

Greater Kashmir Editorial

Meeting the future challenges

Our academic heads must keep the institutions of higher learning in sync with the global realities of market, industry, and technology.

While releasing NAAC's 'Analysis of Accreditation Reports of Union Territories-J&K and Ladakh', Lt. Governor Manoj Sinha made some pertinent remarks about the education that we need now, and that is required to face the challenges of future times. It is now an established fact of our times that "we are heading towards an era which will be dominated by the knowledge economy" and that "our biggest asset would be the Human Capital, a combination of talent, skill, and creativity" This insight into present times has been repeatedly emphasised by the academic leadership world over. It is in this backdrop that we are witnessing tectonic changes in the education delivery mechanism in the global institution. From the curricular content to the linking of campuses with industry the change is too big to be missed. The way new courses have been introduced, and are upgraded with regular inputs from the market, we are into a new world of education. This change is not just about the speed and access granted by technology, but about the attitude towards education. Now it is no more limited to the exchange of theoretical and philosophical content in classrooms, but has moved into practical and productive application of knowledge in various walks of life. Today's economy and today's universities are wedded to each other. The two cannot be separated. Not to speak of separation, we cannot imagine one existing without the other. We must now aim "to empower every student with technical and social skills to develop entrepreneurial thinking." This is the need of the hour, and our academic heads must keep the institutions of higher learning in sync with the global realities of market, industry, and technology.

Victims or Culprits

Life of heroin abusers in the valley



DRUG ABUSE
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It's rarely any day when we don't hear news about drugs in Kashmir. Paddlers being caught red-handed with huge quantities of drugs is no a longer jaw-dropping news. People read the news, curse the people involved, and within an hour forget about it. But what about the people who take these drugs; what happens to them and their families. In a conservative society like Kashmir these stories rarely get out of crisis. As a volunteer, I visited a rehab center in Srinagar where I got a chance to meet the people who are the real victims; to meet their families and listen to their stories. As I entered the rehab center, in just some seconds it was clear that something was strange with the place. One could sense that feeling in the atmosphere. Patients on the first sight appeared normal - walking, talking, eating, like normal people. All the patients were involved in substance abuse of HEROIN which is a highly addictive narcotic drug that comes from the flower, the opium poppy also called brown sugar. It is very difficult to identify a heroin abuser based on physical appearance. They behave normally until they start getting withdrawal symptoms. When a person starts taking heroin his body becomes dependent on it and the abuser has to regularly increase the dosage to meet the demand of the body. Patients report that they could not even move or get out of the beds without taking it. "It was not our choice any more but compulsion. And when we were taking it again only then we were able to get back to normal," most of them

would say. One patient reported that every day I made promise to myself that I won't take it but I always kept convincing myself that this one was going to be my last dose.

While asking the parents what took them so long to realize that their children are resorting to drug abuse they said they looked normal when they were with them. One parent said that my son used to stay in his room for prolonged periods and would sleep till afternoon that is when I got suspicious. One mother said that my children were asking for too much money from their father and he used to give them. "I warned him many times. Sometimes children asked him for semester fees four times for the same semester. One day they were sitting in their room with their friends. I decided to over hear their conversation and heard them talking about something TICHU. When I searched this word online I found they were talking about drugs."

It not only affect the health of the abuser it also destabilizes the family financially. Heroin usually gets sold in grams with one gram costing about 5000 to 6000. No body buys that much initially. "In the beginning, we get the drug for free from the paddler," one patient said. "But that only until we become dependent on it. Then he starts charging for the same. In the beginning, it cost me around 1100-1500 per day, but as my dosage increased my per day expenses crossed 6000 mark. One patient said that it was getting impossible for him to arrange 6000 per day. "I tried to quit but in the fear of getting withdrawal symptoms, I stole the gold of my sister on her wedding night." It is now a known thing that when they run out of money they either steal or they offer to work with the pedlar to bring new customers.

The attitude of society towards these people needs to change. We need not see them as bad people, but as victims of an unfortunate situation.

Haseeb Wani is a PG student and a NSS volunteer

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*'Hard wa k'aen sheeh vanait gav
Vuzmalav hueth sanz karun
Asman washluw, tharr tharr nav
baharan asina'*

Kashmir has four seasons - spring, summer, autumn and winter. Autumn starts from September and closes on November end. It is a different feeling, change in weather and change in aura. It is harvest indeed. But history's strides have cast insipid shadows on otherwise nature's romantic golden good turns, for it has become a cursed land. Its society is fragmented, politics disempowered, and people have lost their own tales that had sustained them over centuries during non-native monarchies. Independence came with thickening of the Cold War, which drenched Kashmir with a sense of infused inferiority, for their hegemonic leadership were misled to play the game for others. Thus they willfully inflicted pain and sufferings to their people in the wasteful years of the past. The weakening of conventional order with the emergence of new power centres and regional alliances have lifted that cover of hidden agendas played during the Cold War Era. The documents of the Cold War Era significantly are declassified. The demise of the Cold War, revolution in information technology, electronic media have opened out multiple channels of scrutiny and the windows of new substantiation. It is open to all.

The first generation was mystified; the borders were tight between India and Pakistan. The only information would come through radio and print media. Since the day Pakistan's first Prime Minister was assassinated, Pakistan construed a strategic depth of western alliance against Communist block of then led by Soviet Union; the process of illusion and mystification started in the valley with outside referent. The liberal Pakistan of Jinnah departed in the association of western and US allies. Adle Stevenson then shadow US foreign secretary was successful not



NBL - 2021
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The 7th edition of hybrid International Conference on Nanotechnology for Better Living (NBL-21) was organized in association with many prestigious universities at NIT Srinagar from 07-11 September 2021. The inaugural session of the conference was presided over by Hon'ble Union Minister for Science & Technology, Dr. Jitendra Singh, who was the chief guest on the ceremony and spoke exclusively on Science and Technology. Prior to him, Prof Sahasrabudhe, Chairman AICTE and Prof Rakesh Sehgal, Director NIT Srinagar spoke on many scientific issues and importance of NBL-21. During the five days deliberations, number of stalwarts joined for plenary and keynote addresses both in person and online mode, besides the luminaries made their presence to venue. The summit provided a platform for the young scientists for stimulating deliberations which culminate into collaborative research atmosphere, which has been witnessed by many bench scientists.

Prof. Qayyum Hussain, Vice Chancellor, Cluster University Srinagar remarked: "I would like to congratulate NIT Srinagar, particularly Dr. MA Shah, for organizing a world class hybrid 7th International Conference on Nanotechnology for Better Living (NBL-21) in such difficult situations. I am highly impressed by his passion for science and leadership in bringing together scientists of international repute in the field of Nanotechnology on a single platform to discuss and deliberate on Nanotech-

The Autumn Optics

This autumn should impregnate winter for peace, so that fresh white spring shapes our future

only to sway away great Abdullah from Nehru but also complete the connect of Lord Mountbatten on whose directions Nehru was forced to take the Kashmir case to UNSC for bringing a categorical decision. So the first generation was a mystified illusion filled generation about the persons and places. Delusions and bewildered tales were weaved and told about Abdullah superhumanly persona. Misconceptions and disinformation constructed around military might and social geography across the border. We were brought out in such environment where local political elites never tried to deconstruct these narratives.

The second generation had prospered on Apple, Handicrafts and wood industries, besides state sponsored funds and charity contributions from the gulf countries. It had witnessed the birth of Bangladesh. It was an era of demystification about the persons and places. Great Abdullah alarmed by Iranian revolution and demystified with American fluidity reclaimed power in a settlement. Before Kashmir would regain itself, history had another surprise in the collapse of Soviet Union that misbalanced the world order. It was late for Abdullah to change the course in 1975 that he had drawn after 1953. For the emerged neo rich and new middle class had found its articulation in the politics of religious identity, which was constructed in the preceding years of political disempowerment of nativity. The collapse of ideologies and disintegration of Soviet Union gave this impression that religion has capacities to melt the cultures. It brought imagined nationalisms, weakened nation state, fragmented social and comingled politics with religion and culture in demanding representations. The process of globalization complicated it.

The third generation is a divided generation. It was groomed in violence and witnessed fragmentation of society and dislocation of minorities. Those who are skilled and empowered are individualistic and live in private and personal realms, unmindful of social obligations. The huge chunks of unemployed youth look to social media sites and distant networking channels and so to the state welfare for survival and engagements. Since the state cannot employ all, the non-state agendas in an asymmetrical warfare are their alluring sites for engagement. The state control, cyber surveillances and international affiliations have become ground realities. It needs a visionary leadership that can take these ailing sections of society away from the thickening vulnerabilities of changing world. There is huge expectation and equally imperative on

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local and central leadership to guide the youth for better life chances. Politics on primordialism, divisive on communal lines and prophesising self-serving interests through seductive power politics will further injure the already wounded people.

It is a fast changing fluid world order. Imagine power discourse shifting from the west to east. China is dictating to the internal politics and governance of neighbouring countries. It is presumed that Afghanistan gets stabilised with interim Taliban governance. A ruling Taliban guided by China would not like to export terrorism to other countries, howsoever propelled by our neighbouring country. China will not gain anything from the instabilities in its neighbourhood. Its OROB is secured enough to debt the states and expand its economic and military muscle. Since Pakistan is pivotal to its interests, it would like to have firm control on Pakistan's inner political and social dynamics. No wonder it appreciated Prime Minister Imran Khan, but likes and even prefers Shahbaz Sharif to the present political disposition. China has emerged as the world power; it aspires for international leadership as well. Its policy is not hybrid warfare through religious induction. It believes in cultural integration through development and through its model of efficiency and belief in human capabilities with abhorrence for religion and faith. India should understand the regional developments and take leaf that internal strength of interfaith accommodation and encouragement for merit and strengthening of institutions are the delivering mechanisms, rather than relying on fluid international relationships. The irony is that the internal cohesion does not come from erasing our national heroes who were not only the champions of the National Movement but were builders of this country in the formidable years after independence. India has not only withstood the challenges to its balkanization, but also its democratic traditions and nation building institutions have struck roots. The challenges are stiffer in future as well. It is a reality that Partition did divide the country, but India still remains India in its historical continuity. Its pluralism, blended

traditions of accommodative faiths and diversities are its sustained historical strengths. Despite Pakistan established on 'Two Nations Theory', India did not miss its sustained contents of nationalism, which are on blended traditions of pluralism. The birth of Bangladesh has been problematic for the defining principles of Pakistan. Unless it redefines its nationalism in accordance with its shared history, it has difficulty to find the gluing threads that come from shared cultural traits for its nation building process. It has suffered hugely, for it has refused to move on such lines. In past, specifically since 1970s, Pakistan with US allied support tried hard that India moves towards its conjunction of divisive communal politics to justify its own existence. It failed and is unable to justify its gluing contents on religion, especially when China has taken over as its anchorage. Under China's tutelage, let us see what path its political and military leadership traces for defining its nationalism. Chinese governing management is highly image conscious leadership. It would not like to see Pakistan to go out of its dependency, but at the same time would not encourage it enough as a client state that would have ramifications for its own interests in international perceptions. The Indian leadership has to move in letter and spirit in the welfare of its people on 'subka saath subka vikas' that it has pronounced and it needs to strengthen its public institutions with persons of excellence and integrity. The present dispensation in the valley is trying its hard for political empowerment and enhancing life chances of common people through development and transparency. It is presumed that not before long we will have representative governance. It is imperative that the local visionary leadership needs to make the process of correction, so that when it takes upon itself, the political orientation is on the predictable lines of political empowerment. The local power elite needs to understand that there is no better alternative to the representative democratic governance, it alone can empower nativity. Looking beyond boundaries will only replicate the ruin. The exhausted people of Kashmir hardly can endure that agony, afresh.

This autumn should impregnate winter for peace, so that fresh white spring flowering shapes our future.

The author is an Emeritus professor in sociology at Banaras Hindu University

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What our delegates say

The impressions of the participants about hybrid International Conference on Nanotechnology for Better Living at NIT Srinagar



and its applications in various fields for the benefit of humankind."

In the past two decades, Nanoscience has reduced boundaries between important core areas (Physics, Chemistry, Electrical, Bio- and Mechanical sciences) and it has truly become a global interdisciplinary field with outstanding applications. I am happy to see a large number of participants attending lectures given by experts in a number of interdisciplinary topics. I hope the next NBL would be an event where all of us meet together to have more fruitful scientific discussions," expressed M.S. Ramachandra Rao, IIT Madras

Dr. Nasheeman Ashraf, CSIR-IIIM, Sanatnagar, Srinagar found the work presented by various invitees as thought provoking.

Prof. G A Harmain, Dean R n C found the inaugural and valedictory functions of the conference especially impressive for bringing scientists, engineers, researchers, political leaders, society and academicians on the same platform.

Dr. Tariq Maqbool from the Department of Nanotechnology, University of Kashmir considered the conference matching international standards in every sense where "fascinating science on Nanoscale was presented and deliberations were held on the latest methods in synthesis of advanced nanomaterial and

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their application in various fields like, efficient storage devices, smart material, nanosensors, nanomedicine etc."

"The young minds indeed got ignited and were waiting for such programs more eagerly and enthusiastically than the Eid and Diwali festivals", expressed Prof S A lone, JMI New Delhi

"Well organized conference, good scale, solid content in presentations," was how Samreena Sabahat, from Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi summed it up.

Arif Gulzar, Hovey Laboratory, DTU health technology, Denmark found NBL 21 "an exciting experience"

"NBL is a step forward to put J&K on the landscape of Nanotechnology which will play a pivotal role in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (FIR)", was how Saifullah Lone, Scientist D, praised the conference. "From this conference I generated lot of ideas to improve my profes-

sional skills. I really enjoyed my time and looking forward for next INBL conference," said Dr Shah Nawaz, University KL Malaysia. Prof Tokeer Ahmad found the conference well arranged, and the quality of lectures and speakers reflects as reflective of the hard work of organizers. Azizah A. Rahman, Secretary to the Rector felt honoured to be invited to speak and participate in the conference

Professor Chennupati Jagadish, congratulated the staff and students at NIT Srinagar on this highly successful ICNBL 2021. he joined the valedictory function.

As a Materials Researcher, Physicist Dr. M V Reddy from Canada read the conference programme and attended few talks. He found the event well organized that attracted good number of international and local speakers.

"This conference was really well-organized. A interdisciplinary platform for academics to share ideas and research findings on subjects of practical significance", were the impressions of Dr. Renuka Seenivasan from Dubai.

Prof. SK Sharma, Director Academics, MIET, Jammu considered the conference as a treat to attend.

Dinesh Pandya, Advisor and Dean, IIT Jammu, gave a talk in the memory of Prof. K. L. Chopra, a great visionary, technologist, motivator and inspirer to young researcher for doing meaningful high-end research. He expressed his sincere wish that this biennial conference series continues to benefit the community by evolving itself and remaining focussed on contemporary areas of use of the people of India.

Kishore K. Sandvani, MRC, Qatar, hoped that the e-conference was beneficial for the young researchers from across the globe.

All the participants were impressed by the content and the conduct of the event, and praised the organizers for that.

Dr. M. A. Shah, Head Department of Physics, National Institute of Technology

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