

## NEW INDIAN AIR FORCE ENSIGN

08 Oct 2023 will go down as a momentous day in the annals of IAF' history. On this historic day, the Chief of Air Staff will unveil the new IAF' ensign.

Going back in history, the RIAF' Ensign comprised of the Union Jack in the upper left canton and the RIAF' roundel (Red, White & Blue) on the fly side. Post-Independence, the Indian Air Force ensign was created by replacing the Union Jack with the Indian tri colour and the RAF' roundels with the IAF' tri colour roundel in the lower right canton.

A new IAF' ensign has now been created to better reflect the values of the Indian Air Force. This reaffirmation will now be reflected by the inclusion of the Air Force Crest in the top right corner of the Ensign, towards the fly side.

The IAF' Crest has the national symbol, the Ashoka lion on the top with the words “सत्यमेव जयते” in Devanagari below it. Below the Ashoka lion is a Himalayan eagle with its wings spread, denoting the fighting qualities of the IAF'. A ring in light blue colour encircles the Himalayan eagle with the words “शारीर्य वयु सेना”The motto of the IAF' “ऋ स्युशं दीप्त” is inscribed below Himalayan eagle in golden Devanagari. The IAF' motto has been taken from verse 24, Chapter 11 of the Bhagavad Gita and means "Radiant Thou Touchedst Heaven" or in other words "Touching the sky with Glory".

## J&K from terrorist capital to tourist capital

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

There is no denying the fact that the UT of Jammu and Kashmir has transformed from terrorist capital to tourist capital as there is discernible change and improvement in the ground situation in J&K and there is great tourist footfall in the last and current year .The militancy in fact is on the death bed and counting its final days .On the whole some stray and residual militancy is showing its ugly head and with the help of dedicated security forces and support of the general public this very thin militancy will also be eliminated very soon and Kashmir will soon become again a paradise on earth and there are no two opinions about it .Some time earlier and from the last over three decades Jammu and Kashmir only witnessed militancy and thousands of the precious human lives have been consumed by the giant of terrorism but now the situation has totally changed and from being a terrorist capital and den it has transformed into a tourist capital and this positive change is a welcome development and augurs well for the overall development of Jammu and Kashmir and the common man of J&K is very happy for this change and wants that the fruits of this change and development should reach the last man standing in the queue .With the active and successful anti terrorist operations ,the security forces have maintained upper hand so far as the terrorism is concerned as the terrorists are now on the run and the common people are also not providing shelter to these enemies of humanity and thus they stand isolated as well as cornered and there are now only stray incidents of militancy in J&K and the people are happy with this transformation of the UT from a terrorist hub to tourist capital .Earlier the tourists were feeling insecure to visit Jammu and Kashmir read Kashmir due to the terrorism and several countries of the globe had issued advisories to its citizens not to visit Kashmir because of terrorism ,but today the situation is totally changed and the foreign and Indian tourists are visiting in huge numbers to the tourist spots in Jammu and Kashmir and contributing to the economy of the UT in a big way .All the people connected with tourism directly or indirectly are gaining from the big tourist footfall and it is a big contribution to the tourist economy of Jammu and Kashmir .The people of the UT are welcoming tourists and providing all help to tourists so that they may not fell any difficulty .The hospitality of the people of J&K has earned admiration and appreciation from the tourists and thus they are coming in huge numbers to see and enjoy the mesmerizing tourist spots of Jammu and Kashmir .The increase in the tourist footfall is very significant and it has played its role and has thus changed the whole narrative of Jammu and Kashmir as there is significant change so far as the ground situation in J&K is concerned .Prime minister Narendra Modi who has the political will ,determination and the big mandate has turned Jammu and Kashmir from a terrorist capital to tourist capital and hub .The national general secretary of BJP and incharge Jammu and Kashmir Tarun Chugh has rightly remarked that Modi has transformed Jammu and Kashmir from a terrorist capital into a tourist capital and there are no two opinions about it. .In the last over three decades there was militancy and terrorism rite large in Jammu and Kashmir and the militants had an upper hand but now from sometime past there is positive change and the union territory has transformed from a terrorist hub into a tourist hub and this positive change has been possible due the leadership of PM Modi and his direction and decision making power.Thus from the second term of Modi which had commenced from 2019,there has been a positive and encouraging change in the overall situation in Jammu and Kashmir and it has transformed from a terrorist capital into a tourist hub as the tourist both foreign and Indian have visited and are visiting in huge numbers to Jammu and Kashmir and changing whole narrative about Jammu and Kashmir .Tourists in lakhs and crores are visiting Jammu and Kashmir and contributing towards the economy of the UT and this is not an ordinary development as during last over three decades of militancy and violence the tourism had suffered a great loss and now from few years of the Modi dispensation ,the tourist footfall has increased beyond imagination and has become an inseparable part of the economy of J&K and thus impacting the tourist economy of the UT .The coming of the tourists in great numbers is a welcome and positive development which has got a positive bearing upon the economy of Jammu and Kashmir and it has carved a place of pride in the tourist map of the world .More and more Indian as well as foreign tourists are visiting Jammu and Kashmir and they are satisfied with the hospitality of the people of the UT and they are becoming the advertisement agents of J&K and are impressing the tourists to come to Jammu and Kashmir and have a glimpses of the beauty of this paradise on earth .In fact the foreign tourists are becoming the peace ,change and positivity ambassadors of Jammu and Kashmir and through them there is great effect of the multiplayer and the tourists in great numbers are coming from the foreign countries to see the beauty of Jammu and Kashmir .The UT is no longer the notorious place of terrorism but slowly and steadily changing and transforming into the tourist hub of the India as tourists both domestic and foreign are visiting Jammu and Kashmir and are experiencing the joy and beauty of J&K and taking much pleasure on the beauty of the union territory .In fact the total and positive change in the ground situation so far As the terrorism is concerned is a thing of joy and satisfaction for the common man and Jammu and Kashmir is fast turning into a tourist hub and capital and this is no ordinary development but a feat of significance as Jammu and Kashmir is experiencing and witnessing a total and positive change which is in the interest of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and mind it all the transformation and change has come due to the leadership qualities and strong will of the prime minister Modi.

(The author is a columnist, social and KP activist).

## Urban Agriculture: Challenges and Opportunities

■ DR. BANARSI LAL

Urban agriculture has become a burning topic on growing and producing the food in the urban areas. It can be defined as the growing of plants and raising of animals within (intra-urban) and around (peri-urban) cities. Urban agriculture is distinguished from rural agriculture as it is integrated into the urban economic and ecological system. Such linkages include the urban residents as labourers, urban resources such as organic wastes like compost and urban wastewater for irrigation, urban consumers, urban ecology, urban food system, etc. It has been observed by the United Nations that the earth population will increase by 40 per cent and cross nine billion by 2050.It is estimated that 80 per cent of population will reside in cities. It has been observed that many countries produce around 20% of their food in cities. Now the developmental agencies have started to integrate urban agriculture in their policies to solve the urban people problems. Urban poor people are mainly engaged in urban agriculture. In many cities it has been observed that lower and middle class government officials, school teachers, rich people are involved in urban agriculture. Women constitute an important part of urban farmers as agriculture and related agro- processing activities are efficiently performed by them.

Agriculture is the mainstay of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir's economy. About 80 per cent of J&K population depends on agriculture. Over the years, the farmers of J&K have adopted new agricultural technologies to increase the agricultural production. Like other states/UTs of the country, people from rural areas of Jammu and Kashmir are migrating towards the urban areas. Rapid urbanization has increased the urban poverty. Cities like Jammu and Srinagar are not able to generate sufficient income and employment opportunities for the rapidly growing population. The costs of supplying and distributing food from rural areas to the urban areas or to import food for the cities are continuously rising and it is expected that urban food insecurity will increase in future. Food prices are increasing which is an emerging problem for the poor urban consumers. Urban agriculture has immense scope in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir as it can create income and employment opportunities

for the urban poor people. Keeping the scope of urban agriculture in view, there is need to create awareness on urban agriculture among the urban and peri-urban people of J&K.Urban agriculture is different than urban jobs that require travelling to the town centre and industrial area. Urban agriculture may take place inside the cities (intra-urban) or in the peri-urban areas. Urban agriculture is possible on the homeland or on land away from the residence, on private land or on public land (parks, conservation areas, along roads, streams and railways), or semi-public land (school yards, grounds of schools and hospitals).By urban agriculture food products from different types of crops and animals as well as non-food products like aromatic and medicinal herbs, ornamental plants, tree products etc. or combinations of these can be produced. Production units in urban agriculture in general tend to be more specialized than rural enterprises. Urban agriculture includes agricultural production activities as well as food processing and marketing activities. In urban agriculture, production and marketing tend to be easier in terms of time and space.

Growing crops in urban areas is quite challenging but possible across the globe. It requires specific knowledge depending upon the location and limitations of land available in the urban areas. Urban agricultural production is mostly done for self-consumption with surpluses being traded. However, the importance of the market-oriented urban agriculture both in volume and economic value should not be underestimated. In urban agriculture mainly fresh products are sold and some part of it is processed for own use, cooked and sold in the streets, or processed and packaged for sale. In urban agriculture, we may encounter individual or family farms, groups or cooperative farms and commercial enterprises at various scales ranging from micro- and small farms to medium-sized and some large-scale enterprises. The technological level of the majority of urban agriculture enterprises in most of the cities like Jammu and Srinagar is still low. However, in some cities of the country like Bangalore and Hyderabad technically advanced and intensive agriculture can be found. Urbanization is rapidly increasing together with the rapid increase in urban poverty and urban food insecurity. Most of the cities in the state have great difficulties

to cope with the development and are unable to create sufficient formal employment opportunities for the poor people. Disposal of urban wastes and waste water and maintaining air and river water quality problems are also increasing.

Urban agriculture can provide a complementary strategy to reduce urban poverty and food insecurity and enhance urban environmental management. Urban agriculture plays an important role in enhancing urban food security since the costs of supplying and distributing food to urban areas based on rural production and imports continue to increase and do not satisfy the demand, especially for the poor people. Urban agriculture also contributes to local economic development, poverty alleviation and social inclusion of the urban poor and women in particular, as well as to the greening of the city and the productive reuse of urban wastes. The importance of urban agriculture is being recognized by many international organizations like the UN, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and municipalities. Urban agriculture contributes to food security and healthy nutrition in urban and peri-urban areas. Urban agriculture may improve both food intake and the quality of the food may improve. In certain countries, 40-60 percent of food consumed by low-income groups is self-produced. It has been observed that the children aged five years or less in low-income farming households were found to be significantly better-off nutritionally (less stunted) than the counterparts in non-farming households and urban farmers generally eat more vegetables than non-urban farmers of the same wealth class. In addition to production for their own consumption needs, large amount of food is produced for other categories of the population. In certain cities urban dwellers are actively involved in agriculture. These urban farmers produce substantial amounts of food for urban consumers.

Urban agriculture to a large extent complements rural agriculture and increases the efficiency of the national food system. It provides products that rural agriculture cannot supply easily (e.g. perishable products).Urban agriculture can play an important strategy for poverty eradication and social integration. It can give the positive stimulus especially to the poor urban women. Several municipalities or NGOs have initi-

ated urban agriculture projects that involve disadvantaged groups such as orphans, disabled people, women, immigrants without jobs, or elderly people, with the aim to integrate them more strongly into the urban network and to provide them with a decent livelihood. The participants in the project may feel enriched by working constructively, building their community, working together and in addition producing food and other products for consumption and for sale. Urban agriculture may be undertaken for the physical or psychological relaxation. Also, urban and peri-urban farms may take on an important role in providing recreational opportunities for citizens or having educational functions such as bringing youth in contact with animals, teaching about ecology, etc.

Urban agriculture and urban forestry can contribute to disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change by reducing runoff, reducing urban temperatures, reducing dust and CO2, while growing fresh food close to consumers reduces energy spent in transportation, cooling, processing and packaging. Urban agriculture can improve the urban ecological system and can play an important role in the urban environmental management system. Now-a-days cities produce more and more wastewater and organic wastes. For most of the cities the disposal of wastes has become a serious problem. Urban agriculture can help to solve such problems by turning urban wastes into a productive resource. In addition, compost-making initiatives create employment and provide income for the urban poor. The use of freshwater has the additional advantage for urban poor farmer because it contains lot of nutrients. Technologies such as hydroponics or organoponics, drip irrigation, zero tillage etc. substantially reduce water needs and health risks and are very interesting for the urban environment. Urban agriculture can positively impact upon the greening and cleaning of the cities. Degraded open spaces and vacant land are often used as informal waste dumpsites and are a source of crime and health problems. When such zones are turned into productive green spaces not only an unhealthy situation is cleared but also the people can actively enjoy the green area. Such activities may also enhance community self-esteem in the neighbourhood.

(The writer is Asstt. Professor, KVK Reasi).

## Reviving Ancestral heritage-Jammu Dogri Takri

■ SHIKHA MAGOTRA

Takri is known for its complexity and chaos in writing forms available all over the regions of J&K, H.P. and Uttarakhand. Even though it ceased to exist in the 20th century, its remnants are too numerous and dispersed for locals to actually lose or forget about it. Every stone, copper plate, utensil, political letter, book, and historical document found in north-western India speaks volumes about the use of the Takri during the periods before the country's independence.

It is the only regional script of India known to have the largest number of variations or forms- 13, used for writing numerous languages spoken all over the states of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and UT of J&K till 20th century. With Chambeali and Dogri Takri as the most commonly recognised and privileged forms, Takri script has around 11 more forms namely Jaunsari, Sirnauri, Koehi, Kulvi, Mandeali, Kashtwari, Kangri, Gaddi, Garhi, Bhatteali and Kinnauri. Each and every form has its own alphabet but share same orthographic structure and thus, belong to a single script- Takri Script. It comprises enormous rich heritage of whole North-west India.

Just as a river, when spreads over a larger wider area, forms tributaries; and as the enormous spread of knowledge in one person, formed ten heads. Similarly, Takri script with the aim to reach wide masses living in a wide North West region of India with high range of altitude variation too naturally got diversified into 13 forms/ heads. Eventually, Takri became a class of scripts, with one of its class/ form/ head as the script of our Dogri language. Let's dive a little deeper into the origin of the script- Namay Dogra Akkhar/ Dvigrīt Akkhar, with Namay Akkhar as its indigenous name.

Origin

Sharada was the most refined and complete script, used for writing the language of Kashmir- paradise on earth, in 16th century. The script at that time, was not only confined to the present Kashmir province but the whole North-west India which include present J&K, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Punjab. The script Sharada remained intact for a long time because its usage was limited

to the most literate men of those times only. The earliest inscription of Sharada is 'Saharan Prashasti' from Himachal Pradesh, still preserved in Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba. With time, Sharada descended as Devashesha with transformation in some alphabets, to be used in the mountainous regions and Gurmukhi to be used in the plains of Punjab. But, Devashesha also called later Sharada, was confined for religious purposes only. So, to be used for writing by the common people of the states too, Devashesha was again transformed and named Takri in 18th century. The new name was given to differentiate its usage from religious men (Purohīts/temple pundits) of the state who considered themselves higher from the folks. So, it is known to have originated from Sharada family of Brahmi scripts through an intermediate form - Devashesha.

Takri had simpler akshar/ alphabets formation and thus was easier to learn and remember by the common folk. But, as the region where it was used for writing was quite widely spread from present J&K to Himachal Pradesh to Uttarakhand further and was also highly mountainous, Takri could not retain single form of writing. Moreover, that time, the North-west India was divided into smaller territories, governed by petty rajas and thus, there was little communication amongst the people belonging to different territory. By the time, Takri reached each and every common man of the area, it evolved into multiple forms. So, in total, Takri has 13 forms now, each having its own alphabet but all of them share single basic orthographic structure or style of writing.

Jammu Dogri Takri Generations

Basically, the form of Takri used for writing Dogri in Jammu has two generations:

► Before 1857

► After 1857

One of the 13 forms of Takri was- Ganmat/ Old Dogri alphabet, used for writing Dogri language in J&K since 18th century. Sadly, at that time, the people in J&K who were literate enough to write it were the rich land owners of the state. So, the authority went to them and they kept the script Ganmat highly confusing and ambiguous- without using matras, using same alphabet to denote multiple phonemes. Then, in 1857, when Maharaja

Ranbir Singh reign started in J&K, he noticed the exploitation of farmers by the land owners. He started working in education field. For this, he along with Jyothi Vishweshwar, the principal of Ranbir pathshala of that time, reframed the script Ganmat and the improvised form was named "Namay Dogra Akkhar".

He declared the script- Namay Dogra Akkhar as the official script of the state, along with Urdu. The constitution of the state (Ranbir Penal Code/ Ranbir And Bidhi) and other political orders, manuscripts were printed in both Namay Dogra Akkhar and Urdu, bilingual. Even the royal postage stamps of the state and the coins too had Namay Dogra Akkhar engraved on it, besides Urdu and Devanagari. The script was used for writing petitions that are read before Maharaja and for this purpose, it had replaced Urdu too. Knowledge of the script was compulsory at that time. No official not having knowledge of the script could be recruited in the state. Maharaja himself signed in Namay Dogra Akkhar on local official papers. A newspaper "Dogra Mittar" was known to be published in Namay Dogra Akkhar in 1889 by Pt. Durga Prasad Mishra as editor.

The period of existence of the script was short-lived, till 1960 approx. The decline period of the script started in 1910 during the rule of Maharaja Pratap Singh, and by 1940, it had almost lost its existence and got confined to home writing only. Some of the Dogri poets wrote in the script but none of the book got published. Finally, a small tributary of the river of knowledge- Sharada, dried completely, when the state adopted Devanagari script for writing Dogri language after independence.

Features

If we compare Namay Akkhar to other Indian scripts, its alphabets/ characters resembles most closely to the Gurmukhi and Devanagari scripts. Eight of its characters are similar to Gurmukhi and seven are similar to Devanagari script. Namay Akkhar does not make use of shirokekha to form words. A shirokekha is a horizontal line that is drawn over the characters to join them to form words while writing. This is the peculiarity of the script that besides being similar to the shirokekha scripts, it is itself written without shi-

rokekha. Also, the script has a very unique way of writing half characters. If we look at its characters, they are very beautifully and artistically designed which makes it easier to write and remember.

JAMMU DOGRI TAKRI

Namay Akkhar Character Set

Revival

Amidst all the difficulties, the script's revival work has begun all over the state. Many organisations within the state and even outside it have started working on it from past few years and they have taken a considerable step forward too. The manuscripts printed during Maharaja Ranbir Singh's rule preserved in Raghunath Library, situated at the backside of Raghunath temple, Jammu are digitized and available online by eGangotri.

An organisation outside J&K, named Aksharaya has also supported our script's revival work. They surveyed our state's archives in 2019 and developed translation tool for translating dogri written in Devanagari to Namay Akhaar script. They also developed digital font for the visualisation of dogri written in Namay Akkhar script, on our own computers.

Recently, in July 2023, a calligraphy workshop was organized by J&K Arts and Cultural academy in collaboration with The Calligraphy Foundation to bridge the gap between Dogri written in Devanagari and its original script- Namay Akkhar. Students from all over the state participated & learned basic calligraphy skills for writing Devanagari script and they wrote Namay Akkhar characters (Jammu Dogri Takri script) too using calligraphy. Along with it, an independent initiative to revive the writing system of Jammu Dogri Takri has begun in the state through Dogra Mittar course since August 2023. The course is designed to learn the namay akkhar and revive the art of writing in the original script of Dogri language, including basic characters, half forms, ligatures, word and sentence formation. This script is being specifically taught to all, irrespective of any educational background. This initiative has been started by the author herself and is imparting script's knowledge to the second batch now, from 29th September, 2023.

(The author is Ph.D. in Takri Script, SMVDU).

## YOUR COLUMN To Enhance Your Public Speaking Skills

Dear Editor,

Public speaking is a valuable skill that can open doors to numerous opportunities in both personal and professional life. Whether you're giving a presentation at work, speaking at a social event, or addressing a large audience, improving your public speaking skills can boost your confidence and effectiveness as a communicator.

Becoming a proficient public speaker is achievable with dedication and practice. Whether you're a seasoned speaker looking to refine your skills or a novice starting from scratch, these seven strategies will help you build confidence and become a more effective com-

municator.

The adage "practice makes perfect" holds true for public speaking. Regularly practicing your speeches or presentations allows you to become more comfortable with the material and delivery. Practice in front of a mirror, record yourself, or rehearse with friends and family to gain valuable feedback.

Knowing your content inside and out is essential. Understand the topic thoroughly, and organize your speech logically with a clear beginning, middle, and end. This familiarity will make it easier to handle questions or unexpected situations during your presentation.

It's normal to feel nervous before speaking in public, but learning to manage those nerves is crucial. Try deep breathing exercises, visualization techniques, or mindfulness to calm your anxiety. Remember, a little nervousness can be a positive energy boost.

Captivate your audience by making your presentation interactive. Use anecdotes, ask questions, and encour-

age participation when appropriate. Engaging with your audience creates a connection and keeps them interested in what you have to say.

Non-verbal communication plays a significant role in public speaking. Maintain good posture, make eye contact with your audience, and use gestures and facial expressions to emphasize key points. A confident demeanor can enhance your credibility.

Visual aids, such as slides or props, can enhance your presentation, but use them sparingly and effectively. Ensure that your visuals complement your speech rather than overshadow it. Avoid cramming too much information onto slides and maintain a clear, concise design.

Continuously improving your public speaking skills requires feedback. After each presentation, ask for constructive criticism from peers, mentors, or even your audience. Use their input to identify areas for improvement and refine your skills.

Vijay Garg