

## SOCIAL MEDIA IS KILLING BOOK READING HABIT!

With the growing influence and liking towards social media, it will surely become difficult to fill the room with books. A survey in UK showed that with the increasing age, the tendency to read a book decreases; the effect profoundly seen when comparison was made between three age groups - six to eight, 12-14 and 15-17 year old. There have been frowns from parents and many quarters of society towards the teen indulgence in FB, internet and other social media websites. They are not happy with the neglect of reading books. Thus it's worthwhile to discuss on the thought that whether social media is killing the practice of reading books?

Affecting reading of books-Social media is unproductive use of time as it only entertains you and gives no food for thought. The amount of education you get from it is very less compared to reading books. It hampers creativity as much of the time is spent on forwarding things to others. Most of the time is spent in searching what others are doing, which can be well spent in reading which atleast adds knowledge to your own life.

Another prominent example can be the usage of 'new' abbreviations to express oneself on the social media. This hampers the language development which in turn affects writing and reading both.

Due to the fast changing content on such websites, the attention span of the readers has reduced. So an important habit of thinking over a thought, giving it time to percolate in your mind, is reduced to a great extent. This is one of the benefits of the book. Books cultivate the capacity to understand and think.

Good reading habit makes way for a better understanding of one's experiences however social media mostly indulges the cravings of people rather than what is good for them.

The role models who the teens follow too are more active on the social media. Teens try to emulate them.

No, they do not affect-Times change and with it, habits. Even if people are moving away from reading, one can always devise better ways to indulge them in reading. One cannot blame everything on change in culture and social media. Teens are just trying to find themselves and prioritize socialization over reading something alone. They are getting connected instead of being alone. With increasing age there is bound to be changes in tendency as teenagers feel the need to establish one's presence in society, find one's position and hence use all the methods available to socialize; an important one being the social media.

They are learning to find themselves with the social media. This is in no way affecting reading.

Socialization is their current priority, but this does not mean that social media is affecting reading books.

There is lack of literature which can suit contemporary needs and thoughts. The classics might be good but do not necessarily suit everyone.

Also disinterest in reading is mostly seen due to no encouragement to reading. For this, parents, peer groups, teachers, etc. could be blamed, rather than social media.

Reading enriches ones' intellectual abilities. Depth in reading helps to develop the mind and personality of a person; it provides insights into human problems, and influences attitudes and behavior. In other words, reading helps to mould a person's character. It is well known that books can be a stimulating agent for building oneself. In this fast changing world, there are going to be lots of distractions. We must innovate to make book-reading relevant again. Encouraging book-reading through social media, incorporating reading in social media, eBooks, developing relevant and quality literature, role models with whom the teens can connect, etc. can be a few starting steps. Instead of blaming we need to work constructively so as to not deny ourselves the benefits of social media.

## Keep your emotional go bag and stay bin ready

Natural and unnatural disasters are becoming so frequent these days - floods, earthquakes, fires, attacks - that we are being advised to keep a 'go bag' and 'emergency bin' ready in case one has to either flee or stay trapped for a while. The go bag would have your vital documents, medicines, water, flashlight, phone charger, facemasks, money and extra spectacles. The emergency or 'stay' bin is in case you get trapped and have to stay put without help for several days; it will be stocked with dry rations, water, power bank, first aid kit, whistle and list of phone numbers to contact if someone finds you.

Once you've organised your go bag and stay bin, you will feel more secure and prepared in the event of an emergency. These measures relate to physical preparedness, to help you survive till help arrives, in case of a sudden disaster.

Just as our body needs to be taken good care of, the mind, too, requires care and attention. The first reaction in an emergency is to feel panic, fear and anger. Negative thoughts crowd the mind and your self-esteem, will power and confidence take a beating. Therefore, along with physical preparedness, it is a good idea to fortify one's mind in order to enable it to deal ably with emotional challenges posed by unexpected disaster.

Psychotherapist Nicole Urdang writes of the importance of emotional preparedness, and offers a few tips for emotional first-aid and says whatever kind of distress you are in right now, you need to tell yourself that

Narayani Ganesh

# Blessed are foreigners who enriched Hindi language

■ R.K. SINHA

Today being Hindi Diwas, it is natural that we mention distinguished scholars, writers, and litterateurs of the Hindi language. Almost all these scholars will be from the Hindi belt. However, there may be few exceptions to this. On this auspicious occasion of Hindi Diwas is it imperative to talk about those patrons of Hindi too who are not primarily of Indian origins. Despite it not being their mother tongue they not only learnt it but also taught and passed it on to the generations to come. Their initiative and creations have enriched the Hindi language.

It seems very obvious that the first name among such Hindi saviors is Father Kamil Bulke. It is impossible that any person from the Hindi belt has not heard his name or has not perused through Father Kamil Bulke's dictionary of vocabulary to find the correct and appropriate words in Hindi for a complex English word. Throughout his life, Father Bulke dedicated himself to serving the Hindi language. He was also constantly trying to gather material for the creation of the Hindi-English dictionary. To this day, his dictionary is renowned to be the most authentic. Apart from this, he added 40,000 new words to it and kept updating it throughout his lifetime. Lakhs of people learned Hindi from him. I am fortunate to have heard them in the Tulsi Jayanti celebrations held in Ranchi for many years. He is a scholar of Ramcharitmanas and almost completely memorised it. It was a matter of good fortune that my wife was his student and under his guidance, she got M.A in Hindi

from Ranchi University.

In this sequence, 85-year-old Kaj Susan is a name worth mentioning. She lives near the Vishwa Shanti Stupa on the Ring Road, in the capital city. She greets you before you get an opportunity to greet her. She says, "My name is Katsu San. I am associated with the Vishwa Shanti Stupa. You are welcome here." You will undoubtedly be amazed by Katsu San's impeccable pronunciation of Hindi words and her strong command of the language. As the conversation progresses, she says, "I came to India in 1960. My interest in India was piqued due to the Lord Buddha." Katsu San is of Japanese origin. After coming to India once, she fell in love with it and took the decision to settle down and live her life here. Now, she says, "India seems like her own country. India is the global spiritual leader today."

Katsu San had learnt Hindi from Kakasaheb Kalelkar ji. She also used to teach Hindi to the Bodh Bikhshuks of Japan who came to her. Personalities like Katsu San are doing a tremendous service to the language. The entirety of the Hindi speaking society should harbour feelings of gratefulness towards her. She had assumed the citizenship of India about 40 years ago. Katsu-Ji is the permanent face of the all-religion prayer meetings in the capital. A few months ago, after the ground worship of the newly constructed building of Parliament in the capital, an all-religion prayer meeting was organized in which prayers of Buddhist, Jewish, Parsi, Bahai, Sikh, Christian, Jain, Muslim, and Hindu religions were offered. It started with

Buddhist prayers. It was done by Katsu ji. This development of Hindi will happen only if those people start teaching whose motherland and mother tongue is not Hindi.

Today it is also necessary to discuss Jillian Wright. She is originally from Britain. It would make one happy when she starts conversing in Hindi. It is as if Saraswati resides in her tongue. Wright also worked for the BBC in London. She loves and teaches Hindi. After coming to India in the 70s, she translated the novels of Rahi Masoom Raza and Srilal Shukla, "Aadha Gaon" and "Rag Darbari", respectively, into English. To understand the atmosphere and language of Rahi Masoom Raza Saheb's novel, "Aadha Gaon" more closely, she also met his family members.

Many others went to the Imambara and witnessed the lamentation for a departed soul happening and understood that doing all this helped them to translate half the village. "Raag Darbari" is also one of his favorite novels. He also translated the stories of "Bhishma Sahni". He especially liked Bhishma Sahni's story "Amritsar Aa Gaya Hai". He likes Uttar Pradesh after Delhi. She says how can one go away from Uttar Pradesh where "Aadha Gaon" and "Raag Darbari" were initially translated. Jillian has also lived in the capital for a long time. From the shopkeepers to the vegetable sellers, she bargains with them in Hindi, although for the first time when someone sees her conversing in Hindi, they are definitely surprised. It is bound to be a surprise, after all, how many white people can speak Hindi? Her mood is spoiled when

in tourist places like the Taj Mahal or Humayun's Tomb, she is asked for higher entry fees considering her as a foreigner. Jillian Wright says "I am Indian, I pay my income tax, then why are you charging more entry fees to me? She is factually absolutely right. She has also taken Indian citizenship. India's relationship with China was never very cordial but India will definitely pay respect to China's Hindi Professor Chang cheng knee who spent his entire life in advertising and popularising Hindi. He has been teaching Hindi for decades at Peking University.

It would be pertinent to mention here Professor Ronald Stuart McGregor of Britain. Professor Ronald continued to teach Hindi at Cambridge University from 1964 to 1997.

He was a top linguist, a scholar of grammar, translator, and historian of Hindi literature. A British citizen, he has also done serious research on Acharya Ramchandra Shukla. He prepared two sections on the history of Hindi literature.

To be honest, how good it would be if these true servers of Hindi are honored on Hindi Day. Hindi is the language of love and harmony. It connects people all over the world. Those who know this language and understand it are now also found in the markets of Singapore, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, London, Toronto, New York. Now by knowing Hindi, one can work pretty much everywhere in the world. Everyone is connecting with this. This is the power of Hindi.

(The author is a senior editor, columnist, and former MP).

# 15 September-‘International Day of Democracy’

■ MAHADEEP SINGH JAMWAL

When we visit the charter of celebrations of days around the world, having been mandated by the United Nations, the most important such day in the charter is the 'International Day of Democracy', established through a resolution passed by the UN General Assembly in 2007, encouraging governments to strengthen and consolidate democracy so as to raise public awareness about democracy. Democracy is a universal value based on the freely-expressed will of people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems, and their full involvement in all aspects of life.

It is a system of government where representatives are voted into office by the voters. Simply Democracy means rule by people. The people elect their leaders. These leaders take the decisions about laws for the common man. This is commonly called representative democracy. The International Day of Democracy provides an opportunity to review the state of democracy in the world. On the day various activities and events are held around the world to promote democracy. 'International Day of Democracy' is honored annually on the 15th of September to audit the state of democracy around the globe, to embolden democratic movements, to mobilize political will and resources to reinforce the achievements of humanity and advocate freedom, peace and human rights. Democracy gives the right to vote, to elect the government of choice.



When we speak of India, the way political parties behave and act during elections, have pushed Indian Representative Democracy to Autocracy (a form of government where one individual automatically assumes all enforcement authority). We have seen it during 2014 Parliament Elections, when a particular party has campaigned not to strengthen democracy but to bring one face in power on alluring commitments.

Democracies are characterized by lively but peaceful debate between a variety of political parties and interest groups. If we visit the theme of the 'The International Day of Democracy' for the year 2018, "Democracy under Strain: Solutions for a Changing World" was a very alarming one and how far we headed towards this concern is a million dollar question? But, what we have observed in Parliament is, the majority group (Treasury Benchers) exclusively pursue their own objectives at the expense of those of the

minority group (Opposition).

According to the 'Economist Intelligence Unit' (EIU) report, "With mounting pressure on India's democratic norms, India's score fell from a peak of 7.92 in 2014 to 6.61 in 2020 and its global ranking slipped from 27th (in 2014) to 53rd (in 2020) as a result of democratic backsliding" under the current regime".

It can be argued that Democratic backsliding is likely when the political elites are not committed to democratic principles. These are the alarming reasons that in India on the 'International Day of Democracy', the prime motive of this day is to hold debates, conferences, discussions etc. are required to be carried to the last village and to the last voter to apprise them, what does Democracy actually mean? And to sensitize them that democracy and human rights are closely linked. Where, Democracy needs the participation of all citizens', to motivate the people to work collectively to fix

the Government for a fairer output and to make it more representative in form.

At the same time we have to emphasize the importance of democracy, what it involves, the challenges it faces as well as the opportunities it offers. The more responsibility is of our elected representatives in the Parliament that is the key academic of democracy. It is a ripe time to examine and discuss how well parliament performs its democratic functions, possibly on the basis of ascetic analysis, and identify what steps it may take to strengthen its effectiveness. If there is no democracy, then there will be lack of rights or a voice and these power lust political parties will be playing with the sanctity of the Democracy.

Democracy is an ideal recognized by an overwhelming majority of countries, and is one of the basic values of the United Nations. However, in recent years this political system seems to be undergoing one of its greatest challenges. How to understand the current situation? What is the way forward? We come across very heavy weight themes for the promotion of Democracy such as: "Strengthening Voices for Democracy", "Engaging youth on democracy", "Space for civil society", "Democracy and the 2030 agenda for sustainable development", "Democracy under Strain: Solutions for a Changing World" "participation" and "COVID-19 - A Spotlight on Democracy" but the way Democracies are trailing behind is a clear indicator that we believe in 'Voices that Resonate' and not in 'Actions that Speaks'.

phone of almost every student except some exceptional cases. Generally, teachers prefer to take online classes through Wise App, Zoom or Google Meet. I have seen some students playing games while their classes.

They put their class in the background and enjoy playing games in silent mode.

Parents get themselves satisfied with the voice of the teacher in the class.

Actually the online mode of teaching has become fatal for the academic growth of students despite very bad effect of gaming on their minds.

Some cases of game addiction can be seen daily on social media. Through this letter, it's my humble request to the teaching as well as the parent community that please have a close vigil on the activities of your students/wards during their online class or they can be assisted in this type of pedagogy.

Further, it's my humble request to the authorities of School Education authorities to devise alternative other ways for the studies of small kids rather than insisting their class work through online mode or there should be some specially designed android phones which shouldn't be compatible to any other app except educational apps otherwise future of coming generation doesn't seem so good.

D P Sharma (Bhamblia).

## Coal sector geared up to meet upsurge in power demand

Ministry of Coal is all geared up to address the issue of stock build up at the end of the Thermal Power Plants (TPPs) during the monsoon season. It is notable that coal stocks with CIL are adequate to meet the upsurge in Power demand being witnessed in the country since July this year. The supply of coal to the Power Plants is being monitored at the highest level in the Ministry on a daily basis in coordination with the Ministry of Power, Railways and the Coal Companies. Secretary (Coal) has reviewed the supply scenario with the Coal Companies on 27th August as well as 30th August. Secretary (Coal) has given specific instructions to the coal companies to give priority supplies to all the TPPs having critical stock level and to focus on stock liquidation from the mines having high stock level. He has further directed that in case of availability issue at linked mines alternative sources be allocated for smooth running of the plant. The despatches are being aligned with the advisories of Power Ministry.

Coal India Limited (CIL) has stepped up its coal supplies vigorously during the last five days of August' 21 consistently clocking 1.7 million tonnes (MTs) per day. Augmenting supplies to coal fired power plants, CIL is pumping 1.36 MTs of coal per day. The last three-day average loading to power sector has touched 1.4 MTs. The coal supplies to TPPs has picked up only in July and have been at a historic high since then. All efforts are being made in cooperation with Railway authorities to enhance despatch to meet the unprecedented growth in the demand for coal-based power. The subsidiaries of CIL have upped their loading commensurate with the prevailing demand scenario. Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) in a record performance has despatched 102 rakes on 30th August. CIL has registered the highest ever loading since July' 21 of 285 rakes in a single day on 30th August from CIL sidings. The depletion rate of coal stocks in TPPs has now much reduced.

In the coming days the supplies from the coal companies to the Power Plants is expected to improve further to stand by the nation in these critical monsoon months and meet the demand of the power sector. It is expected that in the next few days, the coal stock at TPPs will stabilise and start rising thereafter.

AYUSH medicines effective in dealing with post

COVID issues

Minister of State for Ayush Dr Munjpara Mahendrabhai said that Ayush medicines have also proved effective in dealing with post-COVID issues. He added that the Corona pandemic was still lurking around and there was a need for everyone to be alert and follow the COVID protocol. The Minister was addressing a webinar organized by All India Institute of Ayurveda under Ministry of AYUSH, on the role of AYUSH system in the management of COVID-19 on Monday. The event was organized as the first in a series of week-long AYUSH programmes under 'Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav', a celebration to commemorate 75 years of India's freedom next year.

Munjpara said that the Ministry of Ayush regularly issued protocols from time to time to combat COVID-19 and people have benefited in a big way from medicines like Giloy. "There have been several clinical studies on Ayush practices and more research is required in the sector. The Ministry of Ayush welcomes those who want to do research in Ayush" said Ayush minister.

Addressing the webinar, D Senthil Pandian, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Ayush, said that while the entire country was preparing to fight the third wave of COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Ayush has also prepared a blue print. He added that the infrastructure of Ayush sector was expected to be ramped up in the coming days to make the benefits of Ayush systems available to the people of the country at a wider level. Explaining the benefits of the Ayurveda and other streams of Ayush in the management of mild and moderate cases of COVID-19, Dr. Tanuja Nesari, Director, All India Institute of Ayurveda said that the recovery rate at the COVID centre set up at the institute has been more than 99 percent. "Not only were the corona infected patients cured in the COVID Centre, there was no loss of life even among the doctors, nursing staff and other hospital staff engaged in their treatment. The biggest reason for this was that everyone followed the Ayush protocol. I myself take Ayush medicines and am healthy for the last two years," she said. MDNIY Director Dr. Ishwar Basavaraddi, NCH Chairman Dr. Anil Khurana, CCISM Chairman Vaidya Jayant Dev Pujari, CCIRAS Director General N Srikanth and Vice Chancellors of various institutions were also present in the webinar.