Dairy Development

he National Programme for Dairy Development (NPDD) is a significant initiative by the Government of India, aimed at strengthening the dairy sector in the country, enhancing milk production, improving the livelihoods of dairy farmers, and addressing the growing demand for milk and dairy products. It was launched with a vision to support and promote dairy farming across India, especially in rural areas where a large portion of the population is dependent on agriculture and allied activities for their livelihood.

The program focuses on improving milk production by enhancing the productivity of dairy animals through scientific management, better animal health care, and improved breeding practices. The aim is to increase the average yield per animal and make dairy farming more sustainable and profitable.

NPDD aims to create and upgrade dairy infrastructure, including cold storage facilities, milk processing plants, and storage and transportation networks. These upgrades help in reducing the wastage of milk, ensuring better quality of products, and enabling the effective distribution of dairy products to urban and rural markets. A key goal of NPDD is to empower farmers, particularly smallholder dairy farmers, by providing them with the necessary technical support, financial assistance, and access to markets. This is achieved through capacity building, training programs, and financial support for dairy cooperatives and farmer producer organizations (FPOs).

The program includes initiatives to improve the health and nutrition of dairy animals through regular veterinary care, vaccination, and balanced feeding. Healthy animals are crucial to increasing milk productivity and ensuring a steady supply of quality milk. By improving dairy farming practices, increasing milk yield, and ensuring better market access, NPDD aims to boost the income of dairy farmers. The program also focuses on promoting value-added dairy products, which can provide farmers with better returns and create more job opportunities in rural areas. One of the core elements of the NPDD is the strengthening of dairy cooperatives and farmer producer organizations. These entities play a vital role in improving the bargaining power of farmers, ensuring timely payments, and providing quality inputs and technical support to members. The program provides financial assistance to enhance the capacity and infrastructure of these cooperatives.

Weaving Legacy: Celebrating the Timeless Beauty of Dogra Traditional Attire





DR. ANKUSH MAHAJAN & NISHA MAHAJAN
radition is not the worship of ashes,
but the preservation of fire. Gustav Mahler

The Dogra community, renowned for its cultural richness, has woven an extraordinary legacy through its traditions, folklore, and artistic expressions. Among these, the attire of the Dogras stands out as a remarkable blend of beauty, utility, and historical significance. While the winds of modernization have brought about changes, the elegance of Dogra traditional clothing continues to resonate deeply with those who cherish their roots. The Utility and Splendor of Dogra

Clothing

Dogra attire exemplifies the perfect balance of practicality and visual appeal, designed to suit the community's lifestyle

The hardworking men of the Duggar region, primarily engaged in agriculture

and the region's climate.

and cattle-rearing, wore loose pyjamas tied with cords-garments that ensured comfort and resilience during laborious tasks. For gatherings and festivities, the attire transformed into a more elaborate form: long kurtas paired with ghuttanas, pleated pyjamas fitted snugly at the ankles. A crisply starched safa added a finishing touch, symbolizing dignity and cultural pride.

Special occasions like weddings saw Dogra men exuding regality in embroidered achkans, churidar pyjamas, and traditional leather juttis. A ceremonial sword further underscored their warrior heritage and noble charm.

For Women:

Dogra women's clothing combined grace with functionality. Practical giddis were worn during household chores, while long kurtas with suthans-loose yet pleated garments-defined their daily wear. On festive days, embroidered suthans and vibrant odnis showcased the artistry of the region's weavers.

Winter Craftsmanship: A Testament to Resourcefulness

Dogra ingenuity shone brightly during the region's cold winters. Handwoven woolen baskats and blankets offered warmth, while luxurious pashmina shawls-prized for their fine texture-symbolized status and craftsmanship.

The Artisans Behind the Craft
At the heart of Dogra attire lies the

labor of skilled artisans. Local weavers worked on traditional handlooms to create woolen fabrics, ornate achkans, and beautifully embroidered odnis. These age-old techniques reflected both artistry and pride, forming the backbone of the region's economy.

The Modern Era: A Decline in Tradition As modernization seeps into every corner of society, traditional Dogra clothing has faded. Western fashion has replaced ghuttanas, safas, and suthans, leaving these garments limited to rare occasions. Women's odnis and festive suthans now appear mostly in nostalgic folk songs.

Reviving a Cultural Treasure
To protect and promote Dogra attire,
immediate action is needed:

- Exhibitions: Organize events to showcase traditional attire and the heritage of the Dogras.
- Cultural Celebrations: Encourage traditional wear during festivals, weddings, and community events.
- Educational Awareness: Introduce the younger generation to Dogra clothing through schools and competitions.
- Supporting Artisans: Extend financial support to weavers and craftsmen.
- Digital Outreach: Use media campaigns to share the history and beauty of Dogra attire globally.

Global Recognition: Dr. Ankur Sharma's Triumph

Dr. Ankur Sharma's stunning appear-

ance at Mrs. India 2024 brought Dogra culture into the global spotlight. Wearing a handcrafted bridal ensemble embellished with peacock motifs, she showcased the craftsmanship of Jammu's weavers. Holding an image of Mata Vaishno Devi and the Amarnath shrine, Dr. Sharma's portrayal symbolized the region's spiritual depth and artistic excellence. Her triumph is a proud moment for Jammu, offering renewed hope for the revival of Dogra artistry.

Looking Ahead: A Shared Responsibility

Traditional Dogra attire is more than fabric; it is a living representation of culture, values, and identity. As the custodians of this heritage, the Dogra community must lead its preservation. By celebrating and supporting these traditions, they can ensure their rich legacy continues to inspire generations.

In the words of Marcus Garvey, "A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin, and culture is like a tree without roots." It is time to nurture those roots, ensuring the vibrant hues of Dogra tradition shine for centuries to come.

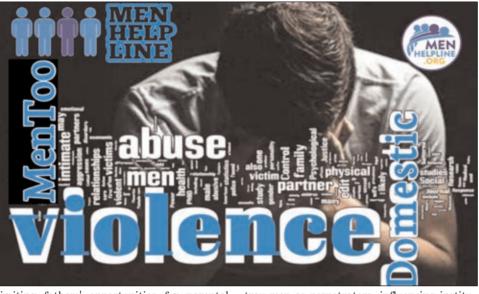
(The writers Dr. Ankush Mahajan is Poet, Writer, Researcher, and Columnist and Nisha Mahajan is Teaching Assistant (Fashion Technology)Govt. College for Women, Parade Ground, Jammu)

Domestic disputes lead to men getting entangled in false dowry cases

PRIYANKA SAURABH

Men's rights refer to legal and social rights that specifically address issues faced by men. In India, while women's empowerment is important to focus on, challenges faced by men are often overlooked, such as false allegations in domestic violence cases under Section 498A IPC, lack of mental health support, and limited parental rights. Recent debates around shared parenting laws highlight the need for a balanced approach to gender justice. Men's rights in India often receive less attention in broader discussions on gender equality. Men do not receive legal recognition as victims of domestic abuse, making it challenging to seek protection or report cases of abuse. Men who are victims of emotional, financial, or physical abuse by a spouse face social stigma and do not receive legal recourse under existing frameworks such as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. Societal expectations for men to suppress

emotions lead to neglect of their mental health, leading to increased suicide rates and untreated psychological problems. NCRB data for 2022 shows that 72.5% of suicide cases are by men, emphasizing the need for gender-sensitive mental health policies. Divorce or separation laws favor maternal custody, marginalizing the role of fathers and denying them equal rights in child rearing. The Guardians and Wards Act, 1890, prefers maternal custody unless the mother is deemed unfit, thereby



limiting fathers' opportunities for parental involvement. Gender-specific laws such as Section 498A (dowry harassment) are sometimes misused, causing reputational, financial, and emotional harm to innocent men. In Rajesh Sharma v. State of UP (2017), the Supreme Court noted the misuse of Section 498A and introduced safeguards against false accusations.

Men lack dedicated institutions or helplines to redress grievances. Social stereotypes por-

tray men as perpetrators, influencing institutional attitudes and limiting appropriate remedies in cases such as workplace abuse or sexual harassment. The Vishaka Guidelines cover workplace harassment only for women, denying male victims equal protection under Indian law. Adult male survivors of sexual abuse remain unrecognized in the legal framework, depriving them of statutory remedies or institutional support. For example, Section 375 of the IPC defines rape only from a woman's per-

spective, leaving male survivors of sexual harassment without any recourse. Policy reforms to ensure a balanced approach to gen-

der justice, including gender-neutral laws. Amend existing laws such as the Domestic Violence Act and Section 498A of the IPC to make them gender-neutral, ensuring equal protection for men against domestic violence and false allegations. In countries such as Canada and the UK, domestic violence laws are gender-neutral. This promotes the best interests of the child while addressing parental grievances. The concept of shared parenting is well established in Australia, which mandates equal consideration for both parents in custody decisions. Establish dedicated policies focusing on men's mental health by integrating mental health services into workplace wellness programs and creating awareness campaigns. Japan has introduced workplace mental health programs targeting stress reduction, which can be adapted to include gender-specific con-

Addressing false allegations: Put in place stringent mechanisms to prevent and punish false allegations in cases of domestic violence, dowry harassment, and sexual harassment to prevent misuse of laws. Institutional measures to ensure a balanced approach towards gender justice are the establishment of men's welfare commissions. Create statutory bodies at national and state levels similar to women's commissions to address specific issues related to men,

including legal aid and counselling. The United Kingdom has a "Men and Boys Coalition" that advocates for issues such as mental health and paternal rights. Set up gender-neutral helplines and shelters to ensure access to immediate help and support for male victims of domestic violence or abuse. The MEN Against Violence and Abuse (Men Against Violence and Abuse) initiative in India provides support to male victims of abuse. Train judiciary and law enforcement officials on gender-neutral approaches and challenges faced by men to ensure fair treatment in cases related to domestic violence, custody, and abuse.

Regular sensitization workshops for the police in Kerala have resulted in a more balanced handling of gender-based complaints. Force organizations to adopt inclusive workplace policies that address issues such as paternity leave, sexual harassment faced by men, and mental health support. Sweden's parental leave policy provides equal leave to fathers, promoting shared parenting and gender equality at home. Men's rights need to be addressed with equal sincerity to ensure a balanced approach to gender justice. Gender-neutral laws, increased mental health support, and awareness campaigns to eliminate social stereotypes are important steps. As Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." A truly inclusive system uplifts all genders, promoting fairness and harmony in

What comes next after fall of Assad regime?

SURJIT SINGH FLORA

rael and Hamas fought a battle in Gaza last year, which spurred ▲ Hezbollah to engage in hostilities with Israel. As a result, Israel began the Lebanon War in order to undermine Hezbollah and oppose Iran, which ultimately resulted in Iran's strength and influence being diminished. Iran and Hezbollah would have maintained their strength and continued to provide assistance to the Assad government if the Gaza conflict had not occurred with them. Were it not for the crisis between Russia and Ukraine that broke out two years ago, Russia would have been in possession of adequate military resources to provide assistance to the Assad dictatorship. As the fight became more intense, Russia moved its forces into Ukraine, which brought about a reduction in the efficacy of the Syrian army in combat as well as a decrease in their

In spite of the fact that the Assad family has been in power in Syria for more than half a century, the situation has never been without controversy. Syria has been involved in a relentless civil war for the better part of a decade, the nation has been ravaged, and several resistance organizations have emerged as a result of the conflict. This has left the Assad administration, which is effectively a minority group, in a position that is very vulnerable. Syria's economy has collapsed, living circumstances have grown severe, and rampant corruption has become an intolerable reality of life. These negative developments are much more catastrophic than the previous ones. The populace is dissatisfied, and finally, a significant rebellion has started among the population. As a result of the army's lack of will to fight, Bashar immediately lost his position as leader.

In spite of the initial excitement that followed the overthrow of the Assad administration, the future of the Syrian people is far more unclear than it was when Assad departed the country. Whether for the better or for the worse, Assad did a respectable job of preserving law and order in regions that were under the jurisdiction of the government. Now that he is no longer in power, there are several indications that Syria may be on the verge of entering another state of civil war.

There are, on the other side, a signif-

icant number of individuals who are of the opinion that this signifies the conclusion of the civil war. I have my doubts about whether or not this is the case. In the past, this civil war was being waged by five separate factions among the population. At this time. one of the players has been eliminated from the board. Another player has established themselves as the dominating player. On the other hand, there are still three more rebel organizations that are competing in the challenge. Whether or not all of them will joyfully embrace each other and establish a new administration, restore peace to the nation, and put an end to the killing of civilians is something that I am not certain of. It is presently unknown what type of 'freedom' the newly elected government of Syria will eventually bring about, but a lot of people are thinking about it. A political campaign was not what this was; it was a battle. There was no one running for office on promises. In my opinion, the HTS has evolved into an organization that is similar to al-Qaeda. It is important for everybody who is expecting for a symbol of freedom and human rights in Syria to take into consideration the chance that they can be incorrect about this.

There is no political opposition in a nation where a tyrant or his family has reigned for decades; the only people who are fighting for independence are rebels. When the opposition takes power in Western nations, they instantly know how to govern the country. This is the practice in

Western countries. These facts are unknown to the rebels. They are masters of conflict resolution, yet they have no concept of peace. As a result, there is a very high probability that a power struggle will occur in order to fill the void. Syria is making strides toward becoming a nation that can operate effectively.

The fall of the Assad administration that was in power in Syria brought down the whole government of the country. There is abundant evidence that a significant number of military ranks broke and fled. However, the influence on the civil service has received less attention from the documentation. The reign of Bashar al-Assad was the primary focus of each and every one of the different agencies that comprise the Syrian government. As a result of his departure, a power vacuum is developing, which has the potential to bring about a civil war in the nation.

While the Syrian opposition is attempting to construct a unity administration against the background of the power vacuum that has been created by the departure of Assad, it is quite probable that they will suffer failure. While some supporters of the Assad regime have already made a commitment to continue the military fight against the new administration, the new government itself has promised to exact retribution upon members of the previous regime. While all is going on, Syria is now considering itself to be the site of a global struggle.

After the overthrow of powerful individuals like as Assad, the outlook for countries is not a positive one. We may learn from the experiences of Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan, and Ukraine that a sustained civil war is often the consequence of a regime transition that is prompted by foreign factors. It is reasonable to fear that the present situation in Syria might escalate into a full-scale civil war. There is every reason to believe this.

It is anticipated that the conflict in Ukraine would come to an end in the year 2025. Nevertheless, when Russia and its NATO rivals accomplish this, they will continue their vast armaments buildup as a preparation for World War 3, which will be the third war in the world. There is overwhelming evidence to support the hypothesis that this will result in an increase in the manufacture of armaments. There will be a great conflict as a result of this. Following the conclusion of the crisis in Ukraine, the struggle between the BRICS nations and NATO will become more intense. At this very time, Syria is quickly becoming the most prominent contender for that conflict on the list of prospective options.

The survival of the Iranian government seems to be the driving force behind the escalation of tensions in the Middle East. Russia is now concerned with Ukraine, and as a result, it is unable to provide assistance to Iran and its proxies when they are in need of assistance. On the other hand, once that battle is over, Russia will be in a position to devote its enhanced production of armaments to outmanoeuvre Iran. There is a possibility that the crisis in Syria may spread into that conflict.

There is every cause to be concerned about the disintegration of order in Syria, despite the fact that Western nations are optimistic about the decision to remove Assad from power. It has just come to light that iihadist groups have taken control of a nation that borders Israel, and it looks that the country is on the verge of experiencing a massive civil war. The conclusion of this conflict will not necessarily be favourable to Western influence, and there is no assurance that this will be the case. It's possible that this is the beginning of an era in the Middle East that will be quite unpredictable.

(The writer is a veteran journalist and freelance writer based in Brampton)

Why reading and writing matter more in the age of Artificial intelligence

VIJAY GARG

s Artificial intelligence grows increasingly sophisticated, our commitment to these skills will determine whether we remain active participants in innovation—or passive consumers

In an era increasingly

defined by technological

innovation, reading and writing—cornerstones of human intellect—are facing a profound transformation. While artificial intelligence bots like OpenAI's ChatGPT and Google Bard redefine the boundaries of information generation, the necessity of cultivating human literacy has never been more crucial. The fromtransition Neanderthals to modern human involved significant cognitive and cultural advancements, but Neanderthals themselves did not read or write. Reading and writing developed after modern humans became the dominant hominin species. These are not merely communication tools but exercises that keep our cognitive faculties sharp and resilient.

When we read, our brains decode symbols, conjuring vivid images, emotions, and concepts. This intricate process activates the left temporal cortex, which is responsible for language processing, and strengthens neural connectivity. Studies underscore that reading enhances memory,

concentration, and analyti-

cal thinking. Engaging with diverse genres deepens empathy and broadens perspectives, fostering a nuanced understanding of

the world.

Writing, on the other hand, is an intellectual partner to reading. Crafting words—whether in a journal, essay, or story—requires us to organise thoughts, synthesise ideas, and express them clearly. This process activates the prefrontal cortex, the brain's hub for decision-making and problem-solving. Writing is more than an intellectual task; it is therapeutic. Research shows that expressive writing can alleviate stress, enhance mood, and even bolster the immune system.

The tactile act of writing also strengthens memory, embedding information deeply within our minds. Reading and writing foster neuroplasticity, enabling the brain to adapt and form new connections. They are antidotes to cognitive decline and shields against neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's. Regular engagement with these skills cultivates intellectual independence, creativity, and emotional depth—uniquely human attributes.

Yet, as AI bots revolutionise the way we consume and produce information, there is an alarming decline in human literacy. Tools like Book AI, which transforms any book into a conversational chatbot, exemplify AI's capacity to digest and reproduce complex information effortlesslv. AI lacks the intrinsic human qualities of creativity, empathy, and ethical judgment. As AI literacy surges, the stagnation of human literacy risks creating a dangerous imbalance. Over-reliance on AI can diminish critical thinking and communication skills, weakening the very attributes that distinguish

humans from machines.

While the fear of displacement is understandable, the answer lies in shifting our perspective. AI is not an adversary but a powerful partner that can amplify human capabilities and drive innovation. Individuals can leverage their unique strengths to complement AI capabilities by prioritising the development of reading and writing skills. In an environment controlled by artificial intelligence, these abilities are necessary to navigate complicated concepts, understandably articulate them, and affirm human importance. The development of artificial intelligence highlights the significance of human expertise rather than diminishing it. By committing to studying throughout our lives, we can ensure that technology will not replace our but rather humanity improve it.

(The writer is Retired Principal & Educational columnist)