India, 2021-22.

Jammu and Kashmir



Source: Prepared based on Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) 2021-22.

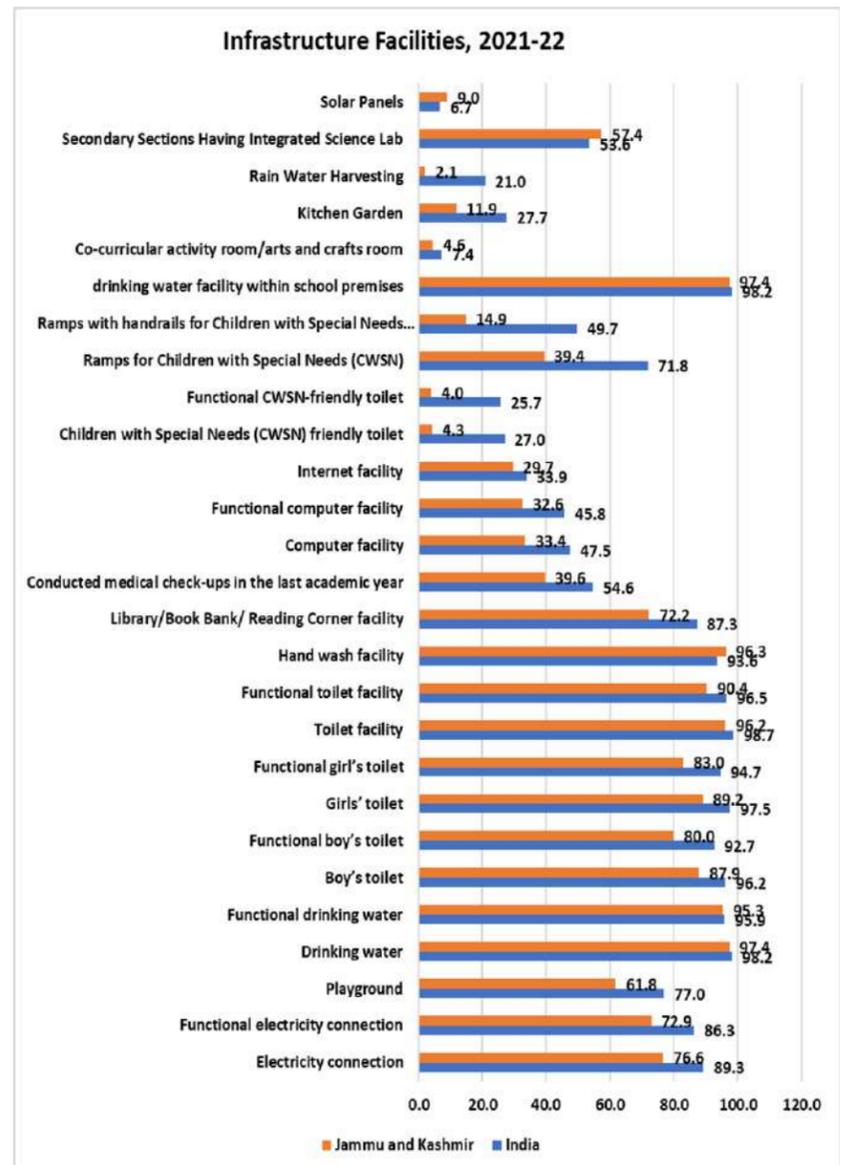
The Infrastructure of Schools

Now let us look at the various infrastructural facilities available in the country's school system and compare the country and the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir in the availability of these infrastructural facilities.

Figure 3 details the various infrastructural facilities in the country and the UT. In all 27 infrastructural facilities except for three infrastructural facilities of hand wash, secondary sections having integrated science labs, and availability of solar panels, the percentage of schools having these facilities in UT is less than the country as a whole. In 15 infrastructural facilities of electricity connection, functional electricity connection, playground, functional boy's toilet, functional girl's toilet, library/book bank/reading corner facility, conducted medical check-ups in the last academic year, computer facility, functional computer facility, Children with Special Needs (CWSN) friendly toilet, functional

CWSN-friendly toilet, ramps for Children with Special Needs (CWSN), ramps with handrails for Children with Special Needs (CWSN), kitchen garden, and rainwater harvesting, the percentage of schools having these facilities in UT is less than the country as a whole by more than ten percent. Moreover, in four infrastructural facilities for Children with Special Needs (CWSN) (toilet facility, functional toilet facility, ramps, and ramps with handrails), there is a whopping difference of more than 20 percentage points between the UT and the country as a whole.

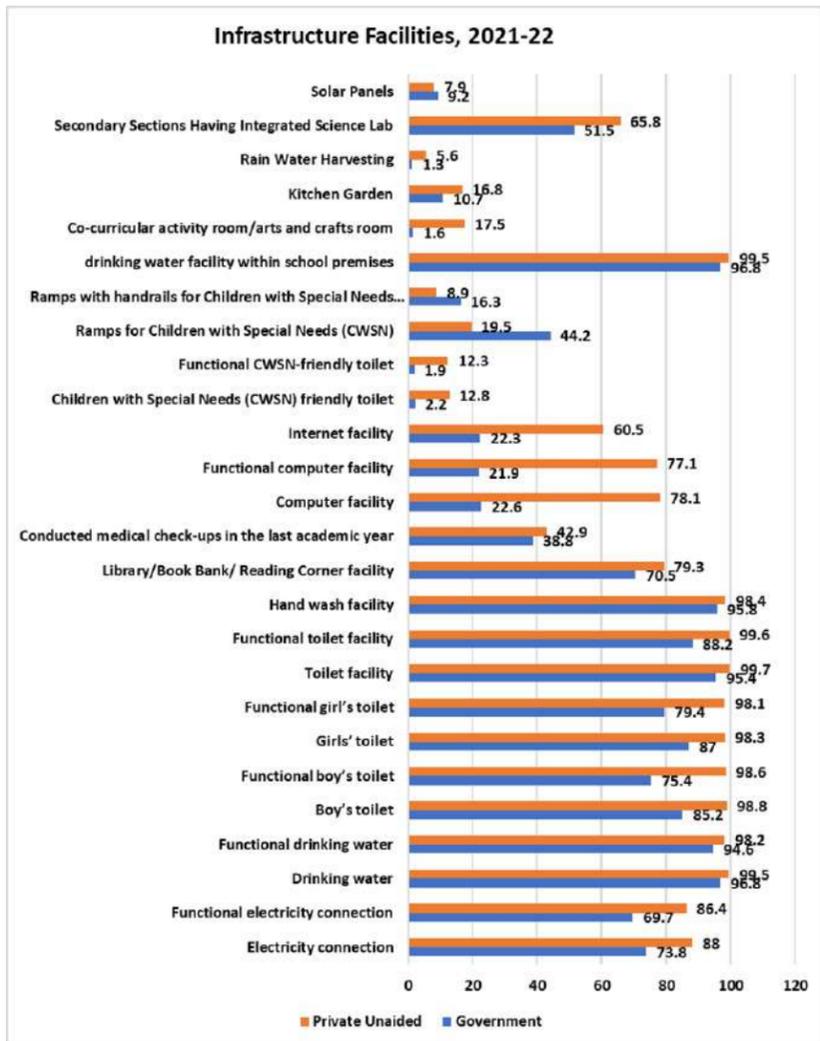
Figure 3: A comparison of the percentage of schools with different infrastructure facilities in Jammu and Kashmir and India, 2021-22.



Source: Prepared based on Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) 2021-22.

As observed from figures 1 and 2, more than 99 percent of schools and enrolments in Jammu and Kashmir are in the government and private unaided (private) sector. Therefore, in Figure 4, a comparison is made between the government and private schools in the availability of infrastructural facilities in the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir. In all the 26 mentioned infrastructural facilities, except for three infrastructural facilities of ramps for Children with Special Needs (CWSN), ramps with handrails for Children with Special Needs (CWSN), and solar panels, the percentage of government schools having these facilities is less than the percentage of private schools. In 14 infrastructural facilities of electricity connection, functional electricity connection, boy's toilet, functional boy's toilet, girl's toilet, functional girl's toilet, functional toilet facility, computer facility, and functional computer facility, internet facility, Children with Special Needs (CWSN) friendly toilet, functional CWSN-friendly toilet, co-curricular activity room/arts and crafts room, and secondary sections having integrated science lab, the percentage of government schools having these facilities is less than the private schools by more than ten percent. Unfortunately, in the infrastructural facilities of computers, functional computers, and the internet, government schools are behind private schools by a whopping difference of 55.5, 55.2, and 38.2 percentage points, respectively.

Figure 4: A comparison of the percentage of Government and Private Unaided schools with different infrastructure facilities in Jammu and Kashmir, 2021-22.

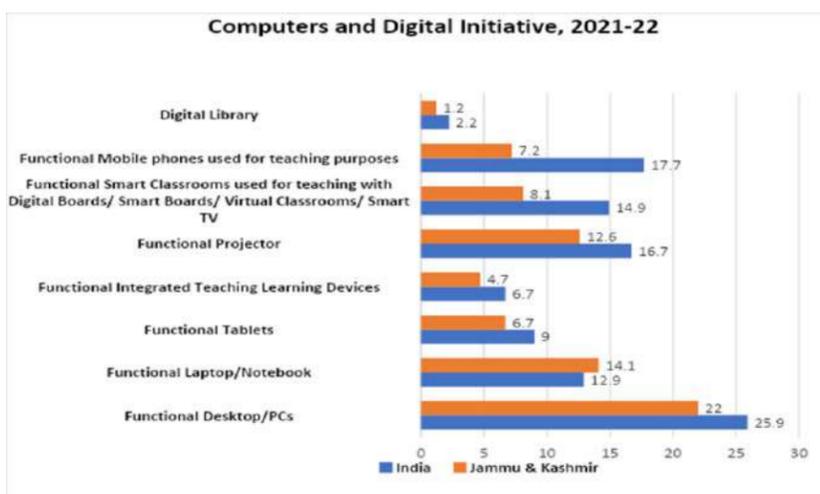


Source: Prepared based on Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) 2021-22.

Computers and Digital Initiatives

Figure 5 compares the country as a whole and the UT in the availability of computers and digital initiative facilities. What is astonishing is that not in any computer and digital initiative, the percentage of schools covered in the UT and country is more than 30 percent. Even worse in the case of UT is that in all the facilities except in the availability of functional laptops/notebooks, the percentage of schools having them is less than the country as a whole. It's miserable that in five initiatives of functional tablets, functional integrated teaching learning devices, functional smart classrooms used for teaching with digital boards/smart boards/virtual classrooms/smart TV, functional mobile phones used for teaching purposes, and digital libraries less than 10 percent of schools are covered in the UT.

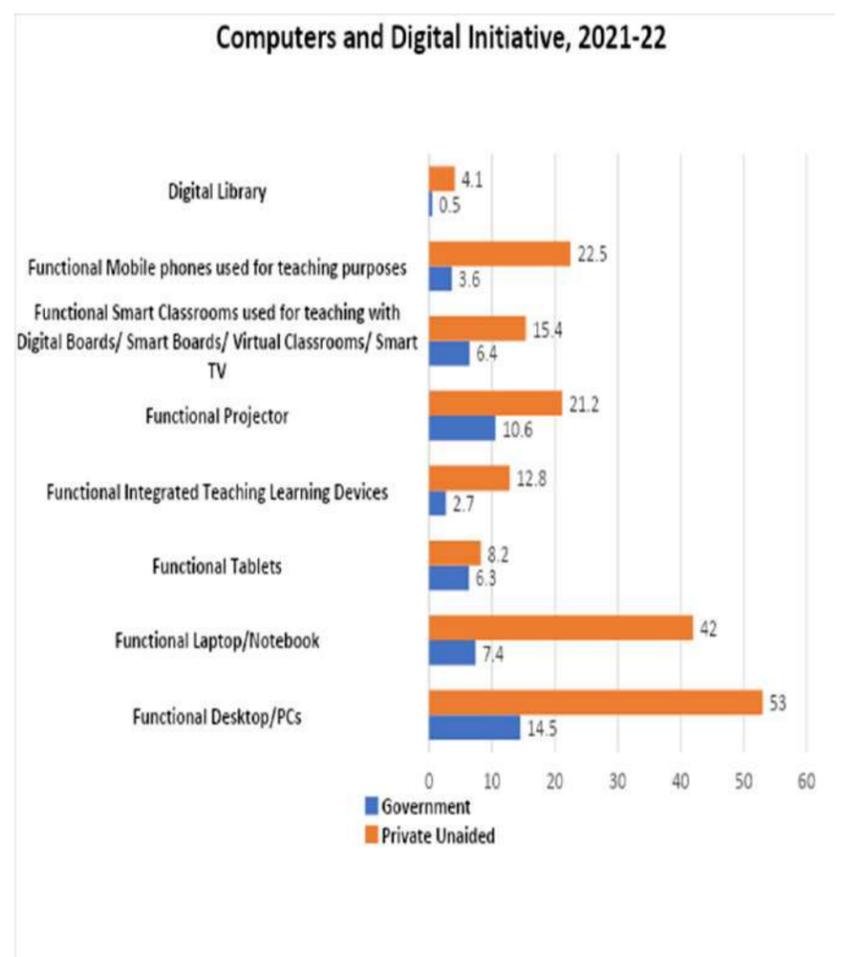
Figure 5: A comparison of the percentage of schools with computer and digital initiatives in Jammu and Kashmir and India, 2021-22.



Source: Prepared based on Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) 2021-22.

In Figure 6, a comparison is made between the government and private unaided schools in the availability of computer and digital initiative facilities in the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir. It is unpromising to see that in all the facilities, the government schools are behind the private schools. The difference between the percentage of government and private schools having functional desktops/PCs and functional laptops/notebooks is horrible.

Figure 6: A comparison of the percentage of Government and Private Unaided schools with computer and digital initiatives in Jammu and Kashmir, 2021-22.



Source: Prepared based on Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) 2021-22.

Conclusion

Details about the various infrastructural facilities and computer and digital initiatives in schools have been provided in the article and a comparison is made between the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and the country as a whole with regard to both facilities. Government and private schools in the UT are also compared to the availability of infrastructural and computer and digital initiative facilities. It is observed; the UT is behind the country, and within the UT, the government schools are behind the private schools in the availability of these facilities. Therefore, efforts should be made by the government to improve the condition of schools and, more specifically, the condition of government schools in terms of the availability of infrastructural facilities and computer and digital initiatives in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Threat Of Exotic Wild Boars To The Ecological Balance Of Dachigam National Park



SEMRAN PARVAIZ

Jammu and Kashmir and its national parks are very rich in biodiversity and famous all over the globe. One such national park is Dachigam National Park, which is only 22 kilometers from Srinagar. The park was established in 1910 on the site of the previous wildlife preserve of the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir. The park's total area is 141 square kilometers, making it one of the largest protected areas in the Himalayas.

There are more than 500 kinds of herbs, 50 kinds of trees, and about 20 kinds of shrubs in the park. Dachigam is known for more than just Hangul. It is also known for its musk deer, leopards, Himalayan Grey Langurs, leopard cats, Himalayan Black Bears, and yellow-throated martens, among other animals. Dachigam is home to many different bird species, including the Himalayan monal, Long-eared owl, Tawny owl, golden oriole, koklass pheasant, Kashmir flycatcher, Lemon-rumped warbler, Tytler's leaf warbler, variegated laughing thrush, streaked laughing thrush, Brown dipper, Himalayan rubythroat, and many more. Apart from these animals and birds, the population of a new exotic animal – wild boar, is increasing at an alarming rate.

In this study, we will discuss the origin of the wild boars in Kashmir and explore the threat that they pose to the ecological balance of Dachigam National Park.

Introduction of Wild Boars in Dachigam National Park

Wild boars are not native to Kashmir as they were introduced to Kashmir by the Maharaja some 100 years back. The main reason for the introduction was hunting. However, after the Maharaja's rule ended and the hunting system was abolished, the exotic wild boars remained. With time, their population grew considerably. One of the primary reasons for this is the absence of a natural predator. The wild boar is a stout, heavy, and strong animal that even a leopard can't predate easily. As per the research, the favorable prey size for Leopards is around 25-30 kgs; however, wild boars normally weigh 60-100 kgs which far exceeds the normal prey size for a leopard. On the contrary, leopards favor dogs that are 15-30 kgs in size and come to cities and villages to prey on the same.

Moreover, these animals have been increasingly sighted in the valley in the past few years, causing concern among the locals and wildlife experts. The wild pigs have been sighted at many places in South and North Kashmir, including Uri, Lachipora, Limber, Sopore, Botanical Garden, Tulip Garden, Rafiabad, Rajwar, and Balpur. Earlier, they were not sighted commonly in the towns, but now everybody is informing the wildlife department about their presence.

Biology Of Wild Boar

Wild boars (*Sus scrofa*) and pigs (*Sus scrofa domesticus*) are both considered boars because they belong to the genus *Sus*. Although originally from Eurasia and North Africa, wild boars have since made their way to the New World (Australia, Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia). This makes them one of the most globally distributed animal species. As a result, the IUCN classifies wild boars as a species of "Least Concern."

Their appearance is known to most people because they are the ancestors of domestic pigs. They have huge ears, small eyes, and a long, blunt snout. Their hair is short and thick. Domestic pigs have less hair than their wild forebears. However, some wild subspecies have a mane-like characteristic on their necks and backs. The males have longer tusks than the females do, and they can be up to a foot long when they emerge from the sides of their mouths. They can reach a maximum length of 7 feet (200 cm) without their tail and a maximum weight of 220 pounds (100 kg). Adult males can reach a shoulder height of up to 47 inches (120 cm).

Social Structure, Mating, and Reproduction

Wild boars are nocturnal animals that spend the day dozing off in leaf and debris nests. Males are typically solitary and only interact with other males during the breeding season when they battle for the right to mate with the females in their area by courting and fighting over them. Sows, or female pigs, typically congregate with other sows and their young. "Sounders" may consist of anywhere from five to thirty people.

On average, a sow (female adult pig) will have 4-6 piglets after a pregnancy that lasts for 4 months. Approximately 2 months after birth, the piglets are ready to venture out of the den for the first time in search of food. After 7 months of being nursed and protected by the sow, they are ready to venture out on their own. While sows achieve reproductive age at 1 year, boars take around 2 years to attain sexual maturity.

Diet

Wild boars are omnivores. In the wild, they will move around in their environment for food. Moreover, they remove the roots of plants and small trees. Moreover, they may raid bird and reptile nests for eggs, and they will kill small mammals and insects they come across when hunting or browsing. Sometimes wild boar will even prey on the young of larger mammals like calves or lambs that are kept as livestock. In most cases, domestic boars will eat feed that has been developed for them. Ingredients include rice, corn, soybeans, cassava, and other grains, as well as vegetables and discarded alcohol still parts.

The Threat

Dachigam National Park is an ecologically sensitive area that is home to the only critically endangered red deer species-Hangul, in this part of the world. Due to habitat fragmentation and human interference, such as Bakerwal migration, the park is facing serious threats to its long-term sustainability. What has added to the problem is the growing population of Wild boars. The worst part, though, is that there has no official or scientific census on the population of wild boars in Dachigam National Park. The increasing sightings of boars in parks, gardens, paddy fields, etc., are adding to the nervousness of the people.

The boars are already causing huge destruction to Dachigam National Park by plowing the land and changing the structure of the soil. Moreover, the Hangul is very sensitive to any disturbances, so it

can get disturbed because of this animal.

As mentioned that they are omnivorous and can eat anything. So they are better adapted to the conditions than the elusive Hangul and can survive tough climates. They can even replace the park as a dominant species in the coming years.

Another issue is their fast reproduction rate. As mentioned earlier, a wild boar gives birth to 4-6 piglets after a short period of only 4 months, and a female boar can reach the reproductive age at only 1 year.

We hereby suggest a few measures that should be taken to control the population of wild boars.

Controlling the exotic wild boar species is not going to be an easy job. They are fast, strong, and strongly adapted to the environment. The first thing that needs to be done is conducting extensive scientific research on the number, population, feeding, and breeding of these wild boars in Dachigam National Park. Only after knowing the exact numbers can other strategies be implemented.

For instance, the wildlife department can use cages to capture these animals, especially in human-habituated areas. Second, with the proper use of scientific research, their breeding can be stopped. This is vital because wild boars are able to breed quickly within a short span of time.

Third, on the extreme side, their population can be regulated by shooting or poisoning them. Such things have been done in certain parts of Australia and New Zealand where local as well as official people have been granted the license to hunt them.

Researchers may need to take these steps to maintain the fragile ecosystem balance in Dachigam National Park

and other areas. This is because the boars are not restricted to Dachigam National Park only but can be found in many places throughout the Kashmir valley. The growing wild boar population can have dire consequences on the hangul population. So, all the stakeholders of this state need to come together to save this precious habitat.

Conclusion

The past is full of examples where human interference has caused ecological problems. The fragile Dachigam National Park is not an exception. A mistake made decades ago can have dire consequences for future generations. The authorities and researchers together need to pave a way to handle the growing population of wild boars in Kashmir. We can learn a lot from the Australians about how they have/are managing their ecosystems by using different mechanisms. Together with the people's support, the problem, our fragile National parks can be saved from human destruction. At the same time, the government must take some decisive steps and decisions to fight against this problem.

Although the J&K wildlife department is well aware of this menace, the need of the hour is to take this issue seriously. Their scientists should immediately start working on controlling the wild boar population. At the same time, they cannot do this without legal support from the JK UT government. Thus, government officials can implement the mentioned strategies and use their manpower to curb this menace on time. This is because we may see increased numbers in the future, which will make control very difficult.



Moreover, these animals have been increasingly sighted in the valley in the past few years, causing concern among the locals and wildlife experts. The wild pigs have been sighted at many places in South and North Kashmir, including Uri, Lachipora, Limber, Sopore, Botanical Garden, Tulip Garden, Rafiabad, Rajwar, and Balpur. Earlier, they were not sighted commonly in the towns, but now everybody is informing the wildlife department about their presence.

Use of technology and astronomical calculations for moon sightings: Accepted in Saudi, Malaysia and Indonesia, why not here?



The use of technology for moon sightings is widely accepted in Malaysia and Indonesia. The “Governmental Observatory of the Republic of Indonesia” is an organization that the Indonesian government set up to track and report the sighting of the new moon. The organisation employs telescopes and scientific computations to determine the crescent moon’s sighting.



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“It’s political, it’s always been. So rather than attributing it to matters of faith, one has to look at these fights among the clerics over the moon sightings as something concerning their own narrow political considerations, and also their convenience!”

Many may find this statement very disconcerting as it is targeted at the people who are somehow placed beyond the pale of any worldly criticism. Their white robes and brown cloaks seem to give them absolute immunity from even the very reasonable evaluations and assessments their claims and beliefs may OTHERWISE attract.

So, end the argument; leave it as it is. Or else, let’s see how the available scientific knowledge and technology could be harnessed to put an end to the controversies which primarily arise because in certain matters we conveniently turn our backs on what even rudimentary scientific knowledge has to offer.

Cut to the chaos on the night of March 22 this year. While people were waiting for the formal announcement on the commencement of the holy month of Ramzan, our own “grand mufti” Nasir-ul-Islam announced that the new moon was not sighted anywhere in Kashmir. He asked people to observe fasting from Friday, March 24, 2023. However, the Anjuman-e-Sharian Shian, another religious body, said it received confirmation of the moon sightings, and asked people to fast from Thursday, March 23, 2023.

Capping the matters came in the Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee in Pakistan, which late in the night of March 22 announced that they had got the requisite evidence of a moon sighting and so the fasting month of Ramzan was to start Thursday, March 23. Following this announcement, people in the Valley, in defiance of their “grand mufti”, headed to mosques and made announcements that Ramzan had begun, and arranged special

Ramzan prayers (Tarawih) on Thursday night itself.

Ideally, this should have put the matter to rest; but this is not how Nasir-ul-Islam wanted it to be. “I stand by my decision as no credible witness is on record from any territory in J&K (on moon sighting) and as such the holy month of Ramzan here will begin on Friday,” the “grand mufti” announced on Thursday night even as Tarawih prayers were going on across Kashmir, including in dozens of mosques in the immediate vicinity of his Soura residence.

Interestingly, a couple of days later, Islam conceded that Ramzan, as per his announcement, had started late by a day and that those who had followed his orders should observe a day of fasting (Qaza) after Eid in the month of Shawaal!

Now this is not the first time (nor last) that Kashmir has seen such confusion over the sighting of the crescent moon. Nor is Kashmir the only place that has seen contradictions and controversies over the issue. However, what is distinct here is that the abrasive and often antagonistic politics between India and Pakistan also get automatically drawn into it.

Now it cannot be mere coincidence that the people of Kashmir, almost always, tend to go with the announcements of Pakistan’s Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee over moon sightings instead of following India’s Hyderabad-based Markazi Ruet-e-Hilal Committee, or New Delhi’s Shahi Imam, or even Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband. This year too, while the fasting month of Ramzan started in Kashmir on March 23 (Thursday), in the rest of India, it started on March 24 (Friday).

Embarrassed by the controversy, BJP leader Darakshan Andrabi, who heads the J&K Waqf Board, said J&K would have its own Ruet-e-Hilal Committee in the future. “We will put an end to such chaos by next year. It is an era of technology, and everything is available, we will take measures to end such chaos by next Eid,” Andrabi said.

Now whether the Waqf Board follows up on her commitment over the issue or not remains to be seen; however, it goes without saying that matters as important as the calendar (Islamic lunar calendar in this case) cannot and should not be left to the discretion and decision of a few clerics, whose knowledge of the scientific phenomena and mathematical calculations is often depressingly very limited. One may appreciate their knowledge of the religious texts and their acumen to interpret them, and as such always turn to them in matters concerning the sacred text; but when it comes to anything scientific, there are obviously experts in this domain who could, and should be roped in.

It is time when we should seriously think of, and actually put to rest any controversies and confusions with regard to the sighting of the moon to decide on the complexion and character of various months of the lunar calendar followed by the Muslims for observance of religious rituals and festivities, such as commencement of the month-long fasting, the Ramzan and two Eids – Eid-ul-Fitr, the end of Ramzan festival and Eid-ul- Azha, the Eid following the annual Hajj, the pilgrimage in Mecca.

The case as of now is that determination of exact dates for each of these events has never been easy, or without controversy. This is why there has been an ongoing debate among Islamic scholars about the sighting or positioning of the new moon and its implications for the commencement of a major activity such as Ramzan and/or celebrations of two Eids.

Some scholars, using ‘positional astronomy’, rely on the ‘scientific method’ to determine the exact position of the new moon without physically sighting the same and yet there are many who rely on bare eyes to physically sight the new moon (‘observation method’) before commencing the fasting month or celebrating the Eid. From a broader Islamic juristic perspective, some believe it is not easy to draw a conclusion on this matter, so they say that the issue warrants thoughtful and constructive deliberations to resolve the controversy and

confusion once and for all.

According to Imam Bukhari, the author of the largest collection of authentic Sahi Hadith, or sayings of the Prophet Muhammad –PBUH), the Hadith concerning the subject says: “Do not begin the fast until you see the new moon and do not break the fast (at the end of Ramzan) until you see the new moon. If the new moon is obscured from you, then enumerate it (i.e. work out when it should be).’ {Al-Mutwatta, Al Bukhari 18.1.1}.”

The last sentence of this Hadith is significant in the sense that it insists if the new moon is not be sighted with bare eyes because of clouds, sandstorms, haze, or any other obstacles, the faithful should be ‘enumerating’ or ‘work(ing) out’ (i.e. calculating) the best and the most scientific way possible to determine the moon’s position. If for some reason it is still not possible to work it out, it is advisable to wait for an additional day before celebrating Eid and/or commencing the month of Ramzan. This is the most authentic and important Hadith that clearly advises how best to determine the new moon’s position/appearance.

In essence, the Hadith requires Muslims to ‘work out’ (or calculate) the time of the appearance of the new moon. That means, if we are sure enough that the new moon has already been born and has gained enough maturity, we may start fasting or celebrate Eid, whichever is the case.

Common sense has it that during the early days of Islam, there was no other way but to sight the new moon with bare eyes. As a result, if the moon could not be sighted with bare eyes on an overcast evening, they had to wait for an extra day to make sure that the new moon was already in the sky. Please note, on the 30th day, there is no requirement even to sight the new moon. That means, the emphasis is not on the mere sighting of the moon, but the confirmation of the moon being in the sky in a certain position (even if it is still hidden under the clouds)!

Today, with the help of science, it is possible to know the exact position and time of the appearance/sighting of the new moon long before the actual day of such sighting. Therefore, with the help of science, ‘working out’ (calculating) or determining the actual position of the new moon is possible without even looking at the sky which, in turn, could serve as the basis for starting fast or celebrating Eid. It does not contradict the above-mentioned Hadith or the instruction by the Prophet (PBUH).

Pertinently, the United Nations Headquarters in New York determines Eid days (both Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Azha) based on astronomical data and includes them in its official holiday calendar at the beginning of the year!

For sighting the new moon, nations like Malaysia, Indonesia, and Saudi Arabia have already embraced technology and astronomical calculations.

For the purpose of sighting the new moon, the International Astronomical Union (IAU) has established standardized procedures and standards. These standards are based on mathematical calculations and take into account both the observer’s location on Earth and how close the moon is to the sun. The United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia are two Muslim nations that have embraced these scientific techniques for moon sightings.

The use of technology for moon sightings is widely accepted in Malaysia and Indonesia. The “Governmental Observatory of the Republic of Indonesia” is an organization that the Indonesian government set up to track and report the sighting of the new moon. The organisation employs telescopes and scientific computations to determine the crescent moon’s sighting.

Similarly, the Department of Islamic Development (JAKIM) in Malaysia employs astronomical calculations and technology for determining the new moon’s sighting. JAKIM also works with ANGKASA, Malaysia’s national space agency, to use

technology to establish the new moon's appearance.

One member of Qada (scholar/justice department), one from KACST/Astronomer, one from Amarah (governing council of the city), and other local volunteers make up Saudi Arabia's numerous Hilal sighting committees. The committee determines the sighting of the crescent moon using sophisticated telescopes and astronomical calculations.

Science, it must be understood, is an aid and not an adversary to our religious belief system (with few exceptions). Science has allowed us to unlock and understand a lot of religious mysteries. Moreover, if we observe carefully, we will see that we rely heavily on science to perform many of our daily religious rituals. For example, we use watches to perform daily prayers and even to start and break the fast during the month of Ramzan. The use of high-powered binoculars and telescopes is fairly common among the followers of the 'observation method', who are, in essence, utilizing scientific means to maintain many of the Islamic rituals including the sighting of the new moon. Hence, science is already in use in many aspects of observance of our religious practices including observing the moon and celebrating other religious and cultural festivities.

But as we have seen, sometimes the religious leaders are adamant about the need to witness the new crescent with bare eyes. On the one hand, they advocate this old practice of moon sighting while on the other they adopt scientific calculations where they find it convenient (go to the statement at the beginning of this write-up).

For instance, as per the scriptures, the daily prayer timings were determined by the position of the sun and the length of shadows. The time of breaking and opening of the fast was also required to be determined by observing threads of light and darkness. But nowhere on the globe do we see these leaders observing shadows and light to ascertain prayer timings. Rather, they rely on watches and clocks created through science. They rely on the annual prayer timing calendar created by scientists by observing the movement of the sun over time. If such a calendar — Meekat-us-Salat – can be adopted by the religious clergy, why can't the same be done in the case of a lunar calendar?

Unfortunately, Muslim religious leaders have always been on the wrong side of history whenever it comes to the adoption of scientific inventions. Islamic civilization has seen catastrophic consequences of their opposition to the use of the printing press! Initially, the inventions like television and loudspeaker were also opposed by religious leaders, but today they have adopted them because they know that without the use of science and technology, they cannot even call faithful for prayers to the mosque (say Azan), not to speak of being able to arrange and manage the annual Hajj pilgrimage when some 4-5 million Muslims from across the world congregate in the holy cities of Mecca and Madinah (Saudi Arabia) to perform identical and simultaneous rituals.

The good thing about relying on science for sighting the crescent moon is that it would allow the global Islamic community to perform Eid and commence the fasting in a uniform, systematic, timely, and uncontroversial manner. It will also eliminate within a country any differences and/or confusions among the Muslims in choosing the day to commence fasting or celebrate Eid, especially in countries where Muslims are a minority and where confusion with moon sighting prevent the Muslims to observe their most important ritual such as Ramzan and celebrate Eids together on the same day.

Bangladesh, for instance, has made a beginning; they have vested the responsibility of announcing the moon sighting with the National Moon Sighting Committee, headed by the minister in charge of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The 18-member committee, however, among others also has the chairman of Bangladesh Space Research and Remote Sensing Institute, and

the director of Bangladesh Meteorological Department as its members. The committee makes use of scientific equipment, including an optical theodolite device, and a high-powered telescope to watch and locate the new moon. The final decision of moon sighting, however, is still based on the 'observation method'.

In the present era of scientific and technological advancement, those who are still avoiding the use of scientific knowledge for making an Islamic calendar and getting over the feuds and having to wait till midnight for a confirmation of a moon sighting, are doing so for their own convenience and vested interests, including their unwillingness to let go of the leverage they have in matters of faith, and which certainly is the source of great political and economic power they enjoy.

However, it goes without saying, they are doing no good to anyone. Today, people, including Muslims have expertise and access to technology to understand the calculations of when and where the sighting occurs. Recorded data shows how the science of moon sightings is compared with the actual observations. The results show that calculations of sightings and observations have matched every month since 1993. Calculations of moon sightings and actual sightings are not two different things for an Islamic calendar as it has been found that they both match.

With today's technology, calculations are far more accurate than the claims of sightings. Experience suggests that people often mistake other objects for the crescent moon. Calculations for sighting are surety (Haqqul-Yaqeen), while claims of sighting may be suspicion (Zann) or mistake!

Allah has given us knowledge about the motions of the earth and moon, and an Islamic calendar based on calculations that has proven to match with actual sighting would enable us to plan ahead of time, while actual sighting will prove to be confirmatory. This only meets the intent of the Qur'an and Sunnah and its benefits greatly surpass the consequences faced by false claims of sighting and waiting for a decision until midnight.

So let Jammu and Kashmir take a lead in initiating this scientific way of ascertaining the position and size of the new moon. The Government of India could initiate this project from its only Muslim-majority area of the country as a gift to the entire Muslim population in India and elsewhere. Mind it, this won't cost much in terms of money, but its political dividends by way of goodwill make it a highly worthwhile investment.

Tailpiece: Some of you may have noticed in the text above that we have placed "grand mufti" within a pair of quotes (commas). Well, with due respect to Nasir-ul-Islam as a person, we are not very comfortable with the term Grand Mufti, and there are reasons for it. If his father, the late Mufti Bashir-ud-din could so easily pass on this heritage to his son and make him the "grand mufti" of Kashmir (some claim the entire J&K), then by the same token, every judge in any and every court of the country, or at least J&K, must also be given the privilege of appointing their sons and daughters as their successors in the judicial positions and institutions headed by them. Remember the office of the Mufti is a quasi-judicial forum in Muslim societies!

We are also not sure if there is anything like a "grand mufti" elsewhere in other Islamic or Muslim countries in West Asia (say Saudi Arabia or Iran), Africa (say Egypt), or even South East Asia (say Indonesia or Malaysia)!

We are also not sure if in J&K itself, this institution of the "grand mufti" has been created by an act of legislation. If yes, then only the "grand mufti" has some legal sanctity and relevance; otherwise, it is no more (or less) important than countless other similar groups which despite existing on the ground have no legal existence; and hence are redundant. By the way, even if there was a legal sanction to it previously, what is the case now — after the reorganization of Jammu and Kashmir in August 2019?

Women in Leadership Roles: An Epic Underrepresentation



NEHA AGGARWAL

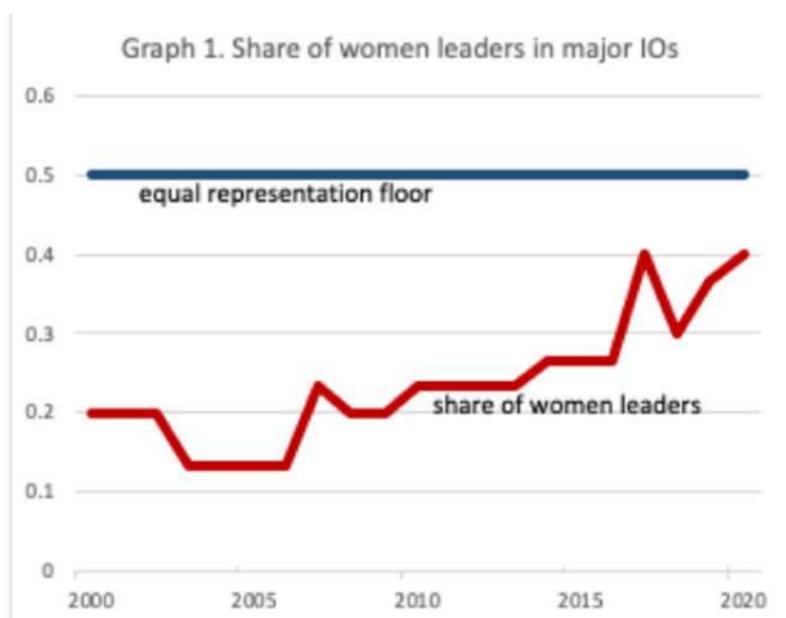
For decades, women have been fighting for equal representation and opportunities in leadership positions, and the battle continues to this day. Women’s equal participation and leadership in political and public life is critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. The historical context of women in leadership is a complex and multifaceted topic that spans centuries of human civilization.

While women have played leadership roles throughout history, their access to formal leadership positions has been limited by social, cultural, and legal barriers. For example, in ancient societies, women were often relegated to the domestic sphere and excluded from political and military leadership roles. In more recent history, the women’s suffrage movement fought for the right to vote and to participate in government, paving the way for women to hold public office.

From Malala Yousafzai, the young Pakistani activist who fights for women’s education, to Angela Merkel, the former Chancellor of Germany who led her country through major crises, women continue to prove their worth as effective leaders. However, despite significant strides made toward gender equality in various spheres, the representation of women in leadership roles in international organizations has remained disappointingly low.

This article is an attempt to understand the barriers to women’s leadership and explore the ways to overcome these barriers.

A Statistical Analysis



Women remain underrepresented at all levels of decision-making globally, and political gender balance is still a long way off. A research study that examined the historical leadership structure of 30 significant international organizations—covering the majority of UN organizations and specialized agencies since their establishment revealed that, out of 291 leaders, there have only been 33 women in positions of high leadership overall. In addition, half of the sample—15 organizations—have never had a female head. The share of women leaders in international organizations is shown in the graph below.

Another research by the UN also paints a similarly bleak picture. Only 34 women are Heads of State or Government, the research claims. At the current pace, it will take another 130 years to achieve gender equality in the highest levels of authority. As of January 1, 2023, women make up 22.8% of Cabinet members who are ministers or are in charge of a major policy area, according to newly collated data by UN Women. There are only 13 nations where women make up 50% or more of cabinet ministers overseeing major policy areas. The number of women representatives in national parliaments is also minuscule. Only six nations—Rwanda (61%), Cuba (53%), Nicaragua (52%), Mexico (50%) New Zealand (50%), and the United Arab Emirates (50%)—have 50 percent or more women serving in single or lower houses of parliament. Gender parity in national legislative bodies won’t be realised until 2063 at the current rate of development. In terms of the proportion of women in leadership positions, India comes in fifth last in Grant Thornton’s Women in Business: Beyond Policy to Progress study.

Barriers to Women’s Leadership

Part of the reason why there are fewer women in leadership roles is fewer female nominees in the initial candidate pools. Few nominations are the result of persistent impediments such as organizational bias, a lack of assertiveness, and poor networking. Their progress is frequently slowed down and prevented by sexual harassment, unfair working conditions, and more subdued types of sexism. Deeply ingrained attitudes and biases against women also prevent women from getting their deserved respect and finding opportunities for advancement. Women become less forceful in their pursuit of promotions because they fear encountering gender bias and stereotyping. Their ascent to higher positions of leadership is slowed by their reluctance to self-advocate for a well-deserved pay raise or promotion. Unfortunately, a lifetime of socialization that has drilled perfectionist behavior into women might also make them more risk-averse and less driven to advance. Girls are often taught to act cautiously by society, in contrast to boys, who



adults typically train to take chances and act fearlessly.

Structures that prevent women from reaching the top rungs of leadership positions are also a product of historical sexism and gender bias. Professional women are too frequently excluded from social events, both official and casual, not because they wouldn't participate but because men don't extend invitations to them. Women consequently lose out on chances to develop the rapport and connections necessary for career growth. Access to established networks, where professional males usually participate, is frequently constrained for women. This makes women feel alienated and makes it difficult for them to interact, fit in, and establish themselves as equals with their male coworkers and superiors. In the past, men have dominated the workforce, which has led to fewer developed networks of female leaders. These networks are crucial for mentoring and supporting burgeoning female talent.

Professional women frequently struggle to strike a balance between work and family. Their capacity to pursue leadership roles may be constrained by their obligations to their families. That's because, despite working full-time jobs, they frequently shoulder the majority of home duties, such as looking after young children or elderly relatives.

Quintessential benefits of women's leadership

From promoting gender equality and social justice to fostering greater inclusivity and diversity in decision-making, the benefits of female leadership are vast and undeniable. Research has consistently shown that higher numbers of women in parliament generally contribute to stronger attention to women's issues. The International Parliamentary Union conducted research in 2014 that demonstrated how having more women in elected positions helped bring up issues like violence against women and women's health. Other studies also showed how having more women in elected positions had a positive impact on matters pertaining to women's employment, financial security, and legal equality. The same study concluded that more women's participation in politics inspires them to get in touch with their elected officials and be more active as citizens.

Gender equality and true democracy are fundamentally dependent on women's political engagement. It makes it easier for women to participate directly in public decision-making and provides a way to ensure that women are held more accountable. Even though it is generally not useful to generalise women's experiences as in any way single, it is acceptable to acknowledge that women have a different set of experiences than males, and these voices are necessary within effective political representation for democracy to work efficiently in everyone's best interests. According

to UN Women, women's participation has a beneficial effect on decision-making. Better childcare in Norway and more drinking water projects in India are just two examples where higher levels of female representation were found to be associated with better outcomes.

Way forward

Since gender-based segregation in decision-making is closely linked to the general status of women and men in employment and society as well as the roles of women and men in relation to family responsibilities, a holistic, all-encompassing approach is necessary to specifically address the causes of gender-based stereotyping. All spheres of life—education, government, civil society, business, and labour unions—must work to advance gender equality.

At the national level, legal frameworks and regulatory mechanisms are required to end sex discrimination. Where these rules and laws exist, they must be strictly enforced. Positive role models of women as leaders and decision-makers can be promoted through affirmative action programmes and awareness-raising efforts, which can break down cultural preconceptions. Organizations should strengthen the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination in hiring, training, and promotion at the institutional level. Human resources departments in the public and private sectors must make sure that women have clear, formal career development pathways from entry-level roles to senior leadership positions in order to entice prospective women leaders. They should establish equal opportunity measures and pay policies, offer opportunities for women to take on management roles, provide mentorship and leadership training opportunities that are ongoing, encourage diversity in fields that are traditionally dominated by men, and stop sexual harassment in the workplace.

Conclusion

The underrepresentation of women in leadership roles is a significant issue that continues to persist in many industries and organizations around the world. Despite progress made in recent years, women still face a range of obstacles and biases that prevent them from reaching the top of their professions. Cultural and social norms prevent women from realizing their full economic potential, and safety concerns restrict their physical and economic mobility. Maintaining a work-life balance, working under pressure, and exclusion from informal communication are other obstacles to women's leadership.

It is clear that more needs to be done to address these issues and promote greater gender equality in leadership positions. This may involve everything from changing hiring and promotion practices to providing more support and mentorship to women in leadership roles, to fostering a more inclusive and equitable workplace culture. Ultimately, creating more opportunities for women to succeed in leadership roles will not only benefit individual women but also their organizations and society as a whole. By harnessing the diverse perspectives, experiences, and skills of women leaders, we can drive innovation, improve decision-making, and create more inclusive and equitable workplaces and communities for everyone.

Now that the world's first cloned Pashmina goat is no more, scientists in Kashmir should explore animal cloning more seriously than ever



PARVAIZ YOUSUF

Noori, the world's first cloned Pashmina goat, died in Kashmir in March 2023. Noori was cloned in March 2012 by a team of scientists at the Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology's (SKUAST) Kashmir, using advanced cloning technology.

Cloning Noori was a big deal because Pashmina goats are hard to breed and hard to find. The Pashmina goat is indigenous to the region, and its fine, soft wool is used to make Pashmina shawls, scarves, and other high-end items. The cloning process involved taking DNA from a Pashmina goat and implanting it into the egg of another

goat. The fertilized egg was then implanted into the uterus of a third goat, which carried the cloned embryo to term. This means that Noori had three mothers and no father, technically. Noori was the first successful clone of female Pashmina goats, and her birth was a significant milestone in the field of biotechnology. Noori died at the age of 11 years at SKUAST Kashmir, which is a good age for any wild goat to live. Let's try to understand what cloning is, why cloning Noori was important, and what can be done next.

Understanding The Concept Of Cloning

Cloning is a method for producing an organism that is an exact genetic copy of another living being. Goats, like other mammals, can be cloned through a technique called somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT).

Somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT) is the process of transferring the nucleus of a non-reproductive cell from the cloned animal into an egg cell. The resulting embryo is transported to the uterus of a surrogate mother, where it is implanted and carried up to birth.

In the year 2000, a group of American scientists announced that they had successfully cloned a goat. Since then, cloning has been employed in goats for several applications, such as the duplication of valuable breeding animals and the creation of transgenic goats that can generate therapeutic proteins in their milk.

The preservation of desirable genetic features, the quick multiplication of superior breeding animals, and the creation of valuable products like milk, meat, and pharmaceuticals are just a few of the potential benefits of cloning in animal breeding and biotechnology.

The ability to keep key genetic features intact is a major benefit of cloning. Cloning can be used to make several copies of an animal with desirable properties, such as a goat with a high milk yield or resistance to disease, ensuring that these characteristics would be passed on to future generations. This is especially helpful in breeds that are in danger of extinction or that are extremely rare.

Similarly, the ability to quickly replicate elite breeding stock is another benefit of cloning. The overall quality of the herd or flock can be improved through the use of cloned animals since breeders can quickly and efficiently generate huge numbers of animals with desirable qualities. This can be especially helpful in the agricultural sector, where it can aid in the raising of livestock for food.

Moreover, cloning has been utilized in biotechnology to create valuable items like medications and their more obvious practical applications. Milk from cloned transgenic goats, for instance, includes therapeutic proteins that can be utilized to treat a wide range of diseases.

However, cloning raises serious moral and practical concerns. The safety of surrogate mothers is a primary concern for researchers. To complete a cloned pregnancy via SCNT, an egg is fertilized in vitro and then put into the uterus of a surrogate mother. Both the surrogate mother and the child may be at risk from this treatment's invasive and potentially dangerous nature.

Pashmina Goats

Pashmina goats, also known as Changthangi goats, are a breed of goat that is native to the Himalayan region of India, Nepal, and Pakistan. Their extremely fine and warm wool is used to make the Pashmina shawls and scarves that are valued internationally.

Pashmina Goats' breed ranges in size from 35 to 65 kilograms (75 to 143 pounds). They are short-legged, stocky, and have round faces and little ears. Their wool is highly sought after because of its fineness (a diameter of 12-16 microns).

Nomadic herders, who follow seasonal pastures, are the ones farming the majority of these goats. Their wool is well suited to keeping people warm because they are kept in hard and frigid settings where temperatures drop well below freezing.

Shearing Pashmina goats is a laborious and time-consuming procedure. It is necessary to shear goats once a year, in the spring, when they have shed their winter coats. Carefully detaching the fine undercoat from the coarse outer hairs, the herders comb the wool from the goats by hand.

In this regard, the successful cloning of Noori

was celebrated as a major step toward saving other endangered species. Thus, new possibilities for saving rare and endangered species were made possible by the successful cloning of the Pashmina goat.

Pashmina Goats And Shawl Industry

Kashmir is home to a thriving industry that has been producing luxurious Pashmina shawls for decades. The Pashmina goat, whose wool is used to make these shawls, is endemic to the Himalayan region. One of the most expensive and coveted fashion accessories is a Pashmina shawl from Kashmir because of its reputation for softness, warmth, and elegance.

The Pashmina shawl industry in Kashmir has been struggling in recent years, but there is still a lot of room for expansion. For many decades, the sector has been a major source of income and employment for thousands of locals.

The exceptional quality and distinctive texture of Pashmina wool are major contributors to the shawls' high price. These shawls are made from the Pashmina goat, whose fibers are finer and softer. Pashmina shawls are made from extremely long-lasting wool and, with careful care, can be passed down through the generations.

A number of factors, including the rise of synthetic textiles, shifts in consumer taste, and regional political turmoil, have combined to make recent years difficult for the sector. Despite these difficulties, the Pashmina shawl business in Kashmir has tremendous untapped potential.

There is a significant market for Kashmiri Pashmina shawls outside of India. A hand-woven shawl can cost anything from Rs 5,000 to Rs 6,000 and up to millions of rupees. As per the official data, the value of Kashmiri shawl exports in the year 2020–21 was Rs 172.53 crore, which is huge.

World's First Cloned Pashmina Goat has left behind a legacy of animal cloning advancements for scientists in Kashmir to explore and build upon for many years to come

When compared to the rest of the world, the idea of cloning is relatively novel in the Kashmir valley. The SKUAST researchers had pursued cloning to protect this threatened breed. Is that it, though? The question is, what should the researchers in Kashmir do next? Did duplicating the Pashmina goat help the survival of this "Near Threatened" goat?

Well! There may not have been many monetary benefits to society at large. However, this ground-breaking study demonstrated that Kashmir and its scientists have the potential to produce cutting-edge research. The scientists in Kashmir shouldn't stop there; they should also work on cloning more Pashmina goats so that local farmers can use them. In addition to bolstering their economy, this has the potential to rejuvenate Kashmir's dyeing textile industry. Here is more that can be done.

Researchers should now focus on replicating other endangered species native to the area. Consider the case of the UT animal of J&K, the critically endangered animal. As only about 250 Hangul remain in the wild, scientists in Kashmir should contribute to their protection. With considerable effort, this can be done

with the method of cloning. Even storage of the DNA from this animal may assist. In any event, the DNA or other stored materials, such as ovum or sperm, can be used to save Kashmir's pride- the Hangul if it becomes extinct.

In addition, cloning some pet animals is a viable choice. For instance, we can meet all of our milk demands by cloning high-yielding cows. Scientists in Kashmir should enter the race to do this on a large scale, as they see it being done in China.

Researchers can also use cloning as a novel conservation method. For example, cloning Musk deer would allow scientists to expand the animal population, decreasing the chances of extinction. This way, scientists can use novel mechanisms of conservation in addition to the traditional methods being used. Similarly, there are a total of 54 threatened bird species in Jammu & Kashmir, including Ladakh, which may be conserved with the same technology.

The food supply is an issue all over the globe, but cloning technology has the potential to be especially helpful in Kashmir. Scientists can increase the healthiness of frequently eaten animals by cloning them. For instance, the increasing demand for high-quality protein in many parts of the world can be met by cloning animals that produce meat with a higher protein content or with more beneficial fats.

Cloned animals produce more nutritious primary goods like meat and secondary products like milk. Researchers can aid the health of people who consume dairy products by cloning animals that produce milk with increased amounts of important nutrients like calcium, vitamin D, and omega-3 fatty acids. Those who don't have easy access to these minerals from other food sources may benefit the most from this.

In addition, Kashmiri researchers can use cloning to help local farmers with some of their problems. Farmers can increase their output and lessen their losses from disease outbreaks and extreme weather conditions if they clone animals that are more resistant to those things. This has the potential to improve farmers' incomes and expand the region's food supply.

Conclusion

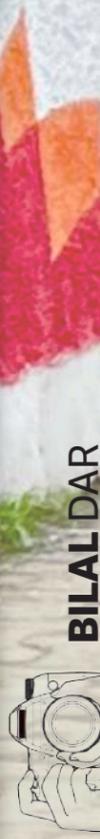
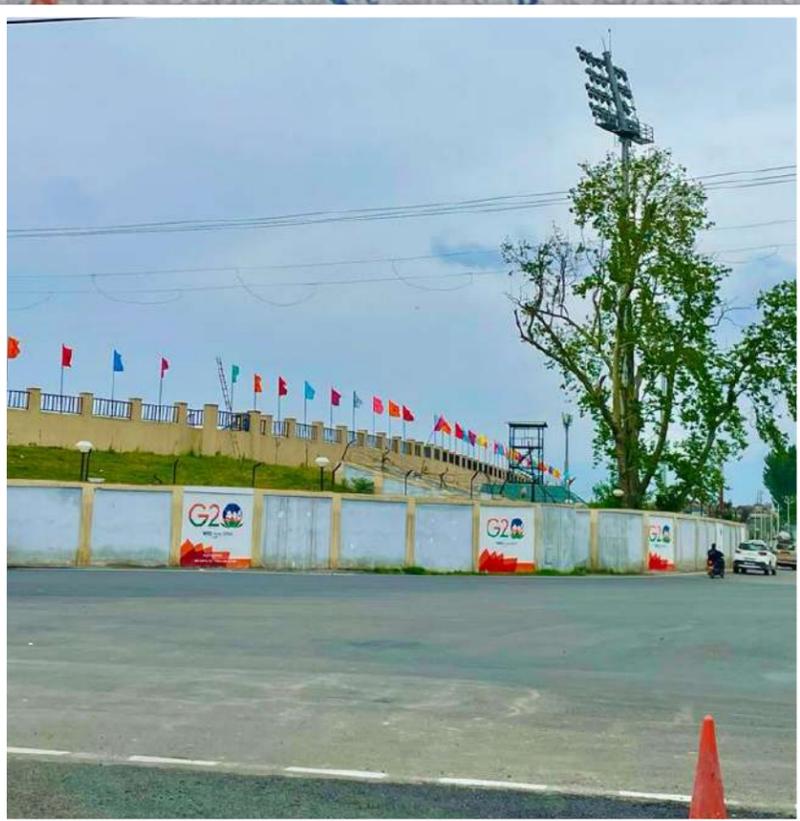
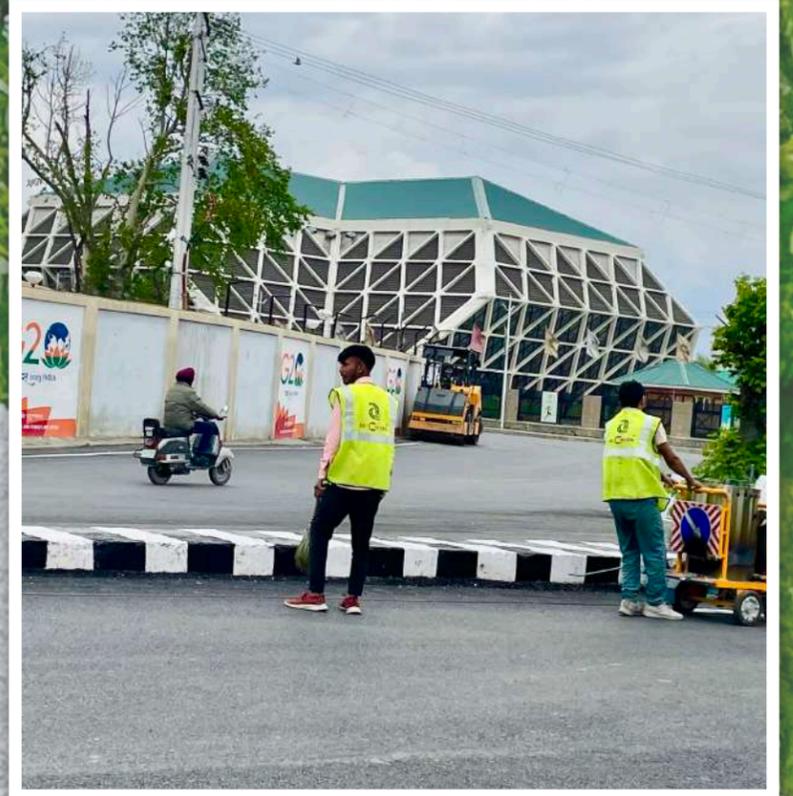
The cloning of the Pashmina goat in Kashmir was certainly a global scientific breakthrough. However, this technology could be used for more than just saving species that are in danger of going extinct. Using cloning technology to make molecular products has the ability to change the way medicine is done. For example, scientists can use cloning to make a lot of human insulin, which can help people with diabetes control their disease. Cloning can also be used to make antibodies and other proteins that can be used to treat a wide range of illnesses.

But it is very important to make sure that cloning is done in a moral & ethical way. To ensure this, scientists have come up with strict processes and rules. These rules are meant to protect the health and safety of animals and people in cloning experiments and stop anyone from misusing this technology.

In the end, Kashmiri experts shouldn't see the death of the cloned Pashmina goat as a setback but rather as a new beginning. The fact that this species was cloned in Kashmir and lived for 11 years shows that this technology has the potential to help both animals and humans alike. By improving and refining cloning methods, we can find new ways to improve the quality of life for all living things on our planet while ensuring that cloning is done in a responsible and ethical way.



SRINAGAR GEARS UP TO HOST 3RD TOURISM WORKING GROUP MEETING



BILAL DAR

