

PRESERVING REGIONAL LANGUAGES

Languages are the lifeblood of cultures, serving as vessels of history, traditions, and identity. Regional languages, in particular, carry the essence of local communities, offering unique perspectives and expressions. However, the rise of globalization, technological advancements, and socio-economic pressures has put many regional languages at risk of extinction. Preserving these languages is not just about saving words but protecting a way of life, fostering diversity, and ensuring cultural continuity. Regional languages are more than mere tools for communication; they are repositories of collective wisdom. They encapsulate local folklore, literature, and philosophies, which contribute to the richness of global heritage. For instance, India, with its linguistic diversity of over 19,500 dialects and 121 major languages, demonstrates how regional tongues reflect the distinctiveness of its various states and communities.

Beyond their cultural significance, regional languages are essential for inclusive development. They allow individuals to access education, government services, and job opportunities in their native tongue, promoting social equity. Additionally, children who receive primary education in their mother tongue are shown to perform better academically, as they can relate more intuitively to concepts taught in familiar linguistic contexts.

Despite their importance, regional languages face multiple challenges. The dominance of global languages, particularly English, has overshadowed smaller tongues. In education, employment, and social mobility, proficiency in English often becomes a prerequisite, sidelining regional languages. Urbanization and migration further exacerbate this issue. Families moving to cities often prioritize mainstream or global languages for their children, fearing that native tongues might limit their prospects. This generational discontinuity leads to a gradual erosion of linguistic traditions.

Media and entertainment also play a significant role. Globalization has brought an influx of content in dominant languages, leaving little room for regional productions. Consequently, younger generations gravitate toward widely spoken languages, finding their native tongues less appealing or relevant.

Paradoxically, while technology has contributed to the decline of regional languages, it also holds immense potential for their preservation. Digital platforms, apps, and social media offer opportunities for language documentation, learning, and promotion. For example, initiatives like Duolingo and regional Wikipedia editions make these languages accessible to a global audience.

Atrocities on Hindus in Bangladesh: Another episode in series that began in 9th century

■ RAJIV SANGRA

And the towers come crashing down. The might inside the concrete melted in the heat of the burning aviation fuel, in the heat of the hate. In that heat of the hate, those who wanted to live were killed and those who wanted to die also died.

Several love stories came to an end on that day and several careers got ruined on that day. That was the time, how one can imagine those people went through what thoughts, what anger, for what faults of theirs that this was being done to them. They were on their way to lose their lives in a minute with the ramming of a jet to the tower and the tower crashing to ground and they lost, along with them those who were on mission to make it happen, also lost lives. They fulfilled their aim. They accomplished what they had come for.

In 1999, Indian Airlines flight 814 was hijacked and taken to Kandahar, Afghanistan, this part of Afghanistan was then ruled by Taliban militia. Hijackers demanded release of Masood Azhar and others. Taliban Militia surrounded the plane, pre-empting any Indian commando operation.

After negotiations between the Indian Government and the hijackers, the hostages were freed eight days after the hijacking occurred in exchange for three terrorists, one of them then founded a terrorist organization.

1989-90, Neighbour killed the neighbour. Killings, abductions, kidnappings, rapes, started, being committed with pride and honour as the belief system behind was infidels are meant to be treated like this and it is a duty and faith bestowed duty, and a duty that can fetch pleasantries in the heaven. Exodus

happened. Half a million people, all Hindus, infidels for them, migrated to Jammu, leaving homes behind, leaving their lands behind, leaving their emotions behind, leaving their religious places behind in the hands of those who later broke hell on all of them.

Criminals laughed and innocents cried for mercy. Enemies of humanity celebrated exodus. They managed to expel their neighbours and then they had got their properties to eye on. They managed to expel their neighbours with whom they had lived together for generations. They expelled them from their roots from where they had emerged. Centuries of living together was forgotten in a single day.

This also continued in the UK and France. France was burnt by the people who were refugees and France allowed them to live in France on humanitarian grounds. One hater just drove a truck on the people enjoying firing of crackers in the sky, killing many instantly and hurting many. One place of knowledge, the library, was burnt. One Indian library of Nalanda University was burned by Bakhtiar Khilji in the late 12th century.

And now in Bangladesh, one day its Prime Minister had to fly to save her life and Bangladesh came into the hands of the radicalized. They repeated their resolve of freeing land from infidels. Hindus were beaten to death, looted, their homes were put to flames and mercy was only for those if it was for, who quickly agreed to conversion.

Places are changing but not the acts of religious cruelty. What had happened in Kashmir is now happening in Bangladesh. History is full of these accounts. Same story is repeated and is made to repeat. Hindu population decline in Pakistan and Bangladesh from over 20 % to 1 to 2 % is the

data that speaks of atrocities and cruelty and stories of abduction of Hindu girls kept coming from these places and other places. A total of 2010 incidents which include 69 temples, of attacks on Hindus took place across Bangladesh, 157 families were attacked, looted, vandalized in 16 days period from August 4 to August 20.

This is the same Bangladesh whose people cried for help when Pakistani army had unleashed barrage of atrocities in the shape of raiding, abductions, rapes, killings etc. India fought a war in 1971 for its liberation from the evil designs of Pakistan and in this war Indian army sacrificed some of its brave men to see peace and development in a neighboring country.

World has been making a huge mistake and we have been doing it for centuries now. We are continuing to do so. We concluded 9/11 was the handiwork of Osama bin Laden and 26/11, of L&T, stone pelting was the handiwork of misguided youth and exodus of terrorists.

Creation of Pakistan to Exodus of Kashmiri Hindus, 9/11 to 26/11, burning of library in France to burning of Nalanda library, Stone pelting to hijacking of 814, stabbing of innocent people in the Borough Market London to 22 people killing by a suicide bomber at an Ariana Grande concert at Manchester Arena, from one hater just driving a truck on the people enjoying firing of crackers in the sky, killing many instantly and hurting many to ramming a car full with explosives on the convoy of CRPF in Pulwama, from Daniel Pearl beheading to mass killings and many millions of incidents, all have got energy from the one source and evolved from one seed of thought and that thought is free the land from infidels and

that's a work that gets the one who does it a place in the heaven.

The greatest misery for mankind is even with this much advanced knowledge they do not see man as man though they see all dogs are dogs. They have divided man on faith and here too they do not stop. They go a step ahead in cementing this thought in their minds that this earth belongs to them only, the other faith believers have no right to live respectfully, they deserve to be killed or converted or given inferior living.

What they get out of this brutality is something they know only. And to any normal human being it is beyond imagination to understand the reasons leading to this insanity. But it happens, has been happening. Human life is really amid the biggest problem of all times. A solution has to be reached for this build up and there is one.

Those who follow peace, love and humanity take a legal course against the culprits of terror and this is the advantage terror reigning industry sees to their use. One example for this is Ajmal Kasab, the terrorist trained in the Lashker-e Toiba terrorist camp who intruded into India along with other terrorists and unleashed hell in Mumbai's 26 November 2008 terrorist attack. He was caught alive and was given trial and later was hanged on 21 November 2012. Total 10 members of Lashker-e Toiba, an Islamic terrorist organization from Pakistan carried out 12 coordinated shooting and bombing attacks lasting four days across Mumbai. 175 innocent people died.

That legal course, that fair trial, that human way to one who is coming with an aim to kill is not the way. The community involved in supporting such acts deserves to be reciprocated adequately and boycotted.

Armed Forces Flag Day

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

Armed Forces Flag Day is celebrated every year on December 7 and the day has a special importance for not only the defense/armed forces but for the countrymen as well. The day is celebrated with great fervor and enthusiasm. The Armed Forces Flag Day or the Flag Day of India is a day dedicated to honoring the soldiers and veterans of India's armed forces. It has been observed annually in India on December 7 since 1949. Immediately after India achieved independence, a need arose for the government to manage the welfare of its defense forces personnel. On August 28, 1949 a committee set up under the defense minister decided to observe a Flag Day annually on December 7. The idea behind observing a Flag Day was to distribute small flags to general population and in return collect donations. Flag Day gains more significance as it considers that it is the responsibility of the civilian population of India to take care of the families and dependents of the armed forces personnel who fight for the country. The Flag of the Indian Armed Forces is similar to that of the United Kingdom's Ministry of Defense, first utilized in 1956, and is a common color scheme in British-aligned territories, used by fellow Commonwealth nations including Cyprus, Kenya and Nigeria. The Flag Day serves to promote three basic causes which are as follows -1-Rehabilitation of battle casualties 2-Welfare of serving personnel and their families and 3-Resettlement and welfare of ex-servicemen and their families. On this important occasion funds are collected from the people through distribution of flags and the money so collected is used for the welfare of army and their families. It is the time for Indians to express its gratitude and appreciation to the current and veteran mil-

itary personnel of India and to acknowledge those who died in service to the country. On the Flag Day all three branches of the Indian forces, the Indian Army, the Indian Air Force and the Indian Navy, arrange a variety of shows, carnivals, dramas and other entertainment programmes to showcase to general public the efforts of their personnel to ensure national security. Throughout the country small flags and car flags in red, deep blue and light blue colors representing the three services are distributed in return for donations. The original Flag Day Fund was set up in 1949 by the Defense Minister's Committee. In 1993, the Defense Minister of India consolidated related welfare funds into single Armed Forces Flag Day fund. Those funds include-Amalgamated Special Fund for War Bereaved, War Disabled and other ex-servicemen /serving personnel. 2 Flag Day Fund 3-St Dunstan's -India and Kendriya Sainik Board Fund. 4-Indian Gorkha EX - Servicemen's Welfare Fund. The fund collection is managed by the local arms of the Kendriya Sainik Board -KSB, which is part of the Ministry of Defense. The collection is organized both by official and non-official means through voluntary organizations. Though welfare of the ex-servicemen and their dependents is the responsibility of the union government, and the governments of states and UT's, majority of the problems have to be resolved only by the states and UT's. Like the Kendriya Sainik Board at the centre, the Rajya/Zila Sainik Boards are responsible for policy formulation and implementation of resettlement and welfare schemes for ex-servicemen, widows and their dependents residing in their respective states/UT's /Districts. To assist the central government in this regard, there are 32 Rajya Sainik Boards and 392 Zila

Sainik Boards in the country. The Secretary KSB advises the Department of Sainik welfare in the states/UT's on the policies for resettlement and welfare of ex-servicemen, widows and seeks reports from the Director, Department Sainik Welfare /Secretary RSB and Zila Sainik welfare officer/Secretary ZSB, on implementation of policies and success in resettling ex-servicemen, widows, disabled personnel invalidated out from the Service and their departments. Advise is also rendered on the welfare schemes required for the clientele, which are financed from funds allotted by the governments of states/UT's and the Amalgamated Special funds. The Fund is operated by a Managing Committee presided over by the Defense Minister at the centre and by the executive heads of the governments in states and UT's. When the Armed Forces Flag Day programme was introduced, the fund collection was managed in such a way that the Central KSB headquarters is given only a very small share of the Flag Day Fund collections made by each state. The allotted funds for KSB is only half a paisa per individual in the state. The primary objective of Armed Forces Flag Day is to honor the sacrifices and dedication of the Indian Armed Forces Personnel. The objective is also to generate funds for the welfare of families of martyrs, ex-servicemen, and disabled soldiers. Objective also includes to foster a sense of responsibility among citizens to support their defenders. Armed Forces Flag Day is all about paying tribute to the members of the armed forces, including the Army, Navy, and Air Force, who selflessly dedicated their lives to safeguarding the country's freedom and peace and so protect its borders. A horizontal tricolor of red, navy blue and sky blue represent the army, navy and air forces of India. As already pointed above

since 1949, 7th December is observed as the Armed Forces Flag Day throughout the country to honor the martyrs and the men in uniform who valiantly fought and continue to fight on our boarders to safeguard the country's honor. Soldiers are one of the greatest assets of any country. They are the guardians of the nation and protect its citizens at all costs. To fulfill their duties, soldiers have sacrificed a lot of things in their lives. The country is forever indebted to these gallant heroes who lay down their lives in the service towards the motherland. It is our duty to not only show our admiration for the martyrs and the living heroes who were wounded while doing their duties but also their families who have been a crucial part of this sacrifice. Apart from government measures at the Centre and state level, it is the collective duty of every citizen of our country to make his/her unstinted and voluntary contribution towards providing care, support, rehabilitation and financial aid. Flag Day brings to the forefront our commitment of looking after our war disabled soldiers, Veer Naris and the families of Martyrs who have sacrificed their lives for the country. The citizens should contribute generously for the welfare of the soldiers, their families, widows, Veer Naris and disabled soldiers as well as for their resettlement and rehabilitation. Let us join hands to celebrate the auspicious occasion with dedication so that welfare of the soldiers, their families and widows is ensured. All of us should contribute for making the Armed Forces Flag Day a success as we are indebted towards the armed forces and should try to repay the debt by contributing towards Armed Forces Flag Day. Jai Hind, Jai Jawan.

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

Violence against Hindus in Bangladesh-a matter of concern

■ RAM RATTAN SHARMA

Following the resignation of Sheikh Hasina on Aug 5, 2024 attacks began on the homes, business and places of worship of the Hindu community in Bangladesh. The Hindus, Buddhist and Christianity council reported that from August 4 to August 20, a total of 2010 incidents (including 69 temples) of attacks on minorities took place across the country within the 16 days period. Among the incidents homes of 157 families were attacked, looted vandalised and set on fire. According to analysts, large no. of Hindus were killed in these attacks. Awami league, being the last bastion of secularism was seen as the protector of the Hindu minority. Though several attacks have taken place during the tenure of Awami League Govt. also. At a conference organized by the Bangladesh Chhatra Parishad an organization representing the minority community, it was stated that 49 teachers from the minority community were forced to resign between 5 - 31 August. At the press conference, Haripada Das, the principal of Gallab Adarsha degree college in Faridaganj, Chandpur shared his personal experience. He said that his house was vandalised and looted on the evening of August 5 and his family barely managed to escape with their lives. He is regularly threatened to resign and is fearful about resuming his duties at the college on charges of misconduct, 252 police Sub-inspectors (SI) were dismissed, all of whom were Hindus. Now there are no Hindus (SI) in Bangladesh. Minority owned homes and businesses were looted, there have been allegations of abduction and assault of Hindu women. Reports indicate that religious centres associated with the Hindu movement ISKCON temples dedicated to the Goddess Kali were also targeted. According to Yudhistir Govinda Das, ISKCON's spokesperson in India one of our ISKCON centers in Melhpur (Khulna Division) was burned, including the deties of Lord Jagannath, Baldev and Subadhra Devi.

Chinmoy Krishna Das is a Bangladeshi Hindu Monk and community leader who is the spokesperson Bangladesh Sanatan Jagran Manch. On 25 Nov, 2024, he was arrested on sedition charges, leading to violent protests by his followers and diplomatic reactions from India.

ISKCON Kolkata called the arrest of Das the last example of continuing attacks on ISKCON members and members of minority communities in Bangladesh. The India Ministry of External Affairs expressed concern on his arrest and urged the Bangladesh govt. to ensure the safety and protection of minority communities in Bangladesh emphasizing their right to peaceful assembly.

The United Kingdom parliament members expressed concern regarding the arrest of Hindu Religious leader Chinmoy Krishna Das and the recent violence targeting the Hindu minority in Bangladesh. During an urgent discussion in the house of commons conservative MP Priti Patel high lighted the spread of violence in Bangladesh and called for action to secure Das's release. Labour MP Barry Gardiner also drew attention to attacks on Hindu Temples and described the situation as being on a knife edge. Founder of Isha Foundation Sadhguru condemned the arrest of Das expressing concern over the Bangladesh's drift from democratic to autocratic tendencies. Deputy Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Pawan Kalyan, Sheikh Hasina exiled former Bangladeshi Prime Minister also condemned the arrest of saint and asked the govt. to release him immediately. America President Donald Trump also condemned the attack on Hindu Temples in Bangladesh. Many top leaders of the world & India are with the Hindus of Bangladesh in this crisis.

Situation is critical & worrisome steps should be taken to ensure the safety and security of Hindus in Bangladesh. Targeted attacks on minority Hindus in Bangladesh is a matter of concern, Bangladesh's minority Hindus, who constitute about 8% of the country's 170 million people, have reportedly faced over 200 attacks in 50 odd districts since the fall of Sheikh Hasina's Awami League govt. on August 5. Atrocities being committed against Hindus and other religious minorities in Bangladesh by Islamic extremists. Attacks, killings, looting, arson and in human persecution of women are alarming and these must stop immediately. The current Bangladesh Govt. is not taking any action, when Bangladeshi Hindus raised their voice democratically, a new phase of injustice and oppression emerged to suppress their voice.

Arrest of ISKCON Priest Chinmoy Krishna Das is unfair. Govt. should immediately stop the atrocities against Hindus and release Das from jail, Govt. of India should also intervene and continue its efforts to prevent the atrocities against Hindus in Bangladesh.

At this critical hour India & The International community must stand with the victims of Bangladesh and express their solidarity. It is necessary for global peace & fraternity.

(The Author is former Dy. Librarian University of Jammu)

Distinctive care & attention imperative forelder parents

■ MOHAMMAD HANIEF

Elders desire a life with good health, dignity, economic independence and finally a peaceful death. They long for care, love and affection. Understanding their needs and concerns, will ensure their good health. Lending an emotional support to the elders keep them jovial, which is inevitably the ideal way to live a healthy life. However, for many people, providing care and attention to elders is not possible due to work priorities.

Elders suffering from cognitive challenges' undergo serious personality changes; at this point they need care and attention. When they are left unattended, most of them are gripped with overwhelming feelings of dejection, purposelessness; some of them even turn violent. Regardless of the fact that many of us know that aging is a natural progression and it has its own shortcoming, most of us tend to ignore this and resort to an unruly approach.

Old age is a sensitive phase; elderly people need care and comfort to lead a healthy life without worries and anxiety. Lack of awareness regarding the changing behavioral patterns in elderly people at home leads to abuse of them by their kin.

Birth, childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age are the most crucial stages in a man's life. All these stages have their very own issues and troubles. As each level passes the physical strength deteriorates as well as the mental stability lessens. It is believed there are over 80 million older folks in India. Since age progresses, various medical issues happen, some of the particular known diseases usually are blood pressure, diabetes, heart failure issues, arthritis, cancer malignancy, joint pains, tuberculosis, as well as kidney infections.

It's just not disease that affects old age; there are various other issues that govern the downfall of the health of the old people. One of the main issues is the negligence from the younger generation. Old people need supervision, the laxity to understand the needs and worries of elders make them appear strangers to the younger generation, who later regard them as a burden.

Old people are subject to abuse from family members over property dispute, some of them are even forced to sell their belongings and live in penury till death. Many of them are too scared to express themselves or fear being humiliated by their loved ones.

Taking care of elderly parents is a season many of us will walk through. Everyone who begins that journey has many questions. Perhaps you're an only child, and the responsibility of taking care

of your elderly parents is yours alone. Maybe there are only a few options available for additional help due to location and affordability. You may have had a challenging relationship with your parents growing up or had a great relationship and now find it difficult to see them in this state. Though every person's scenario will look different, elder care is achievable with the right resources.

For many, the responsibility of caring for aging parents can be daunting. Over the years, everyone will transition from being dependent on parents to being adult friends to being a caretaker for parents' physical and emotional needs. Eldercare is an unfamiliar season of life for both adult children and parents.

Sometimes medical diagnoses are unforeseeable and we deal with things as they come up. However, making a plan with your aging parent about long-term care allows you to create a rough draft that satisfies everyone involved.

Neglecting to involve aging parents in decisions about their care is a significant oversight that can undermine their autonomy, dignity, and overall well-being. This mistake often arises from well-meaning intentions to protect or oversee their welfare, but it can have detrimental effects on their sense of agency and quality of life.

Involving aging parents in decisions about their care respects their fundamental right to self-determination. As individuals age, they may experience physical and cognitive changes that require adjustments in their daily routines, medical treatments, or living arrangements. Consulting them on these matters ensures that their preferences, values, and concerns are considered, promoting a sense of control over their lives. Exclusion from decision-making can lead to feelings of helplessness, frustration, or resentment in aging parents. They may perceive decisions made on their behalf as paternalistic or dismissive of their insights and desires. This can strain relationships and erode trust between caregivers and parents, complicating future interactions and cooperation.

Involving aging parents in decisions fosters transparency and mutual understanding. It encourages open communication about their health status, treatment options, and long-term care plans. This shared information enables aging parents to make informed choices aligned with their goals and values, enhancing their satisfaction with the care they receive. Excluding aging parents from decision-making overlooks their unique perspectives and life experiences. They possess valuable insights into their own preferences, habits, and routines accumulated over a life-

time. Ignoring these insights may result in care plans that are impractical, uncomfortable, or incompatible with their lifestyles, diminishing their overall quality of life.

Failing to seek professional guidance and support while taking care of aging parents can be a critical mistake that caregivers often overlook. This error can stem from various factors, including misconceptions about caregiving responsibilities, reluctance to admit limitations, or underestimation of the complexities involved in elder care. Caregiving for aging parents often begins with good intentions and a sense of familial duty. Many adult children take on caregiving roles without prior experience or training, assuming they can manage their parents' needs effectively on their own. However, the reality of caregiving can quickly become overwhelming, especially as parents' health declines or complex medical conditions arise.

Neglecting effective communication with other family members or siblings regarding the care of aging parents can indeed lead to misunderstandings, conflicts, and ultimately, challenges in providing the best possible care. Clear and open communication is crucial in navigating the complexities of caregiving responsibilities, ensuring equitable distribution of tasks, and fostering a supportive environment for both aging parents and caregivers alike.

One of the primary consequences of poor communication among family members is the emergence of misunderstandings regarding the needs and preferences of aging parents. Each family member may have their own perspective on what constitutes appropriate care, leading to disagreements about medical decisions, living arrangements, financial management, and overall caregiving approaches. Without effective communication, these differing opinions can escalate into conflicts, hindering collaborative decision-making and potentially compromising the well-being of aging parents.

The societal expectations and cultural norms surrounding caregiving can also contribute to caregivers neglecting their own well-being. There is often an unspoken expectation that caregivers should prioritize the needs of their parents above all else, sometimes at the expense of their own physical and mental health. This pressure can lead caregivers to feel guilty or ashamed if they consider their own needs or seek support from others.