

SHOCK WAVES

With confirmation of three Omicron cases in Jammu, a shock wave has rippled across the Union Territory of J&K especially because the Union Health Ministry has warned the States and Union Territories that based on current scientific evidence, Omicron is at least three times more transmissible than the Delta variant. Jammu & Kashmir's Health and Medical Education Department has informed that three individuals tested positive for omicron variant have no foreign history. Although the close contacts of the trio have been tested, the situation has turned precarious once again with chances of this new variant penetrating in the Union Territory becoming more and more. The confirmation of the cases has come from NCDC, Delhi. As the samples were taken on November 30, 2021 there is every chance that more people might have contracted the virus. Looking into the seriousness of the issue strict and prompt containment action is required at the local and district level. Perhaps the omicron cases in Jammu have sounded alarm bells in the entire Union Territory with extra responsibility coming on the Health Department which will have to face the brunt if the cases will surge as the Centre is warning about omicron's higher rate of transmission. The people should understand that it is now time to become serious as probably the third wave is knocking the doors. Till date COVID Appropriate Behaviour is the best precaution against the spread of this disease therefore no hanky-panky should be allowed. It is good that the Jammu administration has issued warnings about wearing masks and has ordered a fine for the defaulters. The time has come now to implement COVID restrictions in letter and spirit as any kind of lethargy can lead to disaster as in the case of the second wave. It is always better to be on the safer side in such cases as precaution is better than cure especially when there is no treatment available for this deadly virus which has already wreaked havoc in many parts of the world. Jammu has lately shown complacency against the coronavirus therefore it is the time to gird up loins against the disease and stay safe.

Deal with Negative Thoughts

The emergence of negative thoughts in the mind is natural. You are having a good day, happily going along your routine, trying to do something when suddenly, a tiny thought crosses your mind: "What if I fail?" And then you react, "Let's give up and stay away from embarrassment." And then you are, feeling sorry about yourself, and dejected. Sometimes, it goes on in a cyclical manner.

It happens to the best of people.

And unfortunately, if the person is already dealing with some kind of disability, then you can imagine how difficult it would be for him to stay away from negative thoughts.

In special needs people, a series of negative thoughts result in a more disabling chain reaction. Each ensuing thought drives their mind towards a deeper downward spiral, leaving them totally helpless. Such negative thoughts make their life even more challenging.

Disability is Just a Physical Condition

Understand that any kind of disability is just a physical condition that can be dealt with the help of strong willpower. You will come across endless examples wherein disabled people have shown exemplary talent and created a name for them all over the world.

Who can ignore Arunima Sinha's achievements? She is the world's first female amputee to scale the highest mountain peak, Mount Everest. Sudha Chandran, Ravindra Jain, Stephen Hawking, Helen Keller, Ludwig Van Beethoven, are some of many amazing people who did not allow their physical limitations to subdue their enthusiasm.

Do read about Nicholas Vujicic. Due to a rare genetic condition, he was born without any limbs. But even this could not stop him from being one of the most iconic motivational speakers.

In fact, there is no dearth of examples. All these brave men and women won over their bodily disabilities and before that, they won over the negative thoughts.

Stay Connected with Positive People

You may want to withdraw from people and isolate yourself. Try not to do that. Associate with people with an optimistic attitude towards life. It will make a world of difference in your outlook towards everything around you.

Nurture caring relationships, spend time with family and friends and often set aside your disability for having some fun.

Shri Sudhanshuji Mahareji

How religions ignited language wars?

■ B Z KHASRU

It may come as a surprise to many people, but it's true, 'Bengali had a chance to become India's top language. The idea was killed after it faced stiff resistance from Bengalis themselves, the rich and powerful ones, who favored Persian. The Bengali-Persian quarrel may be dead, but politics of language is very much alive and well in India even today, nearly 200 years after the earlier episode played out. In the face of strong opposition from non-Hindi speakers, who account for 75 percent of the country's population, the push to impose Hindi as India's national language has been shelved for now, but the war still rages.

The fight has a history going back to 1800s when British started thinking they were going to rule India for a long time. To prepare for it, they embarked upon patching together an administration that could keep Indians under tight control and at the same time, extract hefty tax revenues from them. This was a time when Bengal -then India's most prosperous part -was in the grip of the British East India Company, whose main aim was to make tons of money for its owners. This massive corporation, founded under Queen Elizabeth I, was the world's largest entity of its kind then engaged in foreign trade. Incorporated on 31 December 1600, the company acted as a part trade organization, part nation state and earned huge profits from trade with India, China, Persia and Indonesia for more than 200 years. One of the difficulties the company faced in Bengal - and really a tough one - involved settling disputes related to land ownership and contracts as well as tax collections. After taking control of the region in the mid-1700s, the British retained Mughal official language, Persian, as their official language. But in due course they learned to their great annoyance that people kept their land and tax records in their local dialects. And, they used to submit the vernacular documents to courts whenever they ran into ownership or contract disputes. This created a nightmare for the judges. They needed to hire lots of translators to decipher the local records and interpret statements of warring parties. It cost the company a bundle, and its directors were not too happy about it. So the company set out to streamline the languages used in courts and tax collections. While profit-making was certainly the main driver behind the company's efforts to remove the language anomalies, its top dogs had other concerns, too. Some liberal trustees wanted justice to be dispensed in a language familiar to the

judge as well as to the people at large. Others thought that the language of the people should be the language of the courts. To make it happen, however, was not really a piece of cake. The colonial bosses had different views as to what vernacular or what script should be used. Some favoured retaining Farsi, others supported Hindustani in Persian (Urdu) and still others Hindustani in Nagari (Hindi). But they, in general, agreed that the convenience of the people should take precedence over the convenience of their rulers. In the 1830s, when the company finally began replacing Farsi with different dialects, clashes broke out all over India. Some localities feared that many of their people, who did court-related work, would be jobless, if they were to switch to a new script; others took it as an attack on their religion. In Bombay and Madras presidencies, English and local languages had replaced Persian by 1832. In Bengal, a law passed in 1837 lifted the mandate that Persian must be used in court cases or tax disputes. The law also gave the governor power to come up with ideas to create a new language to replace Farsi.

In 1838, the Governor decided to use vernaculars in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The Governor's staff outlined several options for languages and scripts: Persian in Persian scripts; Hindustani in Persian scripts, i.e. Urdu; English in Roman script; Hindi in Nagari and Bengali in Bengali script. To the surprise of many people, nearly 500 Dhaka residents petitioned the Government in 1839 in favour of Persian against their native Bengali. Today's Bengalis take enormous pride in the glory of their mother tongue, but their brethren generations ago were of different mold. Call them materialists or thoughtless whatever you like, they loved money more than language. Here the common Bengali interest superseded the religious divide. When it comes to money everyone speaks the same language! They argued that Bengali script varied from place to place; one line of Persian could do the work of ten lines of Bengali; the awkward written style (derisively dubbed crab style) of Bengali read more slowly than that of Persian; and people from one district could barely understand the dialect of those from another district.

The petition surprised many people not just because the Bengalis went against their mother tongue but also because both Muslims and Hindus jointly favored Farsi. Of the signers, 200 were Hindu and the rest Muslim. Both the Hindus and the Muslims, especially landowners and those who had to deal

with the courts, understood Persian and Arabic connected with their business far better than any phrases in Shanscrit, (to use the spelling of Nathaniel Halhed, the Englishman who wrote the first Bengali grammar book in English) which contributed heavily to Bengali.

The Sadar Court of Bengal bought the argument that many dialects made Bengali unfit to be a court language; the court would need as many translators as dialects. The court also noted that to record judicial proceedings in Bengali or Hindi would require a third more time than in Persian because Bengali and Hindi scripts took longer to write. So it permitted plaintiffs and defendants in all civil and criminal cases to submit papers in any language they wished in districts where either Urdu or Bengali was in use. In essence, the court killed an earlier decision to replace Farsi by the vernaculars, and allowed instead the local dialects to be added to Persian to conduct official business. But the fight over picking a language continued, with different parties giving different arguments in support of their respective position. As a result, in 1940 the government barred district courts from using Nagari without prior approval from higher-ups. In the end, the Government of India, in consultation with provincial administrators, totally opposed Nagari, because a vast majority of the judges favored Urdu. While the Bengali resistance to Bengali was pure economics, in other parts of India the story was entirely different. In the North, for example, the conflict was more religious than material. Religion intruded into language soon after Islam entered India. Muslim conquerors had a hard time to talk with their new subjects in the hard-to-learn Shanscrit and often used their native idioms to clearly express themselves. When this mixed dialect first appeared in Naagoree (now spelled as Nagari or Nagari) script, the Brahmins showed disdain (One Language, Two Scripts, Christopher King, OUP India, 1994). To the Vedic pundits, the Naagoree, which means writing, was too coarse. So they had their sacred books published in 'polished' Naagoree, or Daeb Naagoree, (now Debanagar) or the writing of the Gods. Hindu bankers, who were very active in the Ganges Delta and drew large traffic, circulated these books into the Bengal interior. However, Farsi remained India's official language until the British changed it much later.

In 1757, the British became Bengal's ruler defeating the Muslim. Under the British, the upper-class Hindu established themselves in a strong position in

due course and turned Bengali into a 'high-flying' medium of expression in the Shanscrit mold.

Syamacharan Ganguli, a Calcutta University fellow, protested the Shanscritization of Bengali. He instead pushed for assimilation of the vocabulary of written Bengali to the everyday speech of educated Bengalis. Several other Bengali literary giants, including Rabindranath Thakur, Haraprasad Shastri and Ramendrasundar Tribedi, went along with Ganguli. The high-flying language was no good for common folks, because it was loaded with Shanscrit words. Neither was Ganguli's Bengali of the educated, because illiterate farmers, weavers and fishermen all spoke local dialects. [An estimated 50 percent of Bengali words are distorted Shanscrit, 45 percent are pure Shanscrit, and the rest are foreign. As a result, Bengali has been 'stunted in its growth by the cramming of a class of food' that it could not digest. This caused a permanent fissure with the Muslim, who viewed Shanscrit as a Hindu slang. The fallout was immense. In the rest of India, the melee centered on Hindi and Urdu. The Hindu favored Hindi and the Muslim wanted Urdu. When the British ordered the exclusive use of the Nagari script in school in 1880 to meet a Hindu demand in the state of Bihar, which was then under the Bengal Presidency, the Muslims howled. As the quarrel went on between the Hindus and the Muslims, the colonial rulers made drastic changes to the way they exchanged information with the Indians.

In the 1830s, English replaced Persian on the higher governmental level and the vernaculars became the medium of transactions on the lower. In much of north India, Urdu became the official vernacular.

Hindi failed to reach that stature until the late 1800s. Hindi began replacing Urdu in the 1870s in Central Provinces and in the 1880s in Bihar, and by 1900s in the North-Western Provinces. The Hindi-Urdu duel in the end exploded into Hindu-Muslim war. In free India, Hindi gained the national stature as a symbol of Hindu pride and spread nationwide like wildfire, partly thanks to Bombay movies.

Bengali, meanwhile, plunged into dark abyss, because Bengal's partition dwarfed the region both demographically and economically, denying its language the edge it needed to be a power play.

Bengali as a regional small fry never made the cut to the national level. (The author is a US-based journalist).

CAG & its report on Jammu & Kashmir

■ MAHADEEP SINGH JAMWAL

It is undeniable that the common man is not aware, what the 'Comptroller and Auditor General' (CAG) is? And how important is to know, what the CAG reports tell us about Government expenditures and its reflection in books by the government departments? Such reports are indicators of corruption by way of miss-utilization, unfruitful expenditure, unauthorized payments etc. It was Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India that unearthed many infamous scandals including 'Chara Ghotala' (Fodder Seam), CAG took the lid off the 'Colgate' seam involving Rs. 1.86 lakh crore that became one of the biggest cases of corruption, CAG unearthed the '2G Spectrum' allocation scandal, CAG exposed 'Adarsh Housing Society' seam etc. that rocked the nation. It is the CAG, an independent authority under the Constitution of India that promotes accountability, transparency and good governance through high quality auditing and accounting. Brief know-how of CAG carry us to the year 1858 (the year the British took over administrative control of India from the East India Company), when the office of the Accountant General (AG) was established. After independence, Article 148 of the Indian Constitution provided for the establishment of a Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) to be appointed by the President of India. The CAG is the head of the 'Indian Audit & Account Department' and chief Guardian of

'Public Purse'. It is the institution through which the accountability of the government and other public authorities (all those who spend public funds) to Parliament and State Legislatures and through them to the people is ensured. It derives its audit mandate from different sources like: Constitution of India (Articles 148 to 151), The Comptroller and Auditor General's (Duties, Powers and Conditions of Service) Act, 1971, Important Judgments, Instructions of Government of India and Regulations on Audit & Accounts 2007.

Accordingly, 'Audit' by CAG is the examination or inspection of various books of accounts by an auditor followed by physical checking of inventory to make sure that all departments are following a documented system of recording transactions. It is done to ascertain the accuracy of financial statements provided by the organization. Government Expenditures are mainly managed from the public funds. Any irregularity, inefficiency, omission found or question arises during the Internal or External Audit is normally noted and is informed to the concerned DDOs, which is called 'Audit Para.' The audit reports are received every year and the finance department has to keep a track of the 'Audit Paras.' With these understanding of 'CAG & Audit', when we traverse through the report of The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) on Social, General, Economic and Revenue Sectors for the year ended 31 March 2019, Government of Jammu and

Kashmir, presented to the Parliament on 24th March 2021, with alarming revelations of management of bank accounts, unfruitful expenditure, unauthorized payment of idle salary etc to the tune of Rs 192 cr in J&K, we come to the conclusion that revenue expenditure that increased by 91 per cent from Rs 29,329 crore in 2014-15 to Rs 56,090 crore in 2018-19, Non-Plan/ Normal revenue expenditure increased by 102 per cent from Rs 26,457 crore to Rs 53,578 crore and capital expenditure increased by 64 percent from Rs 5,134 crore to Rs 8,413 crore during the period from 2014 to 2019 never went for the relief of common man and it was against the claims of fanciful development by the center government. It needs a high level enquiry to pinpoint the defaulters on following observations by CAG as Audit compliance.

1. Education Department has miserably failed to establish Model Schools at block level thus depriving quality education to the intended beneficiaries. The State Government contribution of Rs 5.74 crore and interest accrued included in the available fund of Rs 44.13 crore was also blocked for ten years.

2. 131 DDOs of three selected Government Departments kept Rs 399.94 crore in Bank Accounts during the period from 2014 to 2019 and this include the amount meant for disbursement as relief/compensation to the victims of militancy, natural disasters, and land compensation apart from improper planning and non-completion of schemes,

overstatement of expenditure in the Utilizations Certificates etc.

3. Non-distribution of 1,30,121 ration cards printed by the Food Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department during the period 2015 to 2018 to the consumers led to non collection of Rs 1.07 crore as well as short remittance of Rs 1.69 crore into Government Account.

4. Unfruitful expenditure due to non-functional Solar Power Plants Non-settlement of payment of Works Contract Tax (WCT) with the State Taxes Department rendered 128 Solar Power Plants installed at police establishments nonfunctional since September 2014 despite incurring expenditure of Rs 9.70 crore between May 2014 to January 2015 and availability of maintenance free warranty.

5. Wasteful expenditure by Irrigation and Flood Control Department on water storage tanks resulting in wasteful expenditure of Rs 3.67 crore.

6. Unauthorized drawl and unauthorized payment of idle salary of Rs 79.46 lakh to Drivers/ Chauffeurs during the period from March 2015 to January 2019 by Power Development Department (PDD).

7. Unfruitful expenditure and blocking of funds as a failure of Public Health Engineering Department (Jal-Shakti) to make the augmentation of water supply scheme functional over a period of seven years resulted in unfruitful expenditure of Rs 78.28 lakh and blocking of Rs 39 lakh.

beautiful life as a burden whereas life is worth living in any case. No matter how difficult life may be, our life found in nature gives us reasons to smile. Nature has sent us with so many emotions - love, affection, kindness, compassion, affection, joy. Are we using all these expressions? Are we bringing them to life? To make our life meaningful and enjoyable, we have to put these expressions to work.

Our success may depend on some goal, but our life is not the ultimate goal. Life is about laughing and laughing, feeling and maintaining a little sociality. Our neighbor's son has started working in a good company after studying and writing. He mostly works from home. I have seen him working on his laptop continuously for several hours after closing the room. Seeing his dedication, I am sure that he will be achieving all his objectives. But he doesn't talk to anyone. His mother makes breakfast for him every now and then, stands outside the room and keeps knocking on the door. After a long time, he opens the door for a moment and then closes it. I never saw him sitting in the open air outside the house, even for a moment in peace. He doesn't need any kind of obstacle. Even in someone's misery or illness, he avoids moving anywhere. He no longer seems to be of his equal level. Your neighbourhood, your big house too. This is the reason why he has taken a rented house on the twenty-fifth floor of an apartment, far away

from this area. While he has his own house. He is achieving his goal, but is he achieving life too? A lot of parents want their son to get a big amount as salary. But can life be weighed with money? Don't let a hefty salary take a person away from life itself. The minimum human behavior and qualities in a human being cannot be attributed to a hefty salary or financial income. Man is a social animal. Anti-sociality fills us with depression and depression takes us to the pit of despair. So there is no need to grieve or be disappointed if our target is left behind. We have family, friends, neighbors, people to talk to, and gardens around. We just have to find a chance to spend time with them. Then we can see how the despair of our mind evaporates and turns into happiness. We are losing precious moments of life in searching for great reasons to be happy. Happiness is not found in the market. Are all the people wearing branded clothes and driving in expensive vehicles even happy? Actually, happiness is found even in small things. Someday sit in the park and watch a child. He also takes great pleasure in playing and catching his partner, running after a butterfly, catching the ball. Don't underestimate the importance of small joys. Then all the ugliness of the mind, all the despair will vanish. And then see how beautiful this world seems!

Vijay Garg.

YOUR COLUMN
Don't underestimate importance of small happiness

Dear Editor,

Another year is leaving us. People are starting to calculate it. Where did you go and where have you reached? It is not necessary that we get everything that we were aiming for. It is also not necessary that you should be drowned in the pit of despair over your failures. We may have fallen short of the target in the assessment of the year, but we have achieved what we have done and above all, we have matured more than before. So why mourn what did not happen? Why not celebrate what happened? It is true that sometimes despite everything, our mind falls into the abyss of hopelessness and despair. Because of this we feel that we are not happy. But should this be the biggest reason? There are many shortcomings in our life. What we wanted didn't happen. It is not a big deal to get caught in unintentional despair in the atmosphere, especially at this time. In this way the grip of dissatisfaction and despair starts to get stronger. We begin to think of this