

## Shortage of doctors

Jammu and Kashmir was big state and is now the largest UT, with difficult terrain, wide climatic differences, and far less infrastructure as compared to some neighbouring states. The most serious area of concern is the healthcare system in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. Despite numerous medical colleges, the health care in both UTs is not so healthy. Even for minor surgeries, people rush to the neighbouring States of Punjab or Delhi for specialised treatment. This is possible only for those who can afford it, and for the rest, Government hospitals are the only hope. A peek into the infrastructure available and services being offered leaves much to be desired. Buildings have been built, but doctors are missing. What can be more tragic than the fact that almost 50 percent of the posts in rural Jammu and Kashmir are vacant? The situation is worse in accident-prone hilly areas, where trauma centres have been built but no doctors are available, and district hospitals are understaffed, with the result that all cases are referred to GMCs in Jammu or Srinagar. The situation becomes more complicated in cases of accidents, as time is crucial for victims to survive, but hospitals have no doctors to attend, resulting in high casualty figures. Mere buildings can never be effective hospitals. The High Court has rightly asked for the list of doctors attached and the number of posts referred for recruitment. It is a hard fact that despite tall claims of various digital initiatives in governance, administration, despite efforts, has not been able to streamline the Health and Medical Education Department. There is no transfer policy, with the result that all influential doctors are posted in and around their home cities. The malice is so widely spread that there are scores of doctors who haven't served out of Jammu or Srinagar in their entire career; surprising as it may sound, it is a fact. In this digital age, the fact that the Health and Medical Education Departments is not able to parse the service record data of doctors seems strange. The least concern for the poor as 50 percent of primary health centres, new primary health centres, and community health centres are without doctors. The rural population has to run from pillar to post for even basic treatment. It is not just a case of one district; all districts have only half of the sanctioned number of medical officers.

The net result is overstretched and overburdened GMCs in Jammu and Srinagar, more so the GMC in Jammu during the winter as it serves the winter migrant patients also from Kashmir and Ladakh.

The present situation is more severe in infantile GMCs, which neither has experienced staff nor full complements of doctors. Implicitly, all of this is beyond imagination. A gander at the whole process leaves one shocked at the casual attitude adopted by higher authorities. Even emergencies are running on skeleton ad hoc staff. On night duty, the same MO has to look after the emergency ward as well as the upfront emergencies. As a result, the situation is chaotic, with attendants shouting at the top of their lungs to get attention and ward patients being cared for by nurses. When all the employees are on the Employees Management Portal, why are Departments and Administration not able to break this nexus and implement a robust and consistent policy for transfers? Why is the time-bound recruitment process not being followed? Health services fall under emergency services; critical patients don't have time to seek medical attention in the farthest of places. This whole process is a riddle that the LG Administration has to solve at the earliest. These are policy decisions that should be taken well in advance.

Dr A S Bhatia

I am very addicted to the speeches of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi and was sitting in front of TV screen to watch the "Pariksha pe Charcha - 2023". We should keep one area as No technology zone and do not use any technical devices in that area of your homes", This will help you to reconnect with your families" These words of our prime minister pierced deep into the grey matter of my mind! "Digital fasting" the guru mantra for peaceful and stress free life was given by none other than the prime minister of this glorious country. After Yoga, this concept of Digital fasting will be well perceived by the world community! Was there any mobile phone when I was born? Even land line phones were not available, but the communication among loved ones was great! In summer, we used to go to our Naani's house! A big gathering of young ones and elders for a month together, taking all three meals together! The women folk was busy the whole day cooking meals or knitting the woolen clothes popularly known as "sweaters" ahead of approaching harsh winters and the men discussing different social issues or playing cards! but everyone was involved in the family physically!

Time passed, technology overcame the ingenious expressions. First it was Doordarshan! A Weston TV, then a brand name, came to the Mohallas. There was a single TV and the entire mohalla used to sit and watch the Chitrahara (a show of movie songs) or the TV serials aired by Lahore TV. The interpersonal interactions started to decrease as everyone was engrossed in the TV programmes! That was the initiating point when we realized that the technology is more important than to talk to my next door neighbour! The drifting had started, then there was a flood of technology, it switched over to cordless phones then pagers, mobile phones, smart phones, social networking sites like facebook, whatsapp, twitter, instagram, you tube and many more! When the technology was not there, there were more interpersonal interactions and as the latest technology invaded the society and we got drifted fast into a virtual world!

After listening to the Prime minister, I sat on a sofa and tried to analyse myself and my indulgence in social media. I started to revisit my twenty four hours daily routine. I usually get up around four in the morning. I looked back what is the first thing I have to do after

Squadron Leader Anil Sehgal

For the past 18 years, since the year 2005, a unique Dogri programme is being produced in Jammu, in the video format, which has a rural base and background.

This specially devised programme takes you to the villages of the Dograland and brings the localised issues, problems, aspirations, festivals and social lives of the rural folk to the forefront.

Every week, the anchor visits a randomly chosen village in the Dogra belt of Jammu, Kathua, Ramban, Udhampur, Samba, Rajouri or Reasi districts along with his team that consists of a cameraman, a sound recordist and a driver for the vehicle in which they travel.

The anchor speaks to the young and the old, men, women, students, artisans etcetera of the village on camera. He speaks to them in their language, which is also his own mother tongue Dogri. The informal and unscripted format puts the villagers at ease and they forthrightly speak up their minds.

I was not aware of this popular programme until a month ago. Nor had I ever heard about this programme titled "Kade Aao Sahade Graan" (KASG), which, when translated from Dogri, means : sometime come to our village.

The programme is conceived, and devised by Praveen Sharma, who has been continuously anchoring the programme, since its inception, nonstop except during the tough times of national lockdown due to the COVID pandemic.

Our friend Kuldeep Singh Katoch hails from village Jarmada Tikri in Udhampur district. The Katochs had invited us to visit their village for a weekend in the first week of January this year.

We happened to be in the village when the KASG team visited to record a programme.

This Jarmada village is situated at a hilltop, we call "tikri" in Dogri, about 40 kilometres from Jammu at an average elevation of 1100 feet, in the Trikuta hills.

There was perceptible activity in the hill pockets on the morning of 8 January. The team KASG arrived around 12 noon. Soon they were off to meet the young men of the village whereafter they interacted with the womenfolk, all dressed up in festive attire in cheerful mood.

Women spoke without any inhibition in chaste Dogri after the anchor had set the tone of congeniality and informality. After the usual banter, there was a colourful session of Dogri folk songs the women sang with fervour.

That very morning, Seema Anil Sehgal had gone for a hitch hike tour of the hills along with the host Seema Katoch. Enroute, they happened to meet a few young girls of the village who go to the nearby army school in Udhampur town.

These Dogra girls spoke in a mix of English and Hindi. When my wife enquired if they could

# Lonesome promoter of Dogri

converse in Dogri, they shook their heads in denial. No, they are not adept at speaking in Dogri, they informed in Hindi.

After giving them a short pep talk about the importance of speaking in one's mother tongue, my wife even succeeded in extracting a promise from the girls that they will speak to her in Dogri next time they meet!

Kuldeep Katoch, an engineer by profession, is in deep love with his ancestral village. He took great pride in playing a perfect host to the KASG

First exposure to the city life came knocking as he sought admission in Ranbir High School, Jammu, followed by the studies at the Commerce College for his graduation. Here he met a teacher who spotted his talent at public speaking and acting on the stage.

"Professor Kuldip Singh Jandhrahiya, a Sahitya Akademi Award winner, was instrumental in encouraging me at every step in the college life. He guided me to appear for auditions and soon I found a footing in a private television

" In villages, our young generation hardly speaks any Dogri. They don't know even the counting in Dogri.

" Government schools don't have teachers for Dogri ; large chunk of vacancies remains unfilled".

What are the common grievances and concerns of our villages ?

After speaking to Praveen Sharma, we learn that the common concerns for most of our villages are : roads, education and health services.

If we wish to put speed breakers to the quick migration from our villages to the cities, we must address these issues on priority. Water and erratic supply of electricity are the other concerns that need urgent attention, according to this veteran Dogri anchor.

What kind of impact can a village based programme like KASG have today, you may ask ? To give you a clear idea, Praveen narrated the case of Kartar Chand, a daily wages mazdoor.

Kartar is from Dhanna Ambo Shaani village in Choki Choura tehsil, about 25 kilometres from Akhnoor. His one room tenement recently caught fire when he was away earning his daily wages.

Everything including the frugal food stores, clothing and other essentials were lost to the fire. Local Tehsildar provided just two blankets to the family of four when cold wave was sweeping entire northern region of the country.

" I covered the tragedy in my programme, spoke to Kartar Chand, his family and the local administration in camera. In my narration, I appealed to the viewers to come forward and help the poor man in this hour of need. I flashed his mobile number and the bank account number too.

" So far, about 80 thousand rupees have been paid to his bank account by way of donations. This is certainly better than the help of merely two blankets in the thick of the bone chilling Himalayan winter,"exclaims Praveen.

On a conservative scale, about 700 episodes of KASG have been telecast in the past 17 years, which should be a record for a programme of this nature in Dogri language.

Are you listening, Mr President of Dogri Sanstha, the leading socio-cultural organisation for promotion of Dogri language ? We need to recognise such commendable efforts of individuals like Praveen Sharma in promoting Dogri language and her culture. And, what about the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art Culture and Languages ? Would you like to take notice of such significant contribution, which encompasses all the three pillars of your foundation : art, culture and the language ? Lovers of Dogri language and Dogra culture may like to watch episodes of Kade Aao Sahade Graan on YouTube. Open the YouTube app, just type KASG in the search box, and there you are !



team as if they were his personal guests !

As the team was busy with shooting the programme, Kuldeep lit the tandoor and presided over a lunch with tender chicken tikkas he lovingly roasted in the tandoor for the team members.

Who could ask for anything better than a sumptuous lunch by the burning tandoor on a cloudy winter afternoon in the Trikuta hills !

Praveen Sharma is still a villager at heart. This commerce graduate from the University of Jammu, was born in village Chhanni Saror on the outskirts of Jammu. He studied in the village school and inherited Dogra culture in full measures.

" Times I spent in village Sanger near Purmandal had a lasting impact on me. Here, I learnt the nitty gritty of Duggar life ", says Praveen remembering his maternal grandparents' village.

Coming from a lower middle class household meant practically no exposure to the fast developing city culture, leave alone any impact of the English or the western culture. So, he was raised speaking Dogri and living the traditional Dogra lifestyle.

channel", informs Praveen Sharma.

The only lifestyle well known to Praveen was the Duggar way of living. The only language he was comfortable with, was his mother tongue Dogri. And he had spent most of his life in Dogra villages. So, it was natural and easy for Praveen Sharma to think of a programme based on the rural life in the Dogra belt.

He devised a simple format where he can introduce the village and its residents to his viewers and also articulate the rural issues involved and the difficulties faced by the modern day Dogra villagers. The villagers feel perfectly at home with this anchor who is essentially a villager like them. That is the USP of Kade Aao Sahade Graan !

After travelling through more than 650 villages in the traditional Dogra districts of Jammu, Reasi, Udhampur, Kathua, Ramban, Samba, Akhnoor, Punchh and Rajouri, our Dogri speaking anchor is rather wary of the future of his mother tongue.

" Dogri language and culture is at the verge of extinction, unless some drastic steps are taken by the people and the government together.

## Status of women in J&K

Vibhuti Ubhatt

The status of women at any place is defined by various parameters that delineate their well-being and that holds true for J&K also. Various indices regarding the women of the Union Territory of J&K have shown substantial improvements over the years. But, such improvement notwithstanding, women lag behind their male counterparts on many accounts. A number of statistical figures divulge upon the disadvantages to which women of the UT are subject to. To begin with, the sex ratio for J&K at 889, as per the 2011 census for J&K, being below the national average, has been very disappointing. One would have thought that this ratio would have improved in last one decade. But fertility preferences depicted by The National Family Health Survey-5 carried out in 2019 and 2020, belies our hopes. According to the survey, there is a strong preference for sons in Jammu and Kashmir. The percentage of women and men who want more sons than daughters is 23 and 25 percent, respectively, but only 7 percent of women and men want more daughters than sons. Among women with two children, 65 % with at least one son want no more children, compared with 38% with two daughters. So, a deep rooted attitudinal bias can be seen persisting in the society. The scenario is equally bad in educational and health sectors. While the Census-2011 noted that the women's literacy is lower than men, the Digest of Statistics 2016-17 reveals that the enrolment of girls is lower than that of boys at all levels of school education. The poor educational status of women in J&K has been further confirmed by NFHS which records that that Twenty-one percent of women compared to 9 percent of men age 15-49 have never been to school and only 33 percent of

women age 15-49 in Jammu & Kashmir have completed 12 or more years of schooling, compared with 46 percent of men. Health-wise, an indication is given by NFHS which states that Sixty-six percent of women in Jammu & Kashmir are having anaemia, including 25 percent with mild anaemia, 38 percent with moderate anaemia, and 3 percent with severe anaemia. In terms of employment, NFHS-5 discloses that only 29 percent of all women age 15-49, compared with 73 percent of men, were employed in the 12 months preceding the survey. The Survey further notes the want of

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assets that women hold here as well as lack of decision making power.

Apart from the powerlessness of women, there is continuing trend of crimes against women. As per the Crime Gazette brought about by the Crime Branch, J&K Police the total number of crimes against women has increased by 10% in the year 2021 itself. The number of crimes including rapes, kidnapping/abduction, molestation and cruelty by husband and relatives increased to 3873 in 2021 from 3517 in 2020. The NFHS also notes the wide

prevalence of crimes against women in J&K. According to this survey, 10 percent of women age 18-49 have experienced physical violence sometime in their lives, and 3 percent have experienced sexual violence. In all, 10 percent of women experienced physical or sexual violence and 2 percent experienced both physical and sexual violence. The issue of crimes and violence against women is complicated by the fact that many people - including women approve of some of the crimes committed against women. NFHS records that Forty-nine percent of women agree that a husband

is justified in hitting or beating his wife under some circumstances. Women are most likely to agree that wife beating is justified if a woman shows disrespect for her in-laws (35%), followed by if she neglects the house or children (30%) and if she goes out without telling him (29%).

The story of women in J&K, as told by the above statistics, clearly calls for an intervention by the state. The Government needs to immediately draft a gender policy that should be focused on reducing the gap that exists between men and

women. It should also follow various strategies for empowerment of women including gender budgeting, gender-friendly narrative and bringing more women in the realm of policy making.

While an aggressive state policy might help in improving the situation of women - whether in terms of education, health or other indices, however, the condition of women would not improve without the societal response. Much of the powerlessness of women in J&K, as elsewhere in South Asia, is a reflection of deep patriarchal patterns that continue to be followed, despite the modernisation processes. Women continue to be seen as 'second' or rather 'secondary' sex, more of liability than assets. While most of the resources within the society are controlled by men, they are still powerless beings, mostly under the 'control' over men. What has changed is that women have entered every field which was earlier monopolised by men, but the proportion of such women is very small and in every field the gap between men and women is very huge.

In this month of March, when 'woman' assumes the central space, at least in the public discourse, it is imperative that we as a society take cognisance of 'powerlessness' of women in J&K and think of ways and means by which their status can be improved. While government can certainly pursue the agenda of women's empowerment more aggressively, there is a need for intervention from the society. Media can take the lead, cultural groups - like local theatre groups can generate an awareness, educational institutions can play important role and various social and religious organisations can contribute.

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# Digital Fasting!

getting out of my bed! And at no loss of a second, I realized, first thing was to look for my smart phone in the bed and to search for it ! Then this digital device remained with me in my wash room , in my kitchen and even on the road while I was doing my brisk morning walk to complete my pedometer target !

After the walk, next step for me is to go for a shower but still this machine is with me with old melodious songs of Kishore Kumar being played! Truly speaking once I tried to analyze my full routine after listening to my Prime minister , I was shocked, at no given point of time I was left alone by this faithful digital dog ! I doubted, who is the master of the two me or this digital machine? At the end of day I realized I never looked up towards sky, I never tried to hear the beautiful chirping of the birds sitting on the branches of big peepal tree in the morning , I never felt the heavenly feeling of seeing a rising sun in the morning, because all time my hands and my eyes were engrossed in the smart screen ! Is this the way a life should be lived? The "pariksha pe charcha" has been an eye opener for me and many others like me!

As a result of the effect of Prime minister's speech, I decided not to use my Smartphone from 8 pm to 10 am next morning. The first day was difficult and many a time I took the phone and then left it. It happened many a time during first few days. I was finding it dif-

icult to handle it . Another interesting thing which I experienced that it was only me in the house who was not using social networking, rest everyone was deeply engrossed in it! That thing constantly irritated me! I realized why the elders are finding very uncomfortable with new generation. But soon after a week, this overnight digital fasting began to show its results. I was feeling refreshed! And



the contagious effect was also noticed in the family as Aakash and Harleen and even our maids had reduced the frequency of using social networking! I was feeling relieved, Now, I was not stressed by the rumours , religious hatred messages along with pseudo patriotism of self styled what's app groups. I was not wasting my hours in watching the reels as was also pointed out by our Prime Minister

that it is difficult to come out of reels once you start them! I was away from fear-mongering messages and moreover I was not immediately accessible and was living my life at least from 8pm to 10 am. I was now better without it.

As was said by Mr Prime minister, Digital fasting will reconnect you with your families; it was the greatest after-effect which I experienced, now we at home are taking dinner together and are discussing different issues. It is true that social media these days have become our virtual home and it is not possible to live without it, but to tame it, is very important and a chapter on what is the proper way to use social networking sites may be included in curriculum books. Our all day to day activities, may it be banking , official purpose, grievance redressal system, to get connected with our friend are dependent on social sites , but again as an old saying goes on, "Excess of everything is very bad" So time has come when each of us should learn the art of Digital fasting. I realized that mobile is a good servant but a very bad master! An "International Digital Fasting Day" may be celebrated to spread the awareness about the necessity to control the use of virtual world and to create a No Technology zone in each and every house of the country where no one will use any technical device in that area of the home, as was advocated by our Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Among many changes which I experienced while observing overnight Digital fasting was a better sleep, I developed other hobbies to pass my time, I got more connected to my family, there were less frequency of heated arguments with Harleen, my wife, which she liked as the most favorable after effect of Digital fasting, thanks Mr Prime Minister !! I started to enjoy life more and also I started to give some time to myself and to my GOD. What else you need, as we detox our body by using different types of diet, it is very high time to detox our mind and soul by observing few hours of Digital fasting everyday! Otherwise as Mirza Ghalib said,

**Dard jab dil mein ho  
To dawa keejiye,  
Dil hi jab dard ho toh  
Kya keejiye.**

(The author is Principal, Government Medical College Rajouri)