

□ By Sidharth Mishra



Your reporter's acquaintances teaching on the various campuses tell him that he doesn't have the requisite credentials to be part of the intelligentsia. His observations on matters of interest are dismissed by intellectuals to be that of a journalist's superficial views. Well, they are a journalist's views. Having essentially been trained as a grassroots reporter the observations may be lacking in nuance but certainly not in honesty. The training to question an incident and seek an answer for the same is the ultimate test of a reporter's skill; lack of fieldwork is the ultimate testimony of an academicians' intelligence in this country. Like there is this question – why is there such a hue and cry in the valley; and its cantankerous resonance in the corridors of the intelligentsia. Well, your reporter hasn't found an answer to it all these years, and theorems held forward by the likes of Partha Chatterjee are all bogus.

However, here I must make the distinction between reporters and television anchors. The television anchors, howsoever, urbane or garrulous, have seldom done the necessary legwork to develop that "instinct" which comes from years of spending time in the field and not lecturing in the studio. About a decade ago, in an essay published in an anthology brought out by the Oxford University Press, your reporter had mentioned that the best person to report during the elections is not those trained in political reportage but those who have worked on mundane city beats like crime, sewer, water supply, etc. These city reporters understand the mundane but essential issues and have their finger on the pulse of the voter. So to your city reporter, what interests more is the news that 19 Kashmiri gentlemen cadets got commissioned in the Indian Army earlier this month. Thus the legacy of Lt Umar Fayyaz has not got extinguished, but several have come forward to keep the tradition alive. The 490 cadets who passed out include 67 cadets from friendly countries. Uttar Pradesh accounted for the highest number of cadets with a figure of 74, followed by Haryana with 49, Uttarakhand (40), Rajasthan (30), Bihar (28) and Delhi with 23. My friends from the intelligentsia would say that in social sciences two and two always don't add up to make four. With 19 cadets joining the ranks of commissioned officers of the Indian Army, Jammu & Kashmir doesn't seem like an 'alienated' state. The figures take them closer to the Hindi heartland states like Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Uttarakhand and Bihar. What would cause concern for me is why people from Punjab are not joining in 'respectable' numbers. Your reporter writes about the Valley primarily based on reading the minds of those who "serve in the Valley", those who "practice politics in the Valley" and those who "report on the Valley." The fortunate part is that he gets a chance to interact, meet, and talk with several of them belonging to each the three categories mentioned. So what is the understanding of the situation after several months of turmoil? Has the situation deteriorated after Gen Bipin Rawat took over as the Chief of Army Staff? What is the "Mission

## Unnecessary wail over Kashmir Vale

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Kashmir" of the present government? Indeed to isolate, emaciate and strangle those who seek abrogation of the Instrument of Accession signed by Maharaja Hari Singh and Governor General Luis Mountbatten on October 26, 1947, under provisions of the Indian Independence Act of 1947. From the way events have unfolded in the Valley, few things have become evident. First, the 'turmoil' has been limited to, as BJP president Amit Shah puts it, just three-and-half of the 22 districts of the state. Second is the fact that the 'turmoil' has strong religious overtones and is part of the upheaval in the Islamic world. The third point is that there is a significant role played by Pakistan in fomenting the 'turmoil' in these few districts. While point number one and two would find it difficult to get past the scrutiny of Indian intelligentsia, a euphemism for the left of the centre and extreme left elements amidst us, there are, however, reports to support the credibility of these observations. To the incorrigible believer in the abilities of the Indian Army, to your reporter, Kashmir's Super 40 makes as good a story as Bihar's Super 40. The 'Kashmir Super-40' coaching program is conducted by the Army at Srinagar in coordination with its training partner Centre for Social Responsibility and Learning (CSRL) and Petronet LNG Ltd (PLL) since 2013. Inspired by a similar coaching programme run by now globally famous Anand Kumar in Patna, this program provides a platform for the underprivileged but talented students of the state to compete at the national level. An 11-month free lodging, boarding and coaching programme is provided to the selected 40 students of J&K at 'Zero Cost' to them. This year nine of the 30 finally made the grade to the IITs. The centre aims to surpass this year's success in 2018 with enhanced batch strength of 50. Your reporter wonders, when we have such great stories emanating out of the Vale, what is it that drives our media's obsession with the wail of the stone-pelters. Why such desire in the intelligentsia to create the impression of Kashmir being a colony of the Indian state. Well never heard of an imperialist army introducing welfare schemes like Super 40. Would welcome and hear if there are such references in history.

(Sidharth Mishra is Consulting Editor, Millennium Post.)