

BHASHINI: Multilingual Initiative

The Maha Kumbh Mela, a grand religious and cultural event in India, is an occasion that attracts millions of devotees, pilgrims, and visitors from across the world. Held once every 12 years at four different locations, it is one of the largest gatherings of human beings on the planet. The event brings together people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, which presents significant challenges in terms of communication, ensuring access to important information, and providing a seamless experience for everyone. This is where BHASHINI, an innovative multilingual initiative, plays a transformative role.

BHASHINI is an ambitious government project launched with the vision of bridging language barriers and promoting seamless communication. BHASHINI, which translates to "language" in Sanskrit, aims to develop a comprehensive language technology ecosystem that supports multilingual content creation, real-time translation, and information dissemination across various digital platforms. At its core, the project envisions providing multilingual access to information, making digital content available in every language spoken across India.

With over 22 official languages and hundreds of dialects, India is a linguistically diverse country. The BHASHINI initiative is a response to this linguistic diversity, ensuring that no one is left behind due to language limitations, especially during large-scale events like the Maha Kumbh Mela.

The Kumbh Mela, due to its massive scale and the influx of people from all corners of India and the world, presents unique challenges when it comes to ensuring clear and effective communication. Pilgrims and visitors speak various languages and dialects, making it difficult for authorities and organizers to convey crucial information to everyone.

BHASHINI's intervention at the Maha Kumbh Mela focuses on utilizing technology to break down these language barriers and make vital information accessible to everyone. Through the use of real-time translation tools, AI-powered language models, and multilingual support systems, BHASHINI ensures that visitors receive all the necessary information, instructions, and guidance in their preferred language.

BHASHINI supports the real-time translation of public announcements and information boards at the Kumbh Mela into multiple languages. Whether it's information about the timings of religious ceremonies, safety guidelines, or transportation updates, the technology automatically translates content into the languages that people speak. This ensures that no one is left uninformed due to linguistic barriers, enhancing the overall experience of the visitors.

BHASHINI-powered digital assistants and chatbots play a crucial role in helping people navigate the event. Visitors can interact with these tools to receive instant answers to their queries regarding directions, event schedules, health and safety protocols, and more. These assistants, integrated with language models, understand and respond in various regional languages, making them more user-friendly for a diverse crowd.

BHASHINI integrates with mobile apps to offer language support for navigation, guides, and event details. With millions of people attending the Kumbh, it's critical to have an accessible and easily navigable system in place. The app, powered by BHASHINI's language technologies, allows visitors to receive notifications, search for specific places, and get assistance in their native language. Additionally, voice-based assistance ensures that even those who are not tech-savvy can access information easily.

■ DR BANARSI LAL

Rural-urban migration is one of the most widespread global demographic trends. Presently there is growing international attention to the phenomenon of migration, its causes, its effects and the way in which it occurs. Between 2000 and 2017, the total number of international migrants increased from 173 millions to 258 millions and as many as 25 millions are refugees. Rural India represents around 70 per cent of the Indian population. It is very important to engage the rural youth in a productive way in tandem by providing them credible opportunities for the growth and development. Agriculture is losing the attraction among the rural youths. If the youths will generate extra income in agriculture then the interests of the youths in agriculture can be retained.

There is need to make agri-based industries in the rural areas so that employment opportunities can be generated for the rural youths. Conserving natural environments while feeding the growing human population requires higher higher productivity per hectare. India is having the youngest workforce in the world and our nation can become the human resource capital in the world by creating skill among the youths and convert the trained manpower for the growth of the Indian economy. In India around 51 per cent of the households survive on income from manual casual labour, 30 per cent from cultivation and 19 per cent from other sources. Around 35.73 per cent of the rural people are illiterate and about 67 per cent have education below or till primary. Women constitute about 48.5 per cent of the population and play important role in the Indian economy.

Migration is closely related to fighting hunger, achieving food security and promoting the sustainable use of natural resources. It is primarily a rural phenomenon.

According to the World Bank, over 75 % of the world's poor are located in the rural areas. People migrate for many reasons including seeking better jobs and education or following of family members who have migrated. The positive aspects of rural-urban migration are not without negative consequences.

Rural communities lose human capital especially rural youths who are attracted towards education and job opportunities in urban centres.

This often results in losses of traditional knowledge and socio-cultural values including agrobiodiversity and ethnobiological knowledge. In addition, the local

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social structure often changes as males migrate, leaving communities with children, women and elderly. These changes affect local environment of rural areas. Changes in land use and local societies cause a slow down of the rural economy and local organisations will be unable to maintain infrastructure.

It has been observed that around 20 million people are shifting from rural to urban areas annually. From 2001 migration from rural to urban areas has increased from 27.8 to 31 per cent. Rural migrations to the urban areas have direct impact on agricultural productivity. Rural India remains in the focus of the policy makers as 10.1 per cent of its labour force is unemployed as compared to 7.3 per cent in the urban areas. Agriculture is the dominant employer in the rural areas followed by construction, manufacturing and community services. Rural areas are also the source of workforce in the adjoining towns and cities. In rural areas income from the agriculture is not sufficient especially for the small and marginal farmers who constitute 85 per cent of the farm holdings and for the dry land farmers who constitute more than half of the cultivated land.

There is dire need to increase the employment opportunities for the rural youths to stop the rural migration. Rural youths migrate from rural areas to urban areas in search of employment as the agriculture in the rural areas does not suffice their basic needs. In urban areas they face the problem of housing, language and skill especially in the beginning. Due to these factors they are under paid and their growth is hampered.

The benefits of migration are not universal. Migration can reduce inequalities, it can create more problems. Migration has significant but mixed impacts on rural areas and agriculture. For instance, significant migration out of overpopulated rural areas can have a positive impact by shrinking the local labour pool and causing local wages to rise. Meanwhile, migration into regions with a low rural population can fill critical labour shortages in agriculture.

There is need to address the issue of rural migration. There is need to establish youth hostels in the urban areas which can give shelter to the rural youths especially in the beginning. There is also the need to change the set up of some departments to help the rural youths. The employment office established at each district should be changed for the career guidelines department. Some states in the country have taken initiative

in this direction. From thousands of years farming has been sustaining life on the earth.

We observe various success stories of the progressive farmers across the nation. Some success stories from Reasi district of J&K where organic vegetables growing, poultry farming, floriculture and diversified farming have transformed the lives of the farmers.

These farmers have achieved great success with the adoption of innovative technologies. With the adoption of innovative technologies they have increased their crops production and productivity. It occurred because of their consistent and arduous efforts. The scientific approach adopted by these farmers has resulted maximum output with the minimum inputs. There is need to make our agriculture more entrepreneurial and profitable. Value addition in the agricultural crops can create more income and employment for the rural youths.

Farmers need to adopt the modern agricultural technologies to make farming more profitable. Protected cultivation is high-tech cultivation which produces 5-12 times higher output than cultivation in open fields.

The demand of mushroom is increasing in the market and mushroom cultivation has become the profitable business. Important species of mushrooms are button, oyster, wood ear, shitake and paddy straw. India produces only 0.13 million tonnes of mushrooms out of which button mushroom contributes about 85 per cent of the total mushroom in the country. Out of the total agricultural residue, if one per cent is utilized for mushroom cultivation, the country can produce over three million tonnes of mushrooms and 10 million tonnes of organic manure annually.

Production and supply of inputs required in the agriculture is the commercial ventures with lot of scope especially for the rural youths. Farm machinery can also create employment for the rural youths. In addition repair of farm machinery can also provide commercial ventures to the farmers. Farm machinery on the one hand will benefit the individuals engaged in the different ventures and on the other hand will help to increase our farm incomes.

There is need to combine the farm and non-farm income at the household level which will provide resilience against adverse situations. If the present trend of migration continues then it is estimated that over 50 per cent of our population will be living in the urban areas in future. People will prefer to live in rural areas, semi-rural area or a small town if there is

good telecom connectivity, a good road network and proper education and health care facilities.

Rural areas need to be equipped with technical and educated manpower by expanding the network of industrial training institutes with better facilities. Industries like software, textiles, leather, electronics, pharmaceutical and many others can create such infrastructure. Such efforts can also restrict the migration of rural youths from the rural areas.

Tourism contributes around 11 per cent of the world work force and 10.2 per cent of the global gross domestic product. Our nation has a vast and varied agriculture landscape with natural beauty of blooming mustard fields of the northern India to blooming horticultural trees in the hilly areas to the tulip garden in Kashmir. Our rural areas have immense scope in agri-tourism which can help to create new employment for the rural youths. Tourism industry in India is growing at a rate of 10.1 per cent. Some states are making some strenuous efforts for rural tourism.

In Maharashtra, people residing in the rural areas have formed Maharashtra State Agri and Rural Tourism. There are many agri-tourism centres in the state. In Kerala rural tourism is attracting tourists across the globe. Similarly Rajasthan has also some rural tourism destinations. Our adjoining state Himachal Pradesh is also promoting rural tourism and natural tourism in the hilly areas of the state is attracting the tourists. Gujarat rural areas are also attracting the tourists. Union Territory of J&K has huge potential in rural tourism and govt. is making efforts to develop rural tourism so as to enhance the income and employment in the rural areas of J&K.

Promotion of rural tourism needs conceptual convergence with rural tourism, health tourism, eco-tourism, adventure tourism etc.

Rural tourism can flourish only when the rural infrastructure such as road connectivity, communication and health sector is created in the rural areas. There is need to search the potential areas in the rural areas for the rural tourism and infrastructure required in these areas should be made. There is need to do every effort to make the lives of rural people comfortable and lucrative. Investing in the infrastructure and institutions necessary for a sustainable food system can improve the livelihood sources for the rural people.

(The writer is Chief Scientist & Head of KVK Reasi SKUAST-J)

Healthy India through De-addiction

■ VIJAY GARG

India is one of the most ancient and rich cultures in the world, but today it is struggling with many social problems. One of these problems is the increasing drug addiction, which has not only weakened the roots of the society but has also made the future of the new generation bleak. Youth are the backbone of any nation. Their energy decides the direction of progress and development of any country. India is the youngest country in the world. More than 65 percent of the population here is below 35 years of age, but sadly the country today he is struggling with the problem of drug addiction. Addiction is an evil that is swallowing up the potential, morality and bright future of the youth. This problem is not limited only to the individual level, but it also impacts the development of society and nation. Nowadays drug addiction is increasing rapidly

among the youth. Apart from alcohol, tobacco, ganja, opium and drugs, the prevalence of cocaine, heroin and 'synthetic drugs' has also increased in modern times. Addiction is a problem which ruins the life of any person. Its effect is intoxicating. It is not limited to the individual, rather the scope of drug addiction is very wide which engulfs the family, society and even the entire nation. The drug addict becomes weak both physically and mentally. Chronic drug abuse can lead to heart disease, lung problems, liver damage, cancer and other fatal diseases. Apart from this, the immune system of the person becomes weak, due to which he becomes victim of other diseases also. It is addiction that causes stress, depression, amnesia and gives rise to suicidal tendencies. The person even loses the ability to take decisions, which has a deep impact on his everyday life. Drug addiction changes a

person's conduct. He becomes irritable and insensitive. This change is his yes. Affects social reputation and relationships. Expenditure on drugs weakens the financial condition of the family. Despite limited resources, the needs of other family members are ignored to support the addiction. Nature of drug addict. And becomes aggressive, due to which incidents of domestic violence increase. Women and children are its main victims. Children of drug-addicted fathers start lagging behind in education because their mental and emotional development is hampered due to the negative environment at home. Many times children also get attracted towards drugs. The society runs in unity and harmony, but the problem of drug addiction affects it seriously. A drug addict starts doing wrong things to fulfill his addiction. Apart from this, drug trafficking and distribution. Gangs associated with

this spread insecurity in the society. Road accidents also increase due to driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. The young generation starts adopting wrong habits, due to which the future of the society is in danger. Addiction not only hinders their education and career but also destroys their dreams and all their possibilities. There are many reasons behind drug addiction. People get attracted towards drugs due to stress, depression, loneliness and failure. On the other hand, youth may also come under stress due to problems related to relationships and unemployment. They resort to drugs. Sometimes people start taking drugs under the influence of friends. The drug problem also hinders the progress and development of the nation. The young generation becomes weak due to drugs. This has a negative impact on the productivity and growth potential of the country. The

crimes and accidents caused by this also put a burden on the country's economy. Drug trafficking often serves as a means to fund terrorist activities. This also threatens the internal security of the country, problem arising from drug addiction only. It is not limited to one generation, but it also affects the next generation. Drug abuse by pregnant women has a direct impact on newborn children. Physical deformities and mental problems are common in such circumstances. Its solution is not possible only by making laws or by giving punishment. For this the society will have to work unitedly. Every person has to understand that addiction is a slow poison, which affects not only him but every person around him. Unless we understand its ill effects and try to eradicate it, till then, the dream of a healthy and prosperous India will remain incomplete. Making India drug free is not only the responsibility

of the government but of every citizen. It is necessary to take some important steps to make people drug free. Special programs based on the ill effects of drug addiction should be run in schools and colleges. Youth should be made aware through social media, TV and other mediums. It should be explained to the youth that addiction is a false support and it can ruin their lives. Awareness campaign in rural and urban areas should be run. The police and administration should be alert to ensure that intoxicants are not accessible to the youth. It is necessary to eliminate the mafia and illegal narcotics networks. More rehabilitation centers should be opened for drug addicts. Trained psychiatrists and counselors should be appointed. Families should increase communication with children and understand their problems. Provide a positive environment to children, so that they do not come under

any stress or pressure. Instead of rejecting drug addicts, try to improve them. I want it. Motivated the youth towards sports, music, art and other creative activities. Go. Addiction weakens not only an individual but the entire country. If India has to move towards becoming a world leader, then it is necessary to eliminate the evil like drug addiction. This is possible only when we all try together. The dream of a drug-free India will be realized only when every citizen not only stays away from drugs but also makes others aware of its ill effects. It is very important to get the youth out of the clutches of drugs, it is only a social responsibility. No, but it is a necessary step for nation building. Freeing the youth from drugs is not just a solution to a problem, but it is the foundation of building a healthy, prosperous and happy India. Only drug-free youth can build a strong India.

19th January-Kashmiri Pandit Holocaust Day

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

It was the sad, very unfortunate as well tragic day rather the night of 19th January 1990 that loudspeakers fitted with the mosques in Kashmir particularly in summer capital of the then state of Jammu and Kashmir-Srinagar roared with the threatening calls which terrorized Kashmiri Pandits and forced them to leave the valley or face the serious consequences. That was a very sad and killing experience for the miniscule Kashmiri Pandits which forced them to leave Kashmir and became refugees in their own country for the only reason of being staunch Indian's. The state administrative apparatus was non-existent rather it which was mostly comprised by the majority Muslim community almost compromised and this led to the mass migration of the Kashmiri Pandits from their native land. It was exactly 35 year on the fateful night of January 19, 1990 that these people were threatened, warned and asked to leave valley and so the unfortunate exodus occurred in the democratic and so called Bharat. So 19th January is annually observed as the Kashmiri Pandit holocaust day in Jammu, India and by the Kashmiri Pandits scattered all over the globe and even some democratic countries and human right organizations observe 19th January as KP's holocaust day. Kashmiri pandits were horrified and terrified by the calls of Alha Ho Akbar

, Nizame Mustfa, and warnings to Kashmiri Pandits to leave the valley. As if it was not enough, there further were calls of Cheliv, Raliv & Galiv that meant leave, be converted or face death, and Asi Banaovov Pakistan Batave Rus Ti Batnav San-which translates as we will make Pakistan without Kashmiri Pandits and with Kashmiri Pandit women and other very objectionable slogans. Many Kashmiri Pandit leaders and extra-ordinary men and government officers were killed with sadistic pleasure before 1990 that is in year 1989 which included KP and BJP leader Shri Tika Lal Taploo, Prem Nath Bhat, Judge Nikanth Gangoo to name a few and the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits reached its zenith in January 1990 and afterwards due to the threats and warnings from the loudspeakers fitted with the mosques and all this negative propaganda forced the Kashmiri Pandits to fled Kashmir for the safety and security to their lives and for securing the honor of their girls and other women flock. Had they remain in Kashmir in those radicalized and communalized and surcharged atmosphere, hundreds of the Kashmiri Pandits would have been brutally killed by the Pak sponsored armed marauders. In 1990 and specifically after in January of that year, the Kashmiri Pandits were living in most difficult and trying circumstances and they took the right decision of leaving their homes and hearths under total

threat to their life, dignity and honor of their women flock and thus the major killings which would have been enemies killings were averted by the conscious but most involuntary decision of leaving Kashmir. Even the Muslim neighbors also showed their inability to protect and stand by their Kashmiri Pandit neighbors in the time of their difficulty and insecurity as well as threat to their lives. So how could have they stayed put in Kashmir? The only silver lining was that Governor Jagmohan and he too could not have safeguarded the horrified Kashmiri Hindus as the whole of then state administration was passively watching the threat calls, warnings, pasting of the threat letters outside the houses of the Kashmiri Pandits. But it was a bit relief that Kashmiri Pandits at the peak of militancy after January 1990 were not forced to stay put in Kashmir. In the rural areas of the whole Kashmir where KP's were living in scattered locations, there were big rallies of the people from majority Muslim community raising the religious as well as extremist slogans and this was enough to have terrorize and horrified the minority Kashmiri Pandits and which forced them to take the most involuntary and painful decision of leaving Kashmir and taking refuge in most unfavorable climatic environment. Now 34 years of the displacement of the Kashmiri Pandits have taken place and the inner desire and yearning of returning to their homeland

Kashmir is growing intense and ever stronger with each passing day. It is the highest of injustice and worst kind of human right violations of the Kashmiri Pandits that they left all movable as well as immovable properties accumulated by their forefathers and handed it down to them has been left in the valley which either has been usurped as distress sales and some properties stand occupied by the people of the majority community and the administration being a mute spectator to all this illegal possession of the displaced Landed and other properties. It is very unfortunate that successive centre and state governments and later the UT government has failed to ensure the safe and dignified return and resettlement of the aborigines of Kashmir in the land of their birth. Modi government also promised the return and rehabilitation of the displaced Kashmiri Pandits in Kashmir but without any policy in this direction. With the result the Kashmiri Pandits are continuing to live refugees in their own country. They are living in an alien environment and climatic conditions with which they are not acclimatized. The displaced Kashmiri Pandits are rotting in their colonies such as Jagti, Purkhu and in their houses at other places in Jammu and all over the country and there seem to be no chances of their going back to their roots in Kashmir. The KP's have heard much rhetoric of different political parties that Kashmir is

incomplete without Kashmiri Pandits and the KP's are the part and parcel of the Kashmiri society only for political consumption and in reality no efforts are ever made to translate the promises of their return and rehabilitation to Kashmir. It seemed that KP's are destined to live as refugees for many more years. The KP's yearn to return to Kashmir but neither the centre government nor the UT government of J & K nor the majority community that is KMS are providing any helping hand to the displaced KP's in distress and so they are living involuntary outside their homes and hearths and are cut off from their roots and culture and language. There is imminent threat to their extinction and identity. How long will the KP's continue to live the life of refugees in their own country? The centre government, UT government of J&K, KMs, KP's themselves should take the initiative of returning to Kashmir and great responsibility for the return and rehabilitation rests on the shoulders of the KMs who should play their pivotal role in this direction and make the reverse migration to Kashmir of the KP's a reality in near future. Various KP organizations have observed the black day which is genuinely a holocaust day at various displaced settlements. Pannu Kashmir, ASKPC, KPS, Amphalla, Nou Soom Front AIKS, BJP Displaced District and other KP organizations have observed the holocaust day on 19th

January 2025 and reiterated their demand for homeland /Kashp Land / resettlement and rehabilitation at few concentrated locations in Kashmir where they can live with dignity, security and where there will be full constitutional guaranteed for the Kashmiri Pandits so settled. Till their return and dignified rehabilitation in Kashmir, the displaced KP's that is the small chunk of them should be paid enhanced relief and they should not be harassed unnecessarily under one pretext or the other. The longing to return to their land of birth is becoming intense with the each passing day and it is hoped that in near future displaced, uprooted and dispossessed KP's will return to valley with security and honor. Once of their return to Kashmir besides the government also rests on the shoulders of the KMs as it is they who can guarantee their safety, security and dignity now in the changed circumstances as the militancy has been contained to some extent. Rest 19 January 1990 was a black spot on the history of Kashmir and Kashmiri Pandits and on this date every year a KP irrespective of where he temporarily resides is revisited of the black and dark day of the holocaust and resolve to return and rehabilitate to their native place. Jai Hind, Jai Pannu Kashmir & Jai Dugger as it is later who embraced KP's in their soil.

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