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

# Inksight

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# Cabinet approves the Investment Proposal of Rs. 5281.94 crore for 850 MW Ratle Hydro Power Project

New Delhi: The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, has given its approval for the investment of Rs.5281.94 crore for the 850 MW Ratle Hydro Electric (HE) Project located on river Chenab, in the Kishtwar district of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, by a new Joint Venture Company (JVC) to be incorporated between National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) and Jammu & Kashmir State Power Development Corporation Ltd (JKSPDC) with equity contribution of 51% and 49% respectively.

## Salient Features

The Government of India is also supporting the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir by providing a grant of Rs. 776.44 crores for Equity contribution of JKSPDC in the JVC to be set up for construction of Ratle HE Project (850 MW). NHPC shall invest its equity Rs.808.14 crore from its internal resources. The Ratle Hydro Electric Project shall be commissioned within 60 months. The Power generated from the Project will help in providing balancing of the Grid and will improve the power supply position.

## Implementation Strategy

The Government of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, to make the Project viable, will extend exemption from levy of Water Usage Charges for 10 years after commissioning of the project, reimbursement of State's share of GST (i.e. SGST) and waiver of free power to the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir in a decremental manner, i.e., the free power to the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir would be 1% in the 1st year after commissioning of the Project and rising @1% per year to 12% in the 12th year.

## Objectives

The construction activities of the Project will result in di-



the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir will benefit by getting free power worth Rs. 5289 crore and through the levy of Water Usage Charges worth Rs.9581 crore from the Ratle Hydro Electric Project, during a project life cycle of 40 years...

rect and indirect employment to around 4000 persons and will contribute to the overall socio-economic development of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Further, the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir will benefit by getting free power worth Rs. 5289 crore and through the levy of Water Usage Charges worth Rs.9581 crore from the Ratle Hydro Electric Project, during a project life cycle of 40 years.



# 24.82 crore Indians escape 'Multidimensional Poverty' in last 9 years



New Delhi: 24.82 crore people escaped multidimensional poverty in the last nine years. Findings of NITI Aayog's Discussion Paper 'Multidimensional Poverty in India since 2005-06' give credit for this remarkable achievement to significant initiatives of the government to address all dimensions of poverty between 2013-14 to 2022-23.

The discussion paper was released today by Prof Ramesh Chand, Member, NITI Aayog in the presence of B. V. R. Subrahmanyam, CEO of NITI Aayog. Oxford Policy and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have provided technical inputs for this paper.

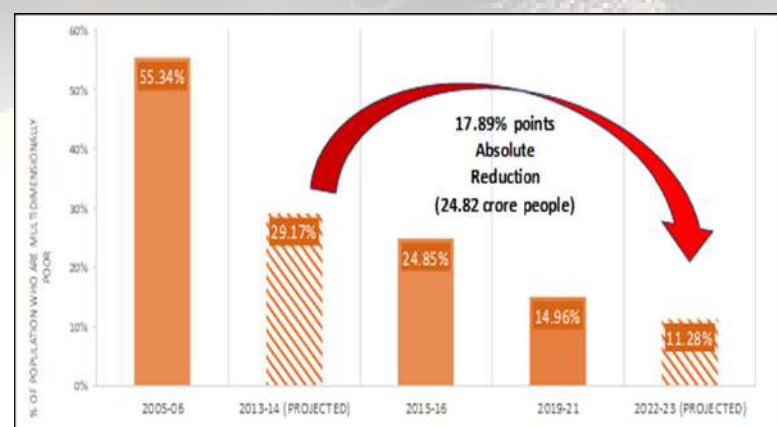
The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) is a globally recognized comprehensive measure that captures poverty in multiple dimensions beyond monetary aspects. MPI's global methodology is based on the robust Alkire and Foster (AF) method that identifies people as poor based on a universally acknowledged metric designed to assess acute poverty, providing a complementary perspective to conventional monetary poverty measures.

According to the Discussion Paper, India has registered a significant decline in multidimensional poverty in India from 29.17% in 2013-14 to 11.28% in 2022-23 i.e. a reduction of 17.89 percentage points. Uttar Pradesh registered the largest decline in the number of poor with 5.94 crore people escaping multidimensional poverty during the last nine years followed by Bihar at 3.77 crore, Madhya Pradesh at 2.30 crore and Rajasthan at 1.87 crore.

The paper also shows that the pace of decline in poverty headcount ratio using the exponential method was much faster between 2015-16 to 2019-21 (10.66% annual rate of decline) compared to the period 2005-06 to 2015-16 (7.69% annual rate of decline). All 12 indicators of MPI have recorded significant improvement during the entire study period. To assess the poverty levels in the year 2013-14 against the current scenario (i.e. for the year 2022-23), projected estimates have been used due to data limitations for these specific periods.

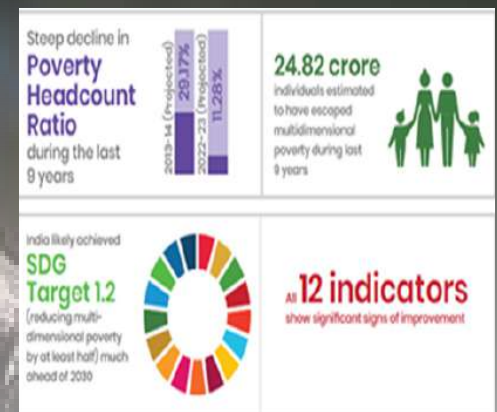
Significant initiatives covering all dimensions of poverty have led to 24.82 crore individuals escaping multidimensional poverty in the last 9 years. As a result, India is likely to achieve its SDG target of halving multidimensional poverty well before 2030. The Government's persistent dedication and resolute commitment to en-

hancing the lives of the most vulnerable and deprived have been instrumental in this accomplishment.



The Government of India has made remarkable progress in improving the lives of people, aiming to reduce poverty in all dimensions. Noteworthy initiatives like Poshan Abhiyan and Anemia Mukta Bharat have significantly enhanced access to healthcare facilities, leading to a substantial decrease in deprivation. Operating one of the world's largest food security programs, the Targeted Public Distribution System under the National Food Security Act covers 81.35 crore beneficiaries, providing food grains to rural and urban populations. Recent decisions, such as extending free food grain distribution under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana for another five years, exemplify the Government's commitment. Various programs addressing maternal health, clean cooking fuel distribution through Ujjwala Yojana, improved electricity coverage via Saubhagya, and transformative campaigns like Swachh Bharat Mission and Jal Jeevan Mission have collectively elevated living conditions and overall well-being of people. Additionally, flagship programs like Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana and PM Awas Yojana have played pivotal roles in financial inclusion and providing safe housing for the underprivileged.

While the performance of States varies, some States that traditionally have high poverty have made remarkable progress in helping people escape poverty, thus reducing inter-state disparities in multidimensional poverty. With this, the fundamental problems in accessing basic services are getting resolved fast so that the country can look towards becoming a developed nation i.e. Viksit Bharat @2047.



# Jal Jeevan Mission provides tap water connections to 14 crore (72.71%) rural households

- Increases rural tap connection coverage from 3 crore to 14 crore in just four years
- Over 2 lakh villages, 161 districts are now 'Har Ghar Jal'

New Delhi: Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) today crossed a momentous milestone of providing tap water connections to 14 Crore (72.71%) rural households.

Launched by Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi on 15th August 2019, the flagship initiative of the Government of India has demonstrated unparalleled speed and scale, increasing rural tap connection coverage from 3 Crore to an astounding 14 Crore in just four years. This significant achievement marks a paradigm shift in rural development, emphasizing the Mission's commitment to ensuring water quality, empowering communities, and promoting sustainable practices.

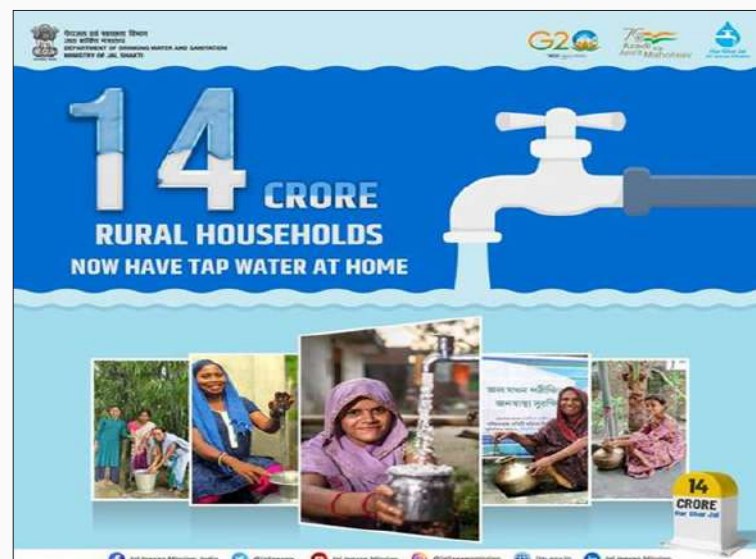
Working in collaboration with States/ UTs and various development partners, JJM has achieved several milestones. As of today, six states, namely Goa, Telangana, Haryana, Gujarat, Punjab, and Himachal Pradesh and three Union Territories of Puducherry, D&D and D&NH, and A&N Islands have achieved 100% coverage. Mizoram at 98.68%, Arunachal Pradesh at 98.48% and Bihar at 96.42% are on track to achieving saturation soon.

The heart of this transformation lies in the combined efforts of the Union and State governments, along with the active participation of development partners. Every second witnesses the installation of a tap water connection, leading to a paradigm shift in the rural landscape. More than 2 lakh villages and 161 districts are now 'Har Ghar Jal'.

By implementing water purification and treatment methods, JJM has ensured that the water reaching households meets the standards, significantly reducing waterborne diseases and improving overall health in rural communities.

In addition to household connections, the Mission has ensured tap water supply in 9.24 lakh (90.65%) schools and 9.57 lakh (86.63%) Anganwadi centres nationwide. In the 112 aspirational districts, tap water access has surged from 21.41 lakh (7.86%) households at the time of launch to 1.96 Crore (72.08%) households today.

The 'Har Ghar Jal' initiative is bringing substantial socio-economic benefits, liberating the rural



population, particularly women and young girls, from the arduous task of fetching water daily. The time saved is now redirected towards income-generating activities, skill development, and supporting children's education.

JJM's sustainable model aims to ensure the longevity of the infrastructure and promotes community-led development. Over 5.29 lakh Village Water & Sanitation Committees (VWSC)/ Pani Samitis have been constituted, along with the preparation of 5.17 lakh Village Action Plans (VAPs) focusing on drinking water source management, greywater treatment, and regular O&M of in-village water supply systems. More than 23.55 lakh women have been trained for testing water samples using Field Testing Kit (FTK) to ensure quality. Rigorous testing of water samples from source and delivery points is conducted regularly. Today, safe drinking water is available in all Arsenic and Fluoride-affected habitations.

Guided by the principle of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas aur Sabka Prayas', Jal Jeevan Mission is steadfastly moving towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6 – providing safe and affordable water to all. The mission's commitment to delivering safe water through taps to all households, schools, Anganwadis, and public institutions in rural areas perfectly aligns with the objectives of Viksit Bharat.



7th Edition of “Pariksha Pe Charcha”

# PM MODI ENGAGES WITH STUDENTS, ADDRESSES EXAM STRESS, PEER PRESSURE, AND TECHNOLOGY INTRUSION



New Delhi: The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi interacted with students, teachers and parents at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi today during the 7th edition of Pariksha Pe Charcha (PPC). He also took a walkthrough of the art and crafts exhibition showcased on the occasion.

PPC is a movement driven by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's efforts to bring together students, parents, teachers and society to foster an environment where each child's unique individuality is celebrated, encouraged and allowed to express itself fully.

Addressing the gathering of students, teachers and parents, the Prime Minister mentioned the creations by the students in the exhibition where they have expressed aspirations and concepts like New National Education Policy in various shapes. He said these exhibits reflect what the new generations think about various topics and what solutions they have for these issues.

Starting his interaction, the Prime Minister explained the importance of the venue, i.e. Bharat Mandapam to the students and told them about the G20 summit where all the major leaders of the world assembled and discussed the future of the world.

## External pressure and stress

Dania Shabu from a private CBSE school in Oman and Md. Arsh from Govt. Sarvodaya Bal Vidyalaya, Burari in Delhi raised the issue of addressing external

factors such as cultural and societal expectations contributing to added pressure on students. The Prime Minister noted that questions regarding cultural and societal expectations have always come up in PPC, even though it is the 7th edition. He highlighted the role of teachers in mitigating the impact of added pressure from external factors upon students and also pointed out that parents have experienced this from time to time. He suggested making oneself capable of handling pressure and preparing for it as a part of life. The Prime Minister urged the students to prepare themselves mentally by giving the example of travelling from one extreme climate condition to the other where the mind already prepares to face extreme weather conditions. He also suggested assessing stress levels and moving forward by gradually incrementing it so that the student's ability is not hampered by it. Shri Modi urged the students, families and teachers to collectively address the issue of external stress while evolving the process rather than implementing a systematic theory. He also suggested that families of students should discuss different ways that work for each of them.

## Peer pressure and competition among friends

Addressing the issue of peer pressure and competition among friends raised by Bhagya Laxmi





In his personal life too he has maintained a system of going into deep sleep within 30 seconds of going to bed. “Awake fully when awake and sound sleep while asleep, is a balance that can be achieved..

from Govt Demonstration Multipurpose School in Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Drashti Chauhan from JNV Panchmahal in Gujarat and Swathi Dileep from Kendriya Vidyalaya, Calicut, Kerala, the Prime Minister highlighted the importance of competition however, he emphasized that competition should be healthy. He pointed out that often the seeds of unhealthy competition are planted in the family situations leading to perverse competition among the siblings. PM Modi asked the parents to avoid comparison among the children. The Prime Minister gave an example of a video where children prioritized helping each other while competing in a healthy manner. He said that doing well in exams is not a zero-sum game and competition is with oneself as good performance by a friend does not restrict the field to do well. This tendency, said the Prime Minister, may give rise to a tendency to befriend those who will not be an inspiring company. He also asked the parents not to compare their children with other children. He also asked them not to make the achievement of their children their visiting card. PM Modi asked students to rejoice in the success of their friends.” Friendship is not a transactional emotion, the Prime Minister said.

### Role of teachers in motivating students

Throwing light on the role of teachers in motivating students, the Prime Minister replied to questions by Shri Kondakanchi Sampatha Rao, a Music teacher from ZP High School, Upparapalli, Andhra Pradesh, and Bunt Medhi, a teacher from Sivasagar Assam. The Prime Minister underlined that music has the capability to relieve the stress of students who not only belong to one class but the entire school. Shri Modi emphasized gradually expanding the student-teacher association right from the first day of class to the time of the exam and said that it would completely eliminate stress during exams. He also urged the teachers to become more accessible to students rather than associating with them on the basis of subjects taught. Giving the example of doctors who have a personal connection with their patients, the Prime Minister said that such a bond acts as half the cure. He also suggested developing a personal connection with the families and appreciating the students for their achievements before them. “Teachers are not in a job role but they shoulder the responsibility

of grooming the lives of students”, PM Modi added.

### Dealing with exam stress

Adrita Chakraborti of Pranavanda Bidya Mandir, West Tripura, Shaikh Taifur Rehman, a student of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Bastar, Chhattisgarh and students from Adarsh Vidyalaya, Cuttack, Odisha, Rajyalaxmi Acharya asked the Prime Minister about dealing with exam stress. The Prime Minister emphasized the need to avoid mistakes due to over enthusiasm of the parents or over sincerity of the students. He asked the parents not to over-hype the exam day by new clothes, rituals or stationery. He also asked the students not to keep preparing until the last moment and approach exams with a relaxed mindset and to avoid any external destruction that can lead to unwanted tension. The Prime Minister advised them to read the question paper and plan with time allocation to avoid panic at the last moment. The Prime Minister reminded the students that most of the exams are still written and the habit of writing is declining due to computers and phones. He asked them to stay in the habit of writing. He asked them to devote 50 percent of their reading/study time to writing. He said only when you write something you truly understand that. He asked them not to be panicked by the speed of the other students.

### Maintaining healthy lifestyle

Raising the issue of striking a balance between exam preparation and maintaining a healthy lifestyle, Dhiraj Subhas, a student of Senior Secondary School from Rajasthan, Najma Khatoon a student of PM SHRI Kendriya Vidyalaya in Kargil, Ladakh and Abhishek Kumar Tiwari, and a teacher from Tobi Lahme a government higher secondary in Arunachal Pradesh asked the Prime Minister about managing studies along with exercise. The Prime Minister mentioned the need to recharge mobile phones to illustrate the need to take care of physical health. He asked for maintaining a balanced lifestyle and avoiding excess of everything. “Healthy body is critical for a healthy mind”, PM Modi said. He said being healthy requires some routines and asked about spending time in sunlight and getting regular and complete sleep. He pointed out that habits like screen time are eating into the required sleep which is considered very important by modern health science. The Prime Minister said that in his personal life too he has maintained a system of going into deep sleep within 30 seconds of going to bed. “Awake fully when awake and sound sleep while asleep, is a balance that can be achieved”, he said. Speaking about nutrition, PM Modi stressed the balanced diet. He also emphasized the importance of regular exercise and physical activities for fitness.

### Career progression

Giving insights on career progression, an issue raised by Madhumita Mallick of Kendriya Vidyalaya, Barrackpore, North 24 Pargana, West Bengal and Aditi Tanwar of The Millennium School in Panipat, Haryana, the Prime Minister suggested attaining clarity when it comes to career path and avoiding confusion and indecisiveness. Giving the example of cleanliness and the Prime Minister’s resolve behind, PM Modi underlined that ‘Swachhata’ is becoming a priority area in the nation. He informed that India’s market in the art and culture sector has grown 250 times in the last 10 years. “If we have the capability, we can live up anything”, PM Modi said urging students to not underestimate themselves. He also suggested going all in with full dedication. Speaking about the National Education



Policy, the Prime Minister highlighted the provisions to adopt different courses rather than being bound by a single stream. He lauded the participation, skill and dedication of students in the exhibition showcased on the occasion and underlined that the work done by them to communicate government schemes is much better when compared to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting of the Government of India. “We must be decisive to eliminate confusion”, PM Modi said, giving the example of ordering food in a restaurant where one must decide on what to eat. He also suggested evaluating the positives and negatives of the decisions to be made.

### Role of Parents

Deepasri, a student from Puducherry Government Higher Secondary School, who joined the program via video conferencing from Delhi, asked the Prime Minister about the role of parents and how students can build trust. The Prime Minister touched upon the trust deficit in families and asked the parents and teachers to tackle this serious issue. He said that this deficit is not sudden but is a result of a long-drawn process and requires a deep self-analysis of everyone’s conduct, be it teachers, parents or students. Honest communication can reduce the chances of trust deficit, he said. Students should be sincere and honest in their dealings. Similarly, parents should also convey their confidence in their children instead of suspicion. The distance created by the trust deficit can push children into depression. The Prime Minister asked the teachers to keep channels of communication open with the students and avoid favouritism. He asked for an experiment and requested families of friends to regularly meet and discuss positive things that can help children.

### Intrusion of technology

Chandresh Jain, a parent from Pune, Maharashtra raised the issue of the intrusion of technology in students’ lives and Kumari Puja Srivastava, a parent from Ramgarh, Jharkhand asked about managing studies with the abundance of social media platforms. Abhinav Rana, a student from TR DAV School, Kangoo, Hamirpur, Himachal Pradesh, raised the issue of educating and encouraging students to manage exam stress effectively while also harnessing the benefits of mobile technology as a tool for learning. “Excess of anything is bad”, the Prime Minister said drawing an analogy to excess mobile phone usage with home-cooked meals which when taken in excess can lead to stomach problems and other issues, even though it is rich in nutrients. He stressed making effective use of technology and mobile phones with the help of judgement-based decision-making. “Every parent faces this issue”, the Prime Minister said pointing out the subject of privacy and secrecy. He stressed formulating a set of rules and regulations in the family and mentioned no electronic gadgets during dinner and creating no gadget zones in the house. “In today’s world”, the Prime Minister said, “one cannot run away from technology.” He said that it should not be considered a burden but it is mandatory to learn its effective usage. The Prime Minister suggested students educate their parents about technology being an educational resource and also recommended sharing the passcodes of every mobile phone in their homes with every member to establish transparency. “This would prevent a lot of evils”, he added. Prime Minister Modi also touched upon monitoring screen time with the use of dedicated mobile applications and tools. He also suggested educating the students about the resourcefulness of mobile phones in the classroom.

How does the Prime Minister handle stress and stay

positive?

M Vagesh, a student of Modern Senior Secondary School, Chennai, Tamil Nadu asked the Prime Minister about how he handles pressure and stress in the position of Prime Minister. Sneha Tyagi, a student of Dynasty Modern Gurukul Academy, Udam Singh Nagar, Uttarakhand asked the Prime Minister “How can we be positive like you?”. The Prime Minister said that it is good to know that children know the pressures of the position of the Prime Minister. He said that everyone faces unforeseen situations. One can react to them by avoidance, however, said the Prime Minister, such people are not able to achieve much in life. “My approach which I found useful is that ‘I challenge every challenge’. I do not wait passively for the challenge to pass. This gives me an opportunity to learn all the time. Dealing with new situations enriches me”. He further said “My biggest confidence is that I have 140 crore countrymen with me. If there are 100 million challenges, there are billions of solutions. I never find myself alone and everything is on me, I am always aware of the capabilities of my country and countrymen. This is the fundamental crux of my thinking”. He said that though he will have to be at the forefront and mistakes will be his but the capabilities of the nation give strength. “The more I enhance the capabilities of my countrymen, my ability to challenge the challenges improves”, he said. Giving an example of the poverty issue, the Prime Minister said when the poor themselves decide to remove poverty, poverty will go away. “It is my responsibility to give them tools for dreaming such as a pucca house, toilet, education, Ayushman, piped water. Once he is unshackled of the daily indignities, he will be sure of the abolition of poverty”, The Prime Minister said. He said that in his tenure of 10 years, 25 crore people came out of poverty.

Furthermore, the Prime Minister said that one should have the wisdom to prioritize things. This comes with experience and analyzing everything. He also said that he considers his mistakes as lessons.

He gave an illustration of the Covid pandemic and said that instead of sitting idle he chose to rally the people and raise their collective strength through acts like calling for diya, or ‘thali’. Similarly, celebrating sporting success and right strategy, direction and leadership have resulted in a massive medal haul at international events.

He said for proper governance also, there should be a system of perfect information from bottom to top and a system of perfect guidance from top to bottom.

The Prime Minister emphasized not being disappointed in life and said that once this decision is made, only positivity remains. “I have shut all doors and windows of disappointment in my life”, the Prime Minister said. He said that decision-making becomes easier when the resolve to do something is strong. “When there is no selfish motive, there is never confusion in decision”, he said. Giving emphasis on making the lives of the present generation easier, the Prime Minister expressed confidence that the generation of today must not face the difficulties faced by their parents. “Government strives to make a nation where not just the present but future generations have a chance to shine and show their capabilities”, the Prime Minister said stressing that it should be the collective resolve of the entire nation. Throwing light on the power of positive thinking, the Prime Minister said that it gives the strength to look for positive outcomes even in the most negative situations. The Prime Minister concluded his interaction by encouraging all students and conveyed his best wishes to achieve their life goals.



# Two remote villages of Keran get grid connectivity for the first time in 75 years

KUPWARA: It was a moment of joy for the 1300 souls of remote villages Kundiyan and Patroo of Keran along the line of control (LOC) in Kupwara district, as their villages for the first time got electricity supply (through grid connectivity).

Two Sub Stations of 250 KV (33kv/440 volts) were completed under Samirdh Seema Yojan (SSY) by KPDCL Electric Division Kupwara, electrifying the villages, and ending the long wait of the residents.

Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri inaugurated it yesterday.

Residents were ecstatic, they had strong reason to be happy, some even shrieked in joy on witnessing the electricity illuminating their houses, thanks to the efforts of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan.

The happiness of the villagers was evident, as they had gathered at Kundian to receive the Deputy Commissioner, who visited these villages to interact with locals.

DC on reaching Patroo and Kundian congratulated the people and PRIs for getting grid connectivity for the first time. She said that it was a job well done. Everything was done in mission mode. From Officers to Line men of PDD, Local PRIs and concerned contractors, all have contributed to the timely completion of this

electrification project which was handed over to people in a record time of two months. It is a big achievement and testimony of transformation down at the grassroots level as only two months ago approval and allocation of this project was made.

The DC further said that the road stretch from Dutt Bridge to Keran has been handed over to Beacon and work on it will be started. She said that by the end of this year, all the villages of Keran will be saturated by the BSNL mobile network.

DC added Airtel and Jio companies will be roped in to provide and enhance cell phone connectivity to the area.

Chairperson, BDC Keran, Mohammad Syed Khoja while expressing his gratitude to District Administration Kupwara said that District Administration led by Deputy Commissioner Kupwara deserves all the appreciation for getting the villages electrified in a short span of just two months. He said that for the residents here it is like a dream come true. “We used to receive 2 to 3 hours of low voltage power through a decade-old Diesel Generator Set (DG Set) which could hardly light up a bulb. We were using candles to lighten our homes. Now our children will study under electric lights and perform well,” said Khoja.



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# Gulmarg Gondola hosts more than a million tourists during 2023



SRINAGAR: The Gulmarg Gondola is soaring high in the skies, both in terms of the revenue generated and the number of tourists ferried.

As the year passed by, more than a million tourists (10, 13, 458) enjoyed the rides of the Gondolas enabling the J&K Cable Car Corporation to earn a revenue of more than Rs. 108 crore during the last calendar year. This is encouragingly higher than the figures of the previous year (2022) which stood at Rs. 91 crore as revenue and 8.50 lakh tourist rides. What is more, tourists describe the experience as surreal and alluring.

The J&K Cable Car Corporation runs and manages the Gulmarg Gondola, considered the flagship attraction of Kashmir tourism. It is possibly India's most popular ropeway, and at a height of 14,000 ft, it is Asia's highest-operating cable car.

Besides the enhanced revenue and visitor trips, the Corporation, during the last year, improved and enhanced the service delivery by improving the ticket issuing mechanism, undertaking several safety tests and overhauling the second phase of the Gondola with the latest technology.

Tourists undertaking the Gondola rides have memorable experiences to share. "It was an amazing ride. The bookings were seamless. I invite people from all across to enjoy the experiences of Gulmarg Gondola," said Akshay from London who is on

vacation at Gulmarg these days. Another tourist couple Shubham and Ajat, who are visiting Gulmarg for the first time, were fascinated by the arrangements and sanitation at both phases of the Gulmarg Gondola. The experiences were echoed by another family from Delhi.

"The people of Gondola are so friendly. My daughter fell cold and these people helped her with everything they could," said a tourist from Vietnam, Kentran who was keen to visit the place once again.

Managing Director of J&K Cable Car Corporation, Raja Yaqoob has appealed to tourists to avail of the online mode of ticket selling for their convenience, time-saving and curbing the chances of any black marketing by any tout. He said the Corporation is committed to improving the tourist experience by giving them easy, hassle-free and safe rides.

He assured of even better facilities in the days to come and appealed to tourists to adhere to the timings mentioned in the ticket to avoid any inconvenience. He said tourist feedback is being taken seriously and necessary improvements in customer services are being made.

It may be mentioned here that the Gulmarg Cable Car comprises two phases; one from Gulmarg Resort to Kongdori Valley and the second from Kongdori to Apharwath Peak.



# Jammu and Kashmir clinches gold at National ODOP awards 2023



Shopian gets bronze for apple as ODOP product

NEW DELHI: In a landmark achievement, the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir has clinched gold (state category B) for promoting the ODOP initiative during the national One District One Product (ODOP) awards ceremony, held at Bharat Mandapam, Pragati Maidan.

The event, held during the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Utsav 2024, recognized exceptional contributors to the ODOP Initiative, showcasing India's cultural heritage, rich diversity, artistic skills, and entrepreneurial spirit.

Khalid Jahangir, Managing Director Jammu and Kashmir Trade Promotion Organization (JKTPO), received the award on behalf of the UT. The JKTPO has been designated as the nodal agency in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir for ODOP which played a pivotal role in promoting ODOP products from the region, showcasing a remarkable commitment to the initiative.

Additionally, the Shopian district of Jammu and Kashmir secured a bronze award under the category of District Awards for the Agriculture sector. This recognition highlights the district's commendable contribution to the ODOP initiative, particularly in the field of horticulture, with Apple as an ODOP product.

The ODOP awards ceremony is a testament to India's journey towards self-reliance, and the winners from Jammu and Kashmir have exemplified excellence in promoting the ODOP initiative. The Union Territory, under the leadership of Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, stands as a shining example of commitment to fostering innovation and contributing to the nation's economic and cultural growth.

The Chief Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir, along with the Commissioner Secretary of Industries

and Commerce, has been a guiding force in propelling the ODOP initiatives in the region.

Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, and Textiles, Piyush Goyal, extended congratulations to the Indian Missions Abroad, states and district awardees. He urged upon them to continue motivating others to promote ODOP products, benefiting local weavers, artisans, and farmers.

Piyush Goyal highlighted the efforts of Indian Missions Abroad in promoting ODOP during the G20 summit and expressed anticipation for the continued growth of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Utsav in the coming years.

Union Minister of External Affairs, Dr. S Jaishankar, who is also the Chief Guest on the occasion, emphasized the significant role of ODOP in representing India's diversity on the global stage. He shared instances of presenting local ODOP products to global leaders during India's G20 Presidency, highlighting the initiative's impact on foreign policy, foreign economic policy and foreign commerce policy.

Dr Jaishankar expressed confidence that ODOP would contribute towards stronger tourism in the coming years as more people become aware of the rich art, culture, and history associated with different regions of India.

Pertinently, JKTPO has been instrumental in the promotion of ODOP and remains steadfast in its commitment to further boost these initiatives. A comprehensive activity plan, dedicated to the promotion of ODOP products in Jammu and Kashmir, has been devised to further boost the ODOP with a focus on products of each district. The JKTPO with the support of the government will take further proactive steps to foster growth and recognition of ODOP products in the region.



# J&K becomes the first UT in the country to launch PM Vishwakarma Yojana



JAMMU: In a significant step towards empowering the craftsman community of Jammu and Kashmir, enhancing their competence and empowering them regarding self-employment as well as equipping them with industry-relevant skills, Jammu and Kashmir today became the first UT of the country to launch the prestigious PM Vishwakarma Yojana (PMVY) from Industrial Training Institute (ITI) Shopian.

The Yojana was launched virtually by Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar along with Secretary of Union Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), Atul Kumar Tiwari with the first batch of 30 trainees (Viswakarmas) of Darzi Craft being imparted training at ITI Shopian from today.

Joint Secretary, MSDE, Sonal Mishra; Commissioner Secretary, SDD, J&K, Saurabh Bhagat; Deputy Commissioner Shopian, Faz Lul Haseeb; Director SDD, J&K, Principals, Superintendents and Instructors of Government ITIs, various craftsmen and large number of locals were also present on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, Advisor Bhatnagar said that it is a proud moment for the entire of Jammu and Kashmir that with the support of the Central Government our UT has become the first UT of the country to start this programme.

He remarked that PMVY is an important scheme as it aims to provide recognition training tool kits certification marketing support and soft loans to empower our craftsmen He also underscored that this scheme is also committed to honour and empowering the artisans of our country who immensely contribute towards the economy of our nation as a whole.

The Advisor further highlighted that the present

LG-led Administration is committed to fostering a culture of skill environment across the region in order to create maximum employment avenues for the youth.

Advisor Bhatnagar, on the occasion, commended the efforts of SDD and ITI Shopian in implementing the program and highlighted the importance of skill development in empowering the youth and contributing to the nation's economic growth. He encouraged the craftsmen to make the most of this opportunity and become catalysts for change across Jammu and Kashmir.

The scheme will be operationalised in all districts of JK soon Speaking on the occasion, Secretary MSDE highlighted the basic objectives of the scheme.

Commissioner Secretary, SDD and Deputy Commissioner Shopian also spoke on the occasion.

While speaking on the occasion, several trainees of the first batch expressed their gratitude for the opportunity and pledged to dedicate themselves to acquiring skills that would not only benefit their careers but also contribute to the overall development of the region.

Pertinently, PMVY is an ambitious initiative of the Central Government in September 2023 by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi. The scheme aims to recognise artisans and crafts of people through PM Vishwakarma certificate and ID card as well as basic training of five to seven days and advanced training of 15 days or more, with a stipend of Rs 500 per day. The scheme will also provide a modern toolkit of Rs 15000 free of cost to trained Vishwakarma besides linkage with credit-based soft loans and marketing support for expansion of their business will also be provided under the Yojana.





# Sajad Ahmad Mir's inspiring journey from teacher to national-level coach

ANANTNAG: Hailing from a small village in Anantnag town, armed with education and dedication, Sajad Ahmad Mir has become a ray of hope for many female students who want to excel in sports and make it their career choices. His journey from a sports student to a national-level coach is reshaping the lives of many students through games.

Mir, a Physical Education Teacher in the Department of Youth Services & Sports District Anantnag believes that success is not about gaining leadership but it is about empowering people through sports. "It is said that the true measure of success is the number of people touched and transformed by one's success," he is living his life to this definition of success.

Nagpur International marathon player, National Level player in Netball, Softball and State Level in cricket and former National Level coach of the cricket team of JKUT, Mir has many certificates in his kitty.

Starting his journey as a Physical education Teacher in the year April 2010 from GMS Monghall, Sajad Ahmed was later transferred to Govt. Girls Model Higher Secondary School Ranibagh in the heart of Anantnag town.

Under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao program launched by the Government of India in 2015, Mir initiated a curriculum for the students, under which he transformed the lives of thousands of students by encouraging them to join Sports, NCC and other curricular activities. He continues to encourage and inspire young sports enthusiasts in the valley.

Recalling the earlier days of his career as a

physical education teacher, he remembers how schools lacked infrastructure despite students being very active and passionate about sports and NCC. "Despite having no formal training the students played very well. Schools did not have any big sports grounds and the basketball, volleyball, and badminton courts too were in dilapidated condition," he recalls.

Mir, a dedicated mentor and guide, decided to take over and guide school children to the best of his ability. When he started training students, he noticed that despite having exceptionally good potential there was a lack of participation by girls. Female students in the valley were surrounded by stereotypes and lacked encouragement to join sports, NCC and cultural activities.

Addressing the concerns about women empowerment and gender bias, Mir decided to pledge his life to this cause by empowering female students through sports. In order to motivate students to take the lead in sports, he organized awareness camps in different games in his school and fulfilled his duty as a coach. So far, he has successfully organized more than 500 plus awareness campaigns in the sports category in remote villages of Kashmir Valley which remained unconnected to roads, due to extreme terrain conditions.

Assisted by his colleagues, he walked miles through the forest to reach isolated villages and spread awareness. "In order to convince and persuade parents to send their wards for national level games, our team conducted a door-to-door campaign, convincing parents to encourage and support their daughters to



join Sports, NCC and cultural activities. We organized many sports tournaments so that government schools could find potential players, organized them into a team, and trained them to play at Zone, District, UT and ultimately at National Level,” he proudly said.

Mir has played a major role in organizing softball, netball, throwball, Basketball, Cricket, woodball, Mini-Golf etc. competitions at district, UT and National Levels or locally which were earlier male-dominated.

It was Mir, who broke the stereotypes and facilitated 1st ever competition for female participants in the year 2011 on the eve of National Sports Day (29th August 2011). His efforts were successful as female participation in sports competitions, NCC and cultural activities normalized by 2015 in the region.

His students have brought laurels at the District, UT and National Levels in Cricket, Netball, Throw Ball, Basketball, Softball, Chess, Kho-Kho, Table Tennis, Martial Art, Karate, NCC and cultural activities and are grateful to his mentorship.

Meanwhile, he continues to transform the lives of female students, Govt. School Students in the region. These Girls are an inspiration to hundreds of Young people in the valley who aspire to excel in sports. One among them is Ruby Syed, a Ranji Cricket Player. Recently she was called by Gujarat Giants for Women IPL Trials.

“What I have achieved is only because of my mentor Sajad Sir & I will not forget how he changed my entire life,” says Ruby Syed. She is presently a Ranji Player and a coach for Young Girls in Sports.

Ayman Mukhtar credits Sajad Sir for introducing her to softball. “I have participated in more than 30 UT Level, University Level Championships, and 3 Nationals in recent years. Whatever I have learned and achieved I owe it all to him,” she said.

Ayman recalls, “How sir would motivate them during morning assembly to participate in sports, NCC and cultural activities. He would tell stories of sportswomen like the Phogat sisters, PT Usha, PV

Sindhu, Sania Mirza, and Saina Nehwal to inspire young girls.”

Fiza Bareed has 25 local championships and several nationals in cricket and has won a Gold Medal in the Toy Making Competition UT Level. “I was inspired by students of Mir and her sister Danishta Bareed who has played 2 Nationals under Mir in the discipline of Softball has decided to learn Cricket.”

Fiza Nisar is a 3 time National Level player of two games Tennis Cricket and Chess. Also a ‘C’ certificate holder in NCC and an adventure sports lover. She has played several local and state level championships since then and is a National Chess and Tennis Cricket Player with two successful Medals.

Mehak Yousuf is a permanent member of the JK Women’s Cricket Team and a Ranji player. She aspires to participate in women’s IPL at the National Level and in International Cricket. She says, “It is time to break the stereotype that girls cannot play sports, especially games which involve strength training. If I can do it, so can other girls. Women are as strong as men and can perform equally well if an opportunity is provided.”

Sajad Ahmad Mir has no intention to stop. He wants to continue his goal of empowering girls through sports. He believes that education is beyond academics.

“Sports teach us the importance of patience, resilience, consistency, and hard work in its true essence. Traditionally girls are not expected or encouraged to play sports but times have changed and now more women are participating in sports than ever before, but there is still a long way to go,” Mir exclaimed.

Emphasizing the importance of sports in life, he believes that apart from being a fun recreational activity and a way to stay active, participating in sports is a way to gain important social, and leadership skills and gain self-confidence.





# Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra: 1.64 crore citizens receive Ayushman Bharat Health coverage



Over 9.47 lakh enrolled under PM Ujjwala Yojana; 27.31 lakh youth enlist in ‘MY Bharat’

New Delhi: Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra is gaining momentum across the nation to raise awareness through outreach activities and achieve saturation of various welfare schemes launched by the Government of India.

The Yatra was flagged off by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on November 15, 2023, from Khunti, Jharkhand with multiple Information, Education and Communication (IEC) vans launched simultaneously from various locations across the country. By January 25, 2024, the Yatra aims to cover over 2.60 lakh Gram Panchayats and 4000+ Urban Local Bodies across the country.

The Yatra has reached the farthest corners of the nation creating awareness about the Government’s welfare schemes. This initiative ensures that these social welfare programs reach every individual in the nation, even the most remote.

As part of the Yatra, various on-spot services like PM Ujjwala Yojana enrolment, MY Bharat volunteer registration, and distribution of Ayushman cards among others are also being provided. During the Yatra, a significant number of citizens have engaged in various government schemes, showcasing substantial participation. Throughout this Yatra, individuals are being encouraged to exercise their rightful privileges.



During the Yatra, more than 9.47 Lakh people were given access to clean cooking fuel under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY), hence liberating families from smoke-filled kitchens. Distribution of over 1.64 Crore Ayushman cards is ensuring that citizens get comprehensive health cover of Rs. 5 Lakhs per family per year.

As part of the Yatra, the Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) provided accident insurance for more than 18.15 lakh citizens. Over 10.86 lakh individuals have availed the benefits of the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), which provides life insurance. Both these schemes are furthering financial inclusion across India.

Additionally, more than 6.79 lakh street vendors were given working capital loans under the Prime Minister Street Vendor’s AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) during the Yatra. Embracing ‘MY Bharat’, over 27.31 lakh youth registered themselves, marking a substantial new wave of engagement within the framework of the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra.



# 15 crore participants in two months

## Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra draws huge crowds across many states

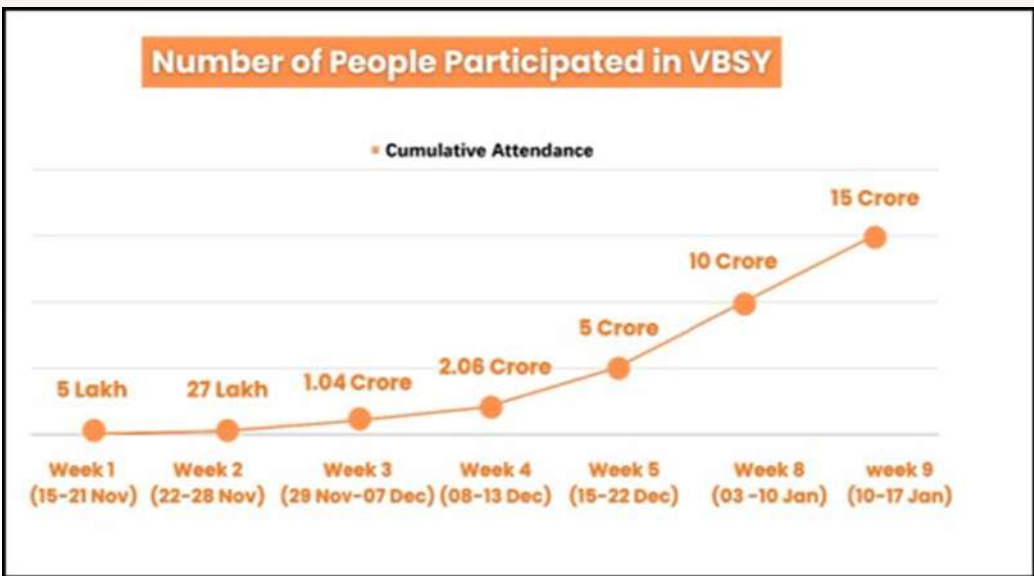


New Delhi: In just two months, the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra has captivated India, drawing over 15 crore enthusiastic participants. This mammoth people’s participation speaks volumes about the Yatra’s impact on forging a unified path towards a thriving and inclusive India. Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra is a landmark initiative aimed at ensuring 100% saturation of government schemes across the nation.

People’s participation numbers increased dramatically after the campaign was launched in the states of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Telangana. While the Yatra had reached out to 2.06 crore people at the end of Week 4 on December 13, 2023, the numbers swelled to 5 crores at the end of the 5th week by December 22, 2023.

Over the next four weeks, the Yatra drew 10 crore participants crossing the 15 crore milestone. As of 17th January, the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra dashboard read 15.34 crore participants covering 2.21 lakh Gram Panchayats and 9,541 urban locations.

The Yatra embodies the spirit of “Jan Bhagidari” (public participation). Launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, it aims to reach every eligible individual with welfare schemes through IEC vans travelling across cities



and villages. Through these vans, it equip communities with knowledge about government schemes, sustainable farming, and access to affordable healthcare, sanitation, and financial independence.

As of January 17, 2024, over 4 Crore people have been screened in health camps. There are over 38 Lakh registrations on My Bharat. More than 2 crore Ayushman Bharat health cards have been issued to ensure accessible healthcare for all. The Yatra has covered over two lakh Gram Panchayats. Over 11 Crore people have taken Sankalp towards building a developed India by 2047.

Tangible impact, village by village:

The Yatra’s impact is undeniable. Over 1 Lakh Gram Panchayats have achieved 100% saturation for Ayushman

Cards, empowering millions with healthcare access. Clean water through the ‘Har Ghar Jal’ scheme now reaches over 79,000 Gram Panchayats, while 100% land records digitization in over 1.38 Lakh Gram panchayat facilitates transparency and security. Moreover, over 17,000 Gram Panchayats have achieved ODF Plus compliance, marking a testament to clean living.

Beyond statistics, a shared dream:

The Yatra’s true success lies in igniting a collective dream – a dream of an India where progress reaches every doorstep, where prosperity is shared by all, and where development translates into empowered lives. With each covered Gram Panchayat, each enrolled beneficiary, and each pledge taken, the Yatra takes India a step closer to making this dream a reality.





**JKPI Publications**



# Role of Sustainable Resource Management in Combating Climate Change



SEMRAN PARVAIZ

In a time marked by prominent environmental issues, the concept of sustainable resource management has emerged as a beacon of hope amidst the looming threat of climate change. The urgency to adopt sustainable practices in resource utilization has never been more imperative, considering the alarming rate at which our planet's natural resources are depleting.

At its core, sustainable resource management is a multifaceted approach that revolves around the responsible utilization and preservation of natural resources, meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their requirements. It embodies a paradigm shift from traditional, often exploitative, resource extraction methods towards strategies that prioritize longevity and ecosystem health.

## The Interconnectedness of Sustainable Resource Management and Climate Change

Climate change, a global crisis fueled by human activities, has resulted in catastrophic consequences worldwide. Rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and ecosystem disruptions are just a few manifestations of this complex issue. Unsustainable

resource extraction, excessive energy consumption, and deforestation are among the key factors exacerbating climate change, creating a precarious environmental imbalance.

## The Nexus Between Sustainable Resource Management and Climate Change

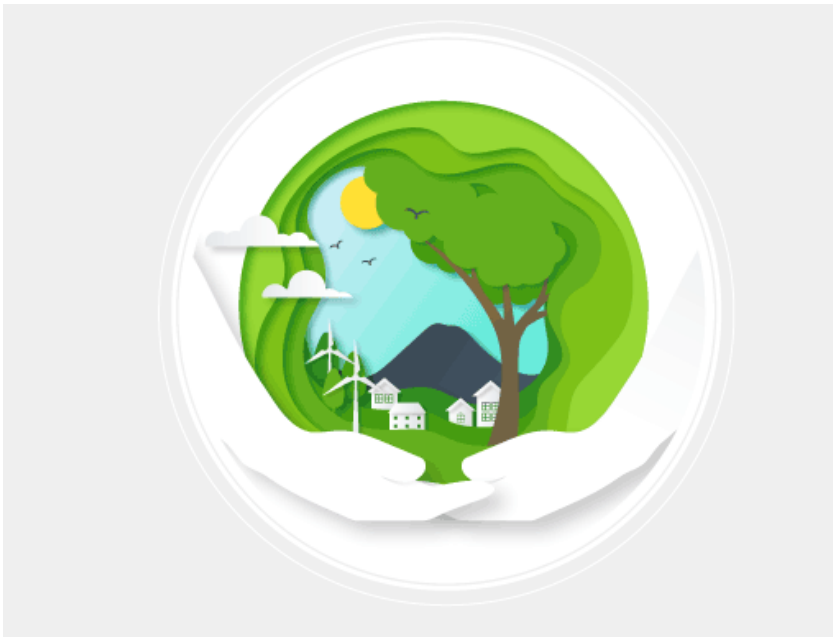
Adopting sustainable resource management practices can significantly mitigate the adverse effects of climate change. One of the critical approaches involves reducing reliance on finite resources and transitioning towards renewable alternatives. The adoption of renewable energy sources like solar, hydroelectric power, and wind diminishes reliance on fossil fuels, consequently decreasing greenhouse gas emissions.

Additionally, implementing circular economy models plays a pivotal role in sustainable resource management. These models promote recycling, reusing, and reducing waste generation, ensuring that resources remain in use for as long as possible. Alleviating the burden on natural resources and minimizing waste production, the circular economy contributes significantly to climate change mitigation efforts.

Efficient land and water management are equally essential components of sustainable resource management. Conserving land, preventing deforestation, and employing water-saving techniques help maintain crucial ecosystems and biodiversity. Preserving natural habitats not only mitigates climate change but also safeguards the rich biodiversity vital for a balanced and resilient ecosystem.

Furthermore, promoting responsible consumption and production practices among individuals and industries is crucial. Encouraging sustainable consumer behaviour and fostering responsible production processes minimize resource depletion and environmental degradation.





### Key Strategies for Sustainable Resource Management

**Transition to Renewable Energy:** Transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources constitutes a fundamental cornerstone of sustainable resource management. Solar, wind, hydroelectric, geothermal, and biomass energy sources offer cleaner alternatives, significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Governments and industries investing in renewable energy infrastructure contribute to a sustainable energy future.

**Circular Economy Principles:** Embracing the circular economy model is crucial. This approach prioritizes resource efficiency, promoting practices like recycling, reusing, and reducing waste. Instead of the traditional linear ‘take-make-dispose’ approach, materials are kept in use for as long as possible, minimizing resource depletion and waste generation.

**Efficient Land and Water Management:** Conservation of land and water resources is essential for sustainable resource management. Preventing deforestation, restoring degraded lands, and implementing sustainable agriculture practices help maintain vital ecosystems. Similarly, employing water-saving techniques, such as drip irrigation or rainwater harvesting, preserves freshwater resources in a world where water scarcity is a growing concern.

**Responsible Consumption and Production:** Encouraging responsible consumption patterns among individuals and industries is critical. This involves promoting sustainable lifestyles, reducing overconsumption, and advocating for eco-friendly products and packaging. Similarly, industries must adopt cleaner production processes, employing technologies that minimize waste generation and environmental impact.

**Biodiversity Preservation:** Protecting biodiversity is integral to sustainable resource management. Preserving ecosystems, conserving habitats, and preventing species loss contribute to the resilience of natural systems. Strategies like creating protected areas, restoring degraded habitats, and supporting sustainable fisheries are essential in safeguarding biodiversity.

**Integrated Waste Management:** Implementing comprehensive waste management strategies is crucial. This includes not only recycling and waste reduction but also proper disposal of hazardous waste. Promoting composting, developing infrastructure for waste separation, and investing in innovative waste-to-energy technologies are key components.

**Policy and Governance Reforms:** Enacting policies and regulations that incentivize sustainable practices is vital. Governments play a pivotal role in cultivating a conducive environment for sustainable resource management by offering incentives for renewable energy adoption, imposing penalties for environmental violations, and supporting research and development of green technologies.

**Education and Awareness:** Raising awareness and educating communities about the importance of sustainable resource management is fundamental. Engaging the public through educational programs, campaigns, and workshops fosters a culture of environmental responsibility, motivating individuals to make informed choices and actively engage in sustainability initiatives.

Efficient land and water management are equally essential components of sustainable resource management. Conserving land, preventing deforestation, and employing water-saving techniques help maintain crucial ecosystems and biodiversity. Preserving natural habitats not only mitigates climate change but also safeguards the rich biodiversity vital for a balanced and resilient ecosystem.

### Synergy in Action

These strategies are interconnected and complement each other. For instance, transitioning to renewable energy reduces reliance on fossil fuels, consequently lowering carbon emissions and mitigating climate change. Simultaneously, embracing circular economy principles reduces resource extraction and waste, supporting the conservation of natural resources and ecosystems.

### The Collective Impact

A holistic approach that integrates these strategies is essential for effective sustainable resource management. Individual efforts, corporate initiatives, governmental policies, and international collaboration are necessary to address the multifaceted challenges posed by resource depletion and environmental degradation. Through the collective implementation of these strategies, societies can progress toward a more sustainable future, safeguarding the well-being of both the planet and future generations.

This elaboration delves deeper into key strategies for sustainable resource management, highlighting their interconnectedness and emphasizing the need for a comprehensive approach to building a sustainable future. Adjustments or additions can be made based on specific examples, case studies, or regional contexts to enrich the content further.

### The Importance of Collective Action

Individual efforts, governmental policies, and corporate initiatives all play pivotal roles in fostering sustainable resource management. Global collaborative efforts are essential to tackle the intricate challenges presented by climate change. Governments, industries, and communities must work synergistically to enact policies, invest in sustainable technologies, and promote awareness regarding the significance of responsible resource management.

### Conclusion

The urgency of combating climate change cannot be overstated, and sustainable resource management stands as an indispensable solution. Embracing this approach is not merely an option but an ethical responsibility toward preserving our planet for current and future generations. By collectively adopting sustainable resource management practices, we can pave the way for a future that is more resilient and sustainable.

In conclusion, the integration of sustainable resource management practices is paramount in mitigating the adverse impacts of climate change. It’s not just about addressing the current environmental crisis; it’s about ensuring a viable future for humanity and the planet we call home.



# Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities in India: A comprehensive overview



## NEHA AGGARWAL

Inclusion is grounded in the fundamental human right to education for all, as enshrined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Quality inclusive education (IE) also constitutes a vital element of the new Sustainable Development Goal agenda. The overarching principle of the Sustainable Development Goals is to ‘leave no one behind.’ Unfortunately, children with disabilities remain one of the most marginalized groups, despite overall progress in global educational attainment. They are less likely to participate in and complete their education compared to their peers without disabilities. In South Asia, an estimated 29 million children were out of school in 2018 – 12.5 million in primary school and 16.5 million in lower secondary school. A significant proportion of these children were estimated to have disabilities, particularly in India.

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) of India has been hailed as ushering in a new era of educational reform. However, it operates within a framework of pervasive policy gaps in the education of disabled children. In India, inclusive education has been described as excluding children with disabilities. Disabled children rarely complete primary school, with only 9% completing secondary school. Approximately 45% of disabled people are

illiterate, and only 62.9% of disabled people aged 3 to 35 have ever attended regular schools. Specific disability categories and genders are disproportionately affected. For instance, children with autism and cerebral palsy are less likely to be enrolled in school, as are girls with disabilities. In this paper, we examine the status of disabled children in education in India and the major roadblocks. India’s education system for the physically challenged is in serious jeopardy and requires concentrated efforts from all stakeholders.

## Status of education among disabled children in India

A study by the World Bank (2007), based on NSS data, noted that children with disabilities are five times more likely to be out of school than children belonging to scheduled castes or scheduled tribes (SC or ST). Furthermore, when children with disabilities do attend school, they rarely progress beyond the primary level, resulting in lower employment opportunities and long-term income poverty. Even in states with high overall enrollment and good educational indicators, a significant proportion of out-of-school children are disabled: in Kerala, the figure is 27 percent, and in Tamil Nadu, it is more than 33 percent. Data also indicates that across all levels of severity, children with disabilities very rarely progress beyond primary school.

The 2019 “State of the Education Report for India: Children with Disabilities” considered the 2011 census, which indicated that there are 78,64,636 disabled children in India, constituting 1.7 percent of the total child population. Three-fourths of children with disabilities under the age of five and one-fourth between the ages of five and 19 do not attend any educational institution. The report noted that only 61 percent of children with disabilities (CWDs) aged 5 to 19 were enrolled in school, compared to 71 percent overall when all children are included. Moreover, 12% of children with disabilities have dropped out of school, and 27% have never attended any



educational institution. According to the report, a large number of disabled children do not attend regular schools but instead opt for the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS). A review of NIOS enrollment figures also shows a drop in most categories of disabilities between 2009 and 2015.

The Unified District Information on School Education (UDISE) + data for 2018-19 also presents a grim picture. It highlights a persistent and almost static enrolment of children with disabilities over the years. In 2013-14, the enrollment of disabled children in school education was 1.1% of the total number of students enrolled. This figure declined to 0.9% in 2018-19. Gender disparity in the enrolment of girls with disabilities also persists.

According to the AISHE report of 2020, the estimated state-wise total enrollment in higher education is 38.5 million, of which 92,831 PwD students were enrolled, as compared to 85,877 in 2019. Among these, 47,830 are male, and 45,001 are female students. When we compare this number with other disadvantaged groups, it is the least among all, clearly indicating that a very small number of these individuals pursue higher education. The table below illustrates the social group-wise distribution of PwD students.

Table: Social group-wise distribution of PWD students

Social Groups	% out of Total PWD			Female per hundred male
	Male	Female	All	
Total	-	-	-	94
SC	9.5	9.3	9.4	78
ST	2.9	4.3	3.4	119
OBC	33.4	30.3	31.6	74

Roadblocks to Education

The plight of disabled children is rooted in their inability to manipulate personal and environmental variables, thereby restricting the performance of daily tasks and disrupting established role patterns and social role expectations. The most significant roadblock for PwD students in education, particularly higher education, is the lack of awareness of government-run programs. This is evident in the 2011 census data, which shows that in rural areas, 49% of the disabled population is literate, while in urban areas, the percentage of literate individuals among the disabled population is 67%.

In the village surveys conducted by the World Bank in UP and TN, the team noted that 72.3 percent of households with disabilities were not aware of schemes for free aids and appliances. Instead, it is observed that “while assistive technologies are a right under the SSA, they are, in practice, rationed, making them a privilege.” It is evident that the benefit of the reservation made for PwD students is often violated, as even a person with a minute disability can obtain

a disabled certificate and misuse it. In this way, many people are prevented from taking advantage of it due to a lack of awareness or not knowing the proper channel through which they can obtain this certificate.

A child’s access to preschool and primary education is most likely to be hampered by the lack of disabled-friendly institutions. According to members of the NCPEDP, less than 1% of the country’s total number of educational institutions are disabled-friendly. Many buildings are old, so the new norms don’t apply to them, making them fail to meet disabled-friendly standards. Children with autism and cerebral palsy, as well as disabled girls, are the least likely to be enrolled in school. Less than 40% of school buildings have ramps, and approximately 17% have accessible restrooms.

In the AISHE (2020) report, only ramps and separate toilets for females are surveyed, although that is not the only criteria to make the HEI accessible for PwD students. There should also be a survey conducted on the availability of lifts, elevators, inclusive toilets, restrooms, and hostel facilities for PwD students in all the HEI, as a person with a locomotor disability may need these amenities. Additionally, there is a shortage of trained special educators in mainstream schools.

The issue is further exacerbated by the attitude of other children,

often manifesting as teasing and exclusion by peers. According to the UNESCO report, besides physical infrastructure, processes in the school, and essential resources like assistive and ICT technology and devices, the attitude of parents and teachers towards including children with disabilities in mainstream education is also crucial to achieving the objective of inclusive education. Most PwD students reside in rural areas where social stigma persists, with the belief that obtaining an education won’t necessarily benefit them in overcoming employment challenges. In rural India, it is observed that people, especially women, due to societal stigma, avoid disclosing the truth about disability. Mehrotra (2004) noted that rural women with disabilities may be the most likely to be overlooked.

A part of the problem also lies in the lack of inclusive policies. Existing laws governing education for people with disabilities are ambiguous. According to the 2016 Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, educational institutions must “provide reasonable accommodation according to the individual’s requirements and provide the necessary support, individualized or otherwise, in



environments that maximize academic and social development consistent with the goal of full inclusion.” However, according to the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy review published in May 2020, the terms “reasonable accommodation,” “individualized support,” and “full inclusion” have not been defined, leaving room for arbitrary implementation.

## Recommendations

Measures are required to ensure quality education for every child to meet the goals and targets of Agenda 2030, specifically Sustainable Development Goal 4. Disabled-friendly infrastructure, such as ramps, lifts, elevators, inclusive toilets, and hostel facilities, should be the government of India’s priority. Most PwD individuals live in rural areas, for whom a proper awareness program concerning opportunities, employability, scholarship schemes, disabled certificates, and various other important matters should be organized. These programs can address doubts and social stigma effectively.

Various national portals can be useful for PwD students, such as [www.swavlambancard.gov.in](http://www.swavlambancard.gov.in) for unique ID cards, [disabilityaairs.gov.in](http://disabilityaairs.gov.in) for various schemes, disabled certificate forms, and scholarship-related information ([www.nhfdc.nic.in](http://www.nhfdc.nic.in), [www.india.gov.in](http://www.india.gov.in), [thenationaltrust.gov.in](http://thenationaltrust.gov.in), etc.). These topics should be discussed in orientation programs to guide students on how to use these resources. Moreover, every educational institution should have an accessible support centre for PwD students. The implementation and regular follow-up of programs should be monitored.

The government should also focus on curriculum transformation and adopting teaching practices to aid the inclusion of diverse learners. Additionally, it should establish a coordinating mechanism under the HRD Ministry for the effective convergence of all education programs for children with disabilities. Ensuring specific and adequate financial allocation in education budgets to meet the learning needs of children with disabilities is crucial.

One of the main challenges is the unavailability of reliable data, as many relevant global and national indicators need to

be disaggregated by disability status. The lack of research that compares the outcomes of education for people with disabilities navigating different education systems – mainstream, special, and home schools – continues to be a hurdle in designing inclusive policies. As the government invests significant amounts of money into disabled-friendly infrastructure, research must be conducted to establish the effectiveness of these efforts.

India needs to prioritize the adoption of standard criteria in data collection. To ensure inclusive societies, concrete action is required to make persons with disabilities and their situations visible in policymaking. Robust data and analysis are required to ensure that persons with disabilities occupy their rightful place in the SDG framework and its implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

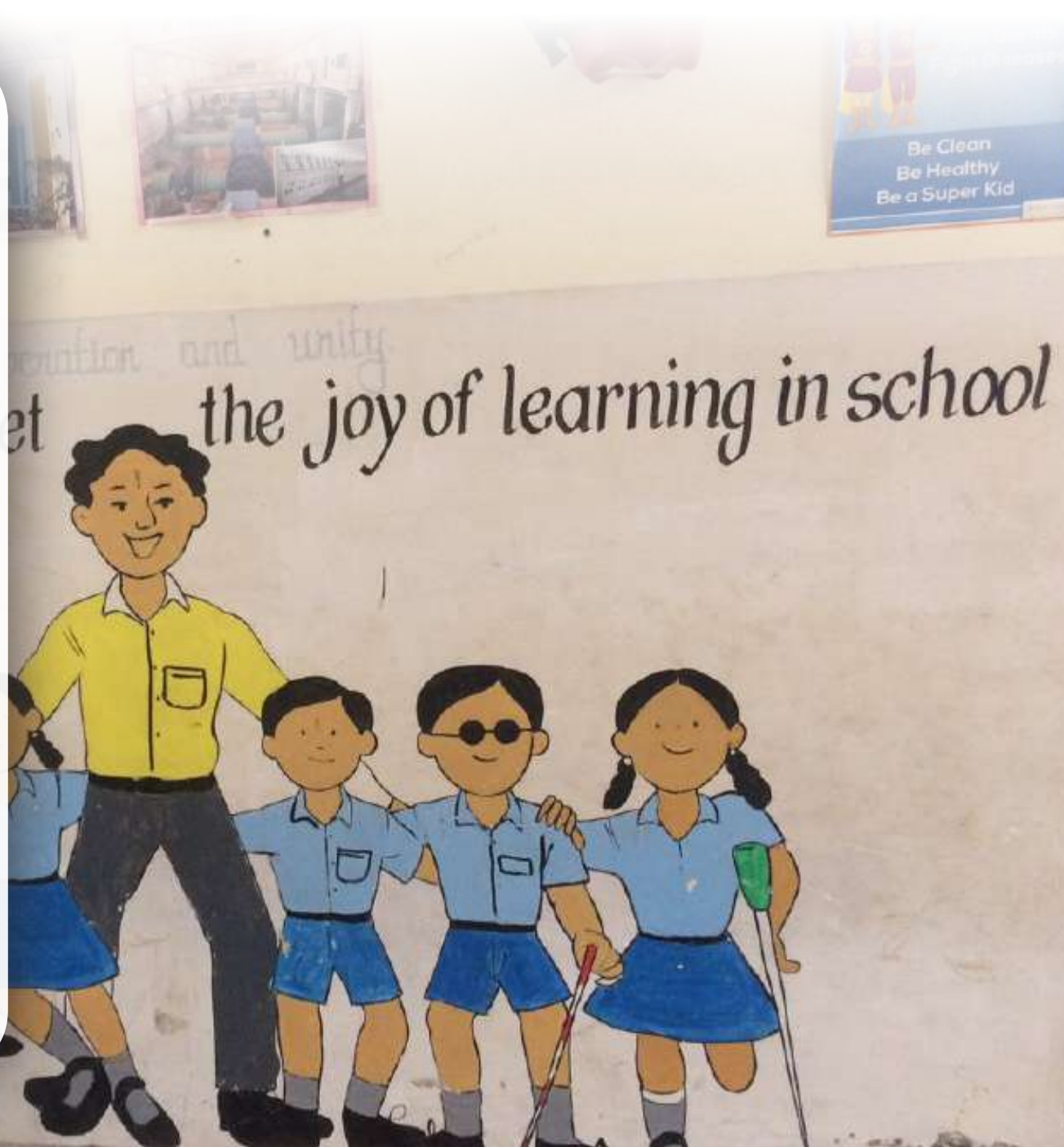
## Conclusion

The participation of disabled children in education is meagre. A gap remains in the enrollment and retention of disabled children in education despite government schemes and programs like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Integrated Education for Disabled Children, Right to Education (RTE) Act, and Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act. Major roadblocks to education include a rigid curriculum, inaccessible infrastructure, the absence of modified assessments, lack of awareness, and social stigma. Part of the problem also stems from the unavailability of reliable data required to design inclusive policies.

The article concludes that to ensure rehabilitation, empowerment, and the overall development of PwDs, disability needs to be mainstreamed into the implementation plan of SDGs, and national development programs need to prioritize inclusive development. We must overcome stereotypes and foster positive attitudes toward children with disabilities in the classroom and beyond. It should and will be our objective to make mainstream education not just available but accessible, affordable, and appropriate for students with disabilities, ensuring that “No One is Left Behind.”



India needs to prioritize the adoption of standard criteria in data collection. To ensure inclusive societies, concrete action is required to make persons with disabilities and their situations visible in policymaking. Robust data and analysis are required to ensure that persons with disabilities occupy their rightful place in the SDG framework and its implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.





# Evolution and challenges of Panchayat Raj System in Jammu and Kashmir – an overview



MUKHTAR DAR

## Introduction

The local governance system, known as the Panchayat Raj System, in Jammu and Kashmir has undergone various stages over time. The commitment to initiate the village Panchayats system can be traced back to the Dogra rule and the “Naya Kashmir” document of the National Conference. Before independence, Kashmir experienced successive despotic and rigid central governance structures. To liberate people from this, the Panchayat Raj emerged as a viable panacea. Consequently, since the nationalist movement began in Kashmir, the idea of a self-local government has consistently featured in political manifestos. However, it took several decades for this idea to materialize in J&K.

A significant development occurred in 2018 when the government initiated elections for the three tiers of the Panchayat Raj. This initiative holds paramount importance in transforming Panchayats into dynamic and formidable agents of rural development. The rural areas have witnessed substantial funds reaching the village level, enabling Panchayats to address vital demands. Consequently, people no longer needed to visit distant offices or elected representatives for minor developments. Instead, officers came to their doorsteps through the “Back to Village” program, and representatives were their co-villagers.

Despite these crucial developments, there is still room at the grassroots level to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Panchayat system. This necessitates additional efforts to make them more village-friendly and truly representative of direct democracy. The system should operate with transparency and accountability, which unfortunately are not currently at their best. Genuine steps are still needed at the grassroots level to address existing loopholes. Persistent issues such as old patterns of dominance, lack of transparency, absence of Gram Sabhas, and rampant corruption continue to prevail in this vital institution.

## Background

The initiatives to develop the Panchayat system in J&K were undertaken during the Dogra rule when, in 1935, Maharaja Hari Singh passed the Jammu and Kashmir Village Panchayat Act. Later, in 1936, he established a Rural Development and Panchayat Department with the motive of building a Panchayat system through local representatives. Soon after nationalist leaders made their presence felt in Kashmir politics, the need for the Panchayat system was recognized. The National Conference, in the historical Naya Kashmir manifesto in 1944, drafted a demand for local councils (Panchayats) along with a legislative assembly based on universal equal franchise.

When the Dogra rule ended in J&K, the predecessor government formulated the Village Panchayat Act in 1958, and several village-level and state-level committees were established. Finally, in 1989, the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly passed the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayat Raj Act. Unfortunately, during this period when the Panchayat Raj was taking root in J&K, militancy erupted. People stayed away from polling booths, and Panchayat elections were not conducted regularly. Furthermore, Panchayat bodies were undermined, and the aspirations of their members were underestimated. They were also targeted by militants, halting the establishment of the Panchayat Raj system.



A landmark development occurred in 2011 when Panchayat elections were carried out, witnessing a massive shift in people's attitudes as 80% of voters participated in polling. However, Panchayats could not flourish further due to continuous turmoil and street demonstrations. In August 2019, after the central government stripped off the special status of Jammu and Kashmir, the 73rd Constitution Act became applicable to the union territory of J&K. This empowered state and UT administrations to take necessary steps to formalize Panchayats and make them units of self-local governance.

Although the 1989 act of the J&K Legislative Assembly passed a law to set up Panchayats in J&K, the act does not contain the list of powers for the three tiers of Panchayat, as they are exclusively mentioned in the 73rd Amendment. After the constitutional changes and the bifurcation of J&K, the three-tier system of Panchayat Raj came into being for the first time in the history of J&K.

After the election was held for the three-tier Panchayats in J&K, a massive shift has taken place in the governance system. The emergence of new leaders within the villages, blocks, and districts made it possible for people to put forward their demands at the local level with their concerned Block chairpersons, Panches, and Sarpanches. Villagers no longer had to travel long distances to visit concerned MLAs and bureaucrats to meet their demands. Now, they had leaders at their doorsteps for the redressal of their problems.

However, apart from these positive developments, unfortunately, Panchayats, like other governance systems, are also plagued with misgovernance, embezzlement of funds, nepotism, favouritism, and a lobby system at the district level. The system that could have kept a check on it remains absent and unimplemented.

## Problems of PRI Institution in J&K

**Absence of Gram Sabha:** A vital aspect of the Panchayat Raj is the Gram Sabha, making it unique from other forms of democracy. The Gram Sabha is the sole embodiment of direct democracy for the people in the country, as opposed to representative democracies. The Gram Sabha involves all the adult population of the village making collective decisions for the development of the village. However, this unique aspect of the Panchayat remains invisible in J&K. It has been observed that Gram Sabhas are rarely conducted, or only a few white-collar individuals attend them. The interests of a few dominate the interests of the whole population, violating the basic tenets of the Gram Panchayat.

No mechanism is in place to check the functioning of Panchayats. The Gram Sabha plays a significant role in bringing transparency to the Panchayat system by monitoring the execution of works and conducting social audits of all rural development projects. It functions as a watchdog by reviewing all documents related to rural development, such as muster rolls, bills, vouchers, measurement books, copies of sanction orders, and other related papers. However, due to the absence of Gram Sabhas in J&K, the working mechanism of Panchayats remains obscure. This absence opens the door wide for corruption, with no other entity to monitor it.

**Illiterate Panchayat Members:** Another hurdle facing the Panchayati Raj system in Jammu and Kashmir is the presence of illiterate Panches, Sarpanchs, and BDCs. It is very challenging for an illiterate person to comprehend rural development programs and policies adequately. It has been noticed that illiterate Panchayat members often affix their seals to documents without understanding their contents. Additionally, it has been observed that they find it very challenging to bring forth Panchayat issues before the bureaucratic machinery, as they lack the knowledge of how to communicate effectively with higher authorities.

**Lack of Infrastructure:** An office is a crucial feature of any functional body, providing a unified space and fostering a sense of collectivism. In J&K, Panchayats lack this essential platform for carrying out their functions with mutual understanding and planning. Nearly every Panchayat in J&K lacks the necessary

infrastructure where its members can assemble to make decisions and plan for development. There is no proper Panchayat building in the villages that could construct the working ethics among Panchayat members and create a sense of unity among them.

Due to the absence of any office building, it has been observed that every member is working in their interest, leading to a lack of coordination among Panchayat members. Consequently, there is no discussion related to a particular plan or development.

**Misuse of Women's Reservation in Panchayats:** The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 mandates a 33% reservation for women. Unfortunately, in Kashmir, it has been observed that this provision is being misused through the proxy presence of their male relatives, resulting in the misuse of their power. The reservation was intended to empower women, but it has been found that female candidates are often influenced by family members to contest polls, and after winning, most of their powers, either directly or indirectly, are exercised by their male relatives.

Take the example of the DDC Shukhnag constituency, where the seat was reserved for women. After winning the election, the successful candidate remained absent from most meetings, and all functions were performed by her father-in-law.

**Lack of Coordination and Revenue Generation:** There is weak coordination among Panchayat members and with officials, which poses a significant barrier for Panchs and Sarpanchs in solving the problems of villages. In Kashmir, Panchayats have failed to generate funds and consistently remain dependent on government schemes. The lengthy fund approval system further results in Panchayats being unable to address villagers' issues on time, rendering them sometimes ineffective.

The failure of officials to act promptly leads to delays in village developmental activities. The slow pace in addressing minor problems makes people indifferent towards Panchayats, and their members have to face the wrath of the public. Similarly, in some instances, the government is only paying lip service to strengthening Panchayats but does not seem sincere. For example, in August 2020, the government decided to grant minor mineral rights to Panchayats; however, two years have passed, and nothing substantial has been done to actualize this grant.

## Recommendations

Currently, the village development programs and schemes in J&K are grappling with a lack of transparency, providing a breeding ground for corruption. This menace can be eradicated through increased people's participation in village development initiatives. The involvement of the people can be augmented through Gram Sabhas. However, it has been observed that Gram Sabhas are being conducted behind closed doors, and a lack of motivation among the people is rendering them unimportant. There is a need to motivate people to actively participate in Gram Sabhas, and the government should rigorously adhere to Gram Sabha plans, ensuring that Gram Sabhas are conducted regularly as per the law.

Panchayat members are facing the wrath of the public. On one side, villagers hardly give an ear to the suggestions of the Panchayat. On the other side, Panchayat members lack the authority to utilize funds during needy times. They can't even fix leaks in pipelines, damages in culverts, and drains, and address problems with electricity supply on time. Panchayats in J&K don't have their funds; thus, they always have to wait for the bureaucratic machinery to act. In villages, its members are only seen as "agents of grabbing (Rural Development Department) RDD contracts." Therefore, it is equally important to create awareness among Panches, Sarpanches, and other members about their roles and responsibilities.

Panchayats should move beyond (Rural Development Department) RDD initiatives and take part in civic works. For instance, clearing snow from lanes, settling local disputes, emphasizing sanitation, and exploring alternatives to solve the problems of villages. This can be made possible by giving powers to Panchayats to divert the funds of MNREGA so they can be utilized in such civic works.



The Panchayats should be provided with proper buildings and staff. In most villages, there is no Panchayat building available. Either they are disputed, occupied by locals, or unconstructed. This situation makes this local institution an unorganized body. An office is paramount for any institution to work collectively and efficiently. It will also create a sense of unity among the Panchayat body, and people can easily register their complaints and suggestions.

The complementary fee for Panchayat members should be given on time, and it should be increased. Sarpanchs are currently being paid 2500, and Panches receive 1000, but it is not enough to cover even their travel expenses. They are consistently engaged in various administrative tasks, and in this process, they spend a considerable amount of money, much more than the complementary fee. As a result, they are forced to explore alternatives to earn money through RDD works, which also diminishes their interest in village development.

Different program platforms should be initiated through media to raise awareness among people about the Panchayat system. Programs can be organized in villages to educate residents about the roles and objectives of PRIs. This approach will help motivate people to actively participate in Panchayat initiatives and encourage more vibrant and progressive individuals to consider contesting elections.

## Conclusion

Almost four years have passed since the three-tier Panchayat system commenced its functioning in Jammu and Kashmir after the government conducted elections for vacant seats of Gram

Panchayat at the village level, Panchayat Samitis at the block level, and Zila Parishad at the district level. It is a fact that villages have witnessed a lot of development over these years. However, at the same time, it cannot be ignored that Panchayats, as an institution, need to flourish much more, as many questions surround their functioning patterns.

It has been observed that a lack of understanding and coordination among the members of the Panchayat and with officials impedes the process and effectiveness of functioning, raising eyebrows on Panchayats' adherence to the parameters of the Panchayat Raj Act. In some instances, Panchayats witness the worst utilization of projects with zero transparency, accountability, and women's participation. The absence of a role for Gram Sabhas in conducting social audits opens the ground for the misuse of funds. Even PRIs are functioning in an unorganized way, with members not working as a unit but pursuing their interests.

Consequently, a race ensues among Panchs and Sarpanchs to grab and facilitate contracts from the Rural Development department. Due to this scenario, mostly people associated with (Rural Development Department) RDD works are contesting Panchayat elections, compromising the larger motives of Panchayats. The institution of Panchayat has played a significant role as an administrative body at the grassroots level in rural India and can play a more efficient role in Kashmir as well. This can be evidenced by the progress of villages since Panchayat Raj started working in Kashmir, particularly after 2018. However, there always remains scope for improvement. Thus, timely measures should be taken to make Panchayats more vibrant and transparent so that people can place their hopes in them.



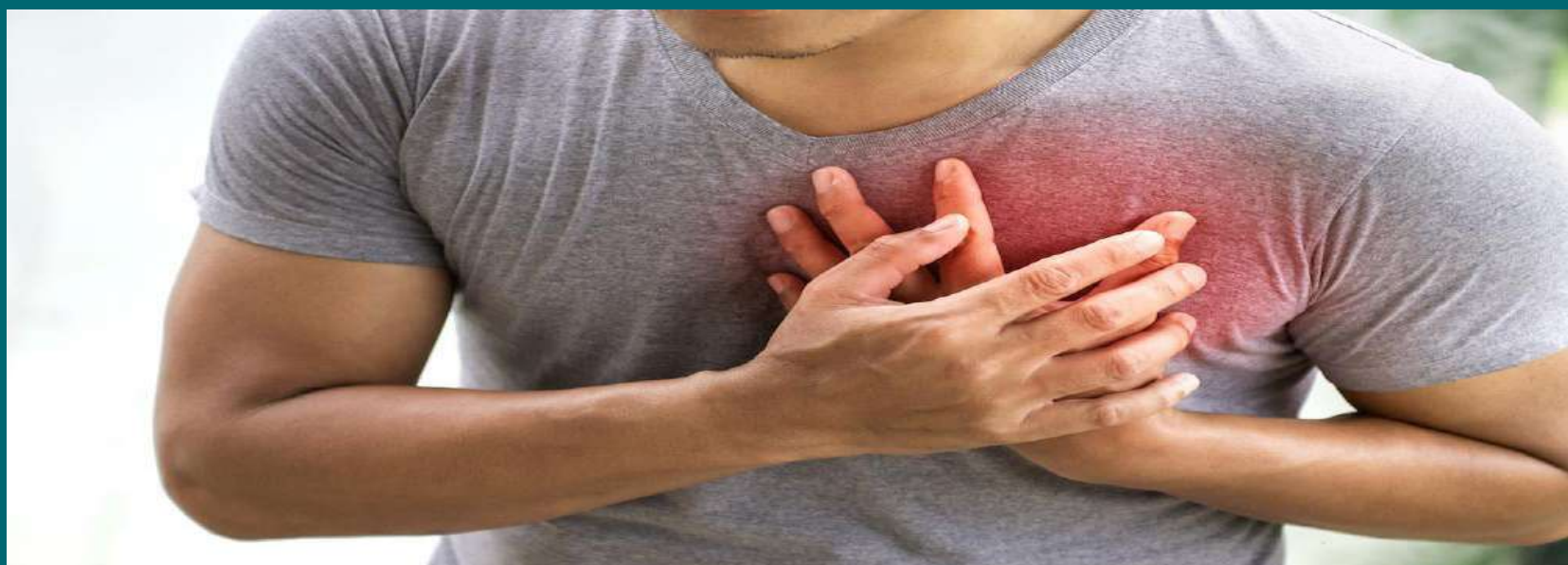
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# Examining the surge in cardiovascular diseases in Kashmir and beyond



**PARVAIZ YOUSUF**

## Understanding a Heart Attack?

**B**locking or significantly reducing blood flow to the heart leads to a heart attack or myocardial infarction. In most cases, obstructed coronary arteries arise from the accumulation of fatty deposits, cholesterol, and other substances. The term “plaques” is used to describe these fatty, cholesterol-filled deposits, while “atherosclerosis” denotes the process of plaque buildup. If a plaque ruptures, it can trigger the formation of a clot, limiting blood flow. Inadequate blood supply can result in permanent injury or death to a segment of the heart muscle.

## What Causes It?

Most heart attacks are triggered by coronary artery disease, wherein the blockage of one or more coronary arteries occurs. These blockages, referred to as plaques, are typically composed of cholesterol. The accumulation of plaques can restrict blood flow to the heart. If a plaque ruptures, it may result in the formation of a blood clot, leading to a heart attack.

The complete or partial blockage of a coronary artery can induce a heart attack. Electrocardiogram (ECG) findings, which signal the necessity for immediate invasive treatment, can be utilized to classify heart attacks. An expert may use the results of an electrocardiogram (ECG) to delineate various types of heart attacks.

Myocardial infarction with ST-segment elevation (STEMI) or unstable angina pectoris (AIS) represents the most common outcome of a sudden, total obstruction in a medium- or large-sized coronary artery. Non-ST-elevation myocardial infarction is frequently linked to partial occlusion (NSTEMI). Nevertheless, a subset of patients with NSTEMI exhibits a complete blockage.

It’s crucial to note that blocked arteries are not the exclusive

cause of heart attacks. Another possible reason is the significant constriction of an otherwise unblocked blood channel, as is the case with coronary artery spasms. Common causes of this condition include cholesterol plaques or early arterial hardening due to smoking or other risk factors. When spasms in the coronary arteries lead to angina, it is also known as Prinzmetal’s angina, vasospastic angina, or variant angina.

Heart muscle damage and the potentially fatal disorder of spontaneous coronary artery dissection (SCAD) can be triggered by viral infections such as COVID-19 and others.

## Are There Any Risk Factors?

Certainly, multiple risk factors contribute to Cardiovascular Diseases (CVDs), including heart attacks. One such risk factor is old age. It is believed that the likelihood of experiencing a heart attack rises with age, with males aged 45 and older and females aged 55 and older being more vulnerable than their counterparts under the age of 45 and 55, respectively. Cigarette smoking and hypertension are two additional contributors.

Another factor, high blood pressure, can lead to permanent damage to the heart’s arteries over time. Having hypertension, along with being overweight, having high cholesterol, or being diabetic, significantly increases the risk.

A similar phenomenon occurs when there is an excess of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, commonly referred to as “bad cholesterol.” Triglycerides, a type of blood fat, significantly increase the risk of a heart attack when present in high concentrations. If levels of high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol, sometimes known as “good cholesterol,” are within the normal range, a person may be at a lower risk of experiencing a heart attack.

Likewise, a person might be at a higher risk if a sibling, parent, or grandmother experienced a heart attack before the age of 55 (for men) or 65 (for women). The association between inactivity (a sedentary lifestyle) and cardiovascular disease remains consistent. Regular exercise can enhance the health of your heart.

Heart disease is associated with a diet rich in animal fats, sweets, processed foods, trans fats, and salt. Increasing your intake of healthful foods, such as fruits, vegetables, fiber, and healthy oils, is recommended.

Obesity has been linked to a variety of health problems, including diabetes, hypertension, elevated levels of bad cholesterol and triglycerides, and decreased levels of good HDL cholesterol. If



a person has diabetes, special caution should be exercised. When insulin production is inadequate, or its effects are blocked, blood sugar levels rise. Therefore, consistently high blood sugar may lead to the risk of experiencing a heart attack.

The use of illegal drugs like cocaine or amphetamines and experiencing excessive emotional stress can elevate the risk of a heart attack. It's important to remember that the constriction of coronary arteries might trigger a heart attack.

### How To Tell It is An Heart Attack?

Keep in mind that symptoms and indicators can vary from person to person. Be aware that some individuals may experience no symptoms at all. Common symptoms include severe chest pain causing tightness in the chest, which may radiate to the back, jaw, neck, and arms. Additionally, symptoms may include cold sweats, dizziness, general exhaustion, shortness of breath, and heartburn.

At times, heart attacks occur suddenly; however, many people experience symptoms and indicators hours, days, or weeks before a serious event. Frequent, severe chest discomfort or pressure (angina) that does not improve with rest should be taken seriously. Temporary reductions in blood supply to the heart are the direct cause of angina.

### Heart Attacks: The Global Scenario?

Cardiovascular Diseases (CVDs) stand as the leading cause of death globally. According to data released by the World Health Organization (WHO), 17.9 million people die each year from CVD, accounting for an estimated 32 percent of global deaths. Simultaneously, WHO data indicates that over 75 percent of these CVD-related deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries. This provides an overall understanding of why countries like India or regions like Kashmir may exhibit higher incidences of heart attacks. Furthermore, WHO estimates, based on data, reveal that 85 percent of all CVD deaths result from strokes and heart attacks. The data itself serves as clear evidence of the severity of heart attacks and strokes within the realm of CVDs.

The American Heart Association (AHA) also published extensive data on Cardiovascular Diseases (CVDs), revealing that in the United States alone, 868,662 people passed away in 2017 due to CVDs. Additionally, CVD stands as the leading cause of death worldwide, claiming more lives annually than all forms of cancer and Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease (CLRD) combined. According to the American Heart Association (AHA), between 2015 and 2018, an estimated 126.9 million adult Americans had at least one type of CVD. Despite the United States being one of the world's most developed nations, the total expenses for CVD in 2016–2017 amounted to \$363.4 billion. In 2018, Coronary Heart Disease (CHD) accounted for 42.1% of all CVD-related deaths in the United States, followed by stroke (17%), hypertension (11%), heart failure (9.6%), vascular disease (2.9%), and other CVD (1.7%). About 18.6 million deaths worldwide are attributed to cardiovascular disease this year. Furthermore, in 2014 and 2015, CVD and stroke accounted for 13% of overall healthcare costs, surpassing the total number of diagnoses made by any major organization.

### The Indian Scenario

In recent years, Cardiovascular Diseases (CVDs) have surpassed other causes of death in India, accounting for 25% of all deaths. Over eighty percent of all cardiovascular disease-related deaths can be attributed to ischemic heart disease and stroke. According to the Global Burden of Disease Report, India's age-standardized CVD death rate is 272 per 100,000 people, exceeding the global average of 235 per 100,000 people. Particularly worrisome aspects of the CVD epidemic in India include its rapid growth, the young age at which it appears in the population, and the high case fatality rate. This epidemiological shift from infectious to chronic diseases has occurred swiftly in India. Premature

death due to CVD increased by 59% in India, from 23.2 million (1990) to 37 million (2005), measured by the number of years of potential life lost (2010). CVD has emerged as the major cause of mortality throughout all regions of India, including poorer states and rural areas, despite substantial variation in the incidence of cardiovascular risk factors across different regions. As the epidemic has progressed, tobacco smoking and inadequate consumption of fruits and vegetables have become increasingly common among those of lower socioeconomic status. Furthermore, individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are less likely to receive adequate therapy, leading to worse outcomes. Strategies are needed to combat the pandemic, including the development and successful implementation of evidence-based policies, the strengthening of health systems, and a focus on prevention, early identification, and treatment using both conventional and new methods. It's important to reiterate that India is a developing country, and consequently, its rate of cardiovascular diseases is higher than the global average.

### The Kashmir Scenario

The uncertainty surrounding whether the increase in Cardiovascular Diseases (CVDs) is unique to the region or comparable to other Indian states persists due to limited research in this area. Consequently, a team of researchers conducted a study on CVDs in two Kashmiri regions. The current prevalence of Coronary Heart Disease (CHD) is notably high and increasing across the Indian subcontinent. Similar to other emerging communities, the people of Jammu and Kashmir are adapting to new ways of life. However, the unique stress and pressures of the past 15 years, stemming from the disturbing situation in the state, seem to have contributed to the rising prevalence of CHD.

To compare CHD rates between rural and urban communities in the valley, researchers conducted an epidemiological study. Using a random sample method, the study encompassed both rural and urban areas of the twin districts of Anantnag and Srinagar, involving a study population of 44,305 people, with 13,893 intended recipients. The combined results of all diagnostic tests indicated a 7.54 percent prevalence of CHD in the population under study. Specifically, the incidence rate was 6.70 percent in rural areas and 8.37 percent in urban centers. The prevalence of coronary heart disease was 7.88% in males and 6.63% in females. Consequently, the findings of this study, which suggest that urban areas pose a higher risk of cardiovascular diseases than rural areas, hold significance.

The consistent loss of young male lives in Kashmir serves as additional evidence that men are more susceptible to CVDs than women.

### Does Winter Play A Dark Role?

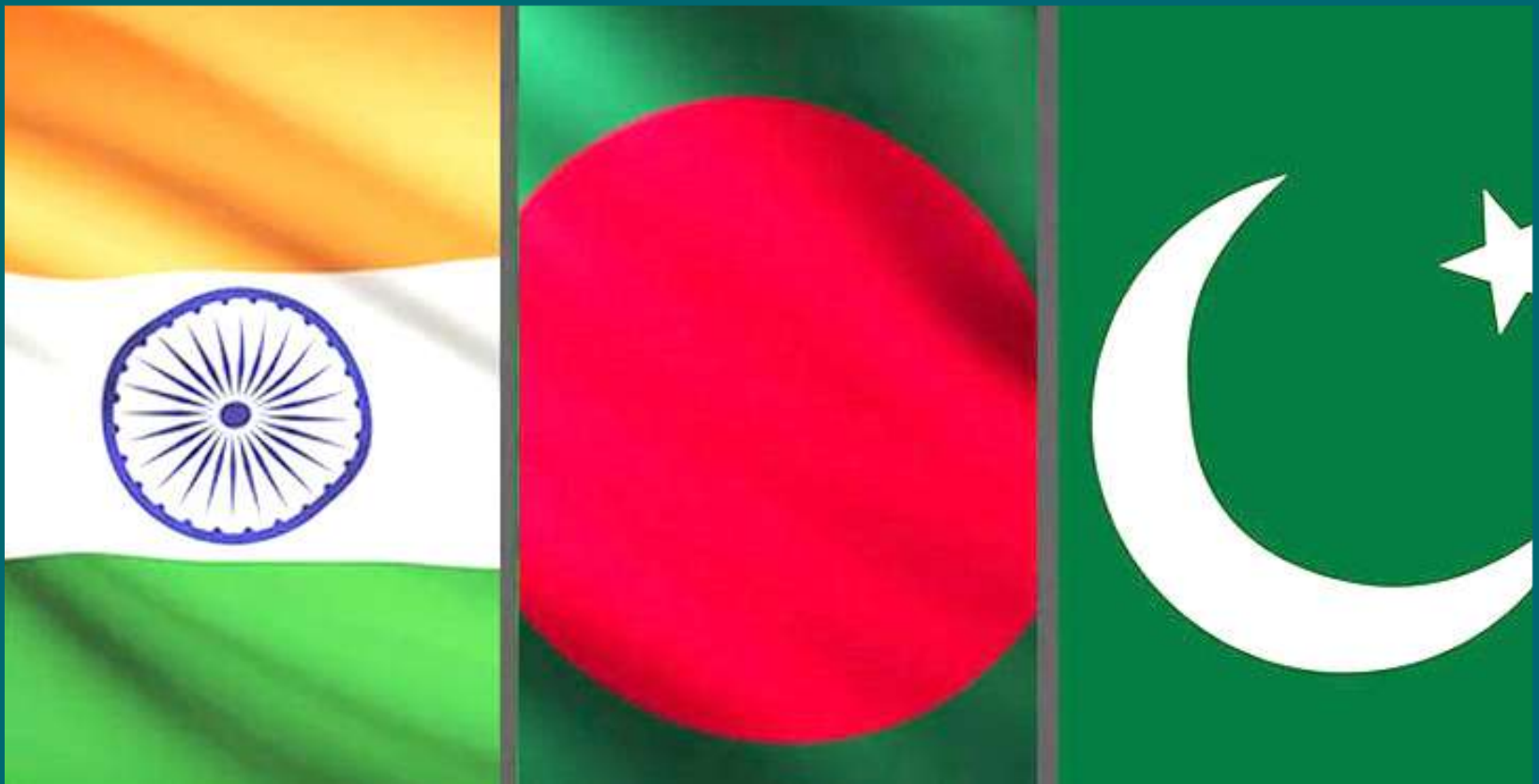
There is a consensus among specialists that the harsh winters in Kashmir may play a significant role in the region's high incidence of heart attacks. Research conducted by Raina et al. (2018), published in the Journal of Human Ecology, suggests that unhealthy lifestyles contribute to the rise in heart attacks in Kashmir. Consequently, residents of Kashmir should remain vigilant about the variables that put them at risk for cardiovascular diseases. However, a lack of credible studies definitively correlating the harsh Kashmiri winters to an increase in heart attacks exists. Nonetheless, this should never be interpreted as a license to disregard the risks already outlined.

### What To Do If You Suspect A Heart Attack?

You or a loved one should immediately seek professional medical assistance or transport the patient to the nearest hospital. Second, you can take nitroglycerin if your doctor has recommended it until help arrives. To be prepared for a heart attack, always have aspirin on hand if your doctor recommends it. An anticoagulant like aspirin can prevent blood clotting, potentially preventing catastrophic bleeding.



# Pakistan's influence in Bangladesh: Impacts on India's Security & China-India Dynamics



UJJAWAL UPADHYAY

## Abstract

This study aims to analyse the role of Pakistan in the politics of Bangladesh how the ISI has deep-rooted itself in the political system of the country and how it poses a major threat to the Northeastern states of India, especially the lower Assam region. The study will present information available in the open source to substantiate the threat and highlight potential dangers if Pakistan's intelligence agency- ISI can in state leaders in Bangladesh that can align with the Pakistan way of thinking and support radical Islamic ideology.

The paper is divided into 4 sections- the first section gives a historical background of relations between Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India. It gives a background of how since the times of Zia-Ur-Rehman, the ISI slowly and gradually seeded itself in the country despite a bloody war and numerous atrocities. The second section discusses the current political scenario and how Pakistan is meddling with the politics of the country and at the same time raising Proxy groups in the country to destabilise India at its North-Eastern periphery. The third section highlights the future threats and how Pakistan is using the "Beartrap strategy", that it employed in Afghanistan to lure the Soviet

Union into a war and fought through Proxies. The final section will be the conclusion and mention the steps that can be taken by India to mitigate the threat and secure its strategic peripheries.

## Introduction

Since the independence in 1971 after a bloodbath and numerous atrocities committed against the Bangla people by the Pakistani army to crush any voice of dissent and dilute the cultural identity of the people through various steps and measures starting from making Urdu the official language for all purposes to brutally cracking down on activism origination in the erstwhile "East Pakistan", led to the war of independence in the December of 1971 and liberating the country and giving birth to Bangladesh. Awami League has enjoyed popularity since the 1970s and a government under the leadership of Sheikh Mujib ur Rahman was formed in 1971 after the liberation. Since then, the country has faced many political assassinations, coups and countercoups that have always kept the country in a state of political instability. One such turning point in political history came in 1975 when Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated and Zia ur Rahman took over the nation and imposed military rule. Bangladesh underwent some major changes under the leadership of Zia. He Islamised the country and idealised the value of sharia in the constitution of Bangladesh by enshrining "Bismallah-ar-Rahman-Rahim" in the preamble. The 5th constitutional amendment in 1979 further strengthened the grip of Zia over Bangladeshi politics as it disallowed any law passed under martial law to be challenged in any court or tribunal within the country. The oppressive regime of Zia also amended its relations with Pakistan and opened diplomatic channels which will be analysed in the later sections. The overall assessment is that the ISI has used proxies such as Lashkar and Jamaat-e-Islami to propagate jihadist ideals and radicalise the youth to raise terrorist groups in the backyard of India which not only



endanger the integrity of India and pose a threat to its national security but also will hamper the economic development and growth of Bangladesh.

## Body

### *Introductory part*

The Awami League (AL) and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), the two contenders for power in Bangladesh are complete opposites in ideologies. While the Awami League has a more secular outlook and focuses more on economic development, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party has a radical Islamic outlook that emphasizes jihad and the Muslim Brotherhood. Liberation has been of key importance in the Bangladeshi politics. Both AL and BNP have very different connotations hence the effects of their ideology are reflected in their policies and political stances on various domestic and international issues. Since Sheikh Hasina came to power in 2009, she has taken some drastic steps to curb the radicalisation and instituted a tribunal to investigate various tribunals to investigate various political killings including her father's- Mujibur Rehman. Awami League has always strived to install a democratic government in Bangladesh and bring stability and development.

### *Descriptive part*

The ISI has been using Bangladesh as a staging area to destabilise the Northeast of India since the 1990s. Lower Assam's ethnic swamp has served provided a true point of entry for radical outfits to infiltrate the heart of mainland India. The emergence of fundamentalists was a result of the large entrance of the terrorist group Al Qaeda associated with Ansarullah Bangla Team entering Assam from Bangladesh, the rising radicalization within the Indian subcontinent, and the polarisation of India's democracy appear to confirm this point. Although there currently has been something of a "cold war" among democratic organisations inside Pakistan as well as the ISI, the reality remains eternally that the ISI operates as a "state within a state," and only a handful of elected representatives in Pakistan have proven competent to put a stop upon this wild administration in past decades. The ISI's deep-state functioning requirements are untainted by democratic oversight, and the current ISI chief, Lt Gen Nadeem Anjum, is most likely currently checking his organization's sights on compensating for Sheikh Hasina and creating Bangladesh's turf around India over a new anti-India disparaging narrative.

## The China Factor

Bangladesh and China have had a diplomatic connection since the Chinese government recognised Dhaka in 1975. Following then, their friendship has blossomed and evolved from a normality into an all-weather friend. Bangladesh and China's connection has grown significantly as a result of several mutually beneficial contracts, industrial agreements, trade strategies, and collaborative industrial and commercial organisations, with collaboration sectors continually growing. The two nations now have a solid political relationship in the vicinity. A considerable measure of investment and commercial movement supplements each other's economic interaction. Chinese investment in the country has expanded tremendously in the past few decades, as it has throughout virtually every other South Asian state. The cumulative Chinese FDI climbed between US\$69.73 billion in 2015 to US\$444.85 million by 2021. Notably, the Chinese serve as the second-largest contributor in Bangladesh, following only the United States. Chinese funding has mostly flowed into the clothing, textile, energy production, and infrastructure sectors. The BRI also includes Chinese investment in the nation's electricity

generating and manufacturing sectors. Beijing has committed to spending US\$38 billion throughout the nation, which is third in terms of GDP in this region shortly after Pakistan. In terms of industry, the two countries have a robust relationship, however, it is heavily skewed to the PRC's benefit. Trade between the two countries climbed from 14.8 billion USD in 2015, to nearly 30 billion USD in 2022. Chinese accounts for almost all of Bangladesh's overall imports throughout the rest of the globe, which mostly include textiles, technology, and refined petroleum goods.

According to the Chinese Ambassador to Dhaka Yao Wen, the Chinese support Dhaka's polls to be conducted in accordance with the laws, and those involved to sort out their disagreements to preserve social and political equilibrium. A watershed point in Bangladesh-China relations occurred in the year 2012 when the International Monetary Fund officially accused Bangladeshi politicians of engaging in corruption during a massive construction complex spanning the Padma waters. Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina saw the International Monetary Fund's claim as a challenge to her professional standing and requested Chinese assistance for wrapping up the development.

While Bangladeshi civil rights groups, coalitions of opposition parties, the general population, and opponents of the Awami League administration broadly favour US policies towards Bangladesh under Biden's presidency, the Chinese mainland, like India, has endorsed PM Hasina. While Hasina encountered Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the inaugural BRICS summit in 2023, Xi told his partner that Beijing would reject outside influence within Bangladesh and deepen its trade relationship alongside it, guaranteeing her the nation might count on Beijing in the face of United States exertion.

Bangladeshi individuals critical of the governing Awami League claim that its administration is modelled after the Chinese leadership, in which ideological rivalry is absent, presidential elections are simplified to a formality, political expression is restricted, and accounts of building roads and bridges take precedence over constitutional security.

There is a chance that Dhaka may move farther towards Chinese influence after the following election, which many outsiders believe is unlikely to be open to everyone since the Awami League intends to remain in its position and would utilise its machinery to do so. The Dhaka administration could find itself unable to continue ignoring the US for long since American-Bangladesh connections are multifaceted and firmly established in individual-to-individual interaction. Dhaka requires both China and the United States, but merely one of these two countries is working to propel Bangladesh closer to resorting to China.

## Conclusion

The Maldivian's last presidential vote provided a stage for the Indian Chinese competitiveness, resulting in the newly elected president, Mohamed Muiz, declaring "Indians away" a prominent topic of his presidential bid. We additionally saw both big forces compete for position throughout the Nepalese campaign of 2022. Although the Bangladeshi state of affairs varies compared to those among its neighbouring South Asian peers, the China and India competition continues to be an essential element. Both nations' interests regarding Bangladesh have grown during the last two decades, demonstrated by the rising global conflicts encircling the next elections. Whatever the explanations for India's modest reaction, it is unambiguous that America has switched its attention from seeing the Bangladeshi situation primarily under the Indian lens. Rather, its priority on fostering a system of government in Bangladesh, particularly to combat the growing presence of China within the nation, will have a big impact on India's position in the Bangladeshi legislative elections in 2024.



# Valley's Dry Spell Ends With Fresh Snowfall

