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INDIAN DIASPORA IN EAST AFRICA : ITS CONTRIBUTION IN NATION BUILDING



The conference on Indian Diaspora in East Africa: Its Contribution in Nation Building was jointly organized by the Indian Council for International Cooperation (Antar Rastriya Sahayog Parishad) and the Hindu Council of Kenya at Nairobi on 17th March 2023. The Chief Guest of the conference was the Indian High Commissioner to Kenya Dr. Namgya Khampa and the Guest of Honours were, Hon. Gladys Boss Shollei, Deputy Speaker of Kenya National Assembly; Father Mutaio, Chairman of Inter Religious Council of Kenya and Office Bearers of several civil society organisations in East Africa. Kenya Hindu Council had more than 150 affiliate organisations who, along with others, shared the diverse role of Indian Community in Nation Building of East Africa. Besides the morning plenary sessions which was addressed by the Chief Guests and other high dignitaries, the conference was divided in several working

groups to map and assess the contributions of Indian diaspora in diverse sectors of Kenyan and East African Societies. It was attended by around 200 participants who made comprehensive presentations on historical and current role of Indian Diaspora in diverse sectors of national life of Kenya and other East African countries.

The High Commissioner of India highlighted sterling contributions on Indian Diaspora in Kenya from freedom struggles times to current days. Many Indians from Gujarat and Punjab migrated to Kenya during late 19th century and early 20th century to work on British railway and business sector. They established themselves as a significant and influential community in the country. She said that during 1920s and 1930s Indian activist in Kenya, Makhan Singh, Pio Gama Pinto, Jivanji were at the fore front of Anti- colonial movement.

They formed alliance with local Kenyan nationalist, including Jomo Kenyatta, and participated actively for decolonisation of Kenya. Kenyan newspapers, such as East African Indian Nationalist and the African Standard played a crucial role in disseminating anti- colonial ideas and mobilizing support for struggle for independence. She asserted that Indian businessmen played a crucial role in funding the anti- colonial movement. They provided financial assistance to nationalist groups, including the Mau Mau, and helped to organize strikes and boycotts. She also mentioned Indian diplomatic support through appointment of Indian envoy Aba Saheb Pant, whose house was one of the nerve centre for local freedom fighters. Besides, she mentioned several supports that India as a country also extends to Kenya through India Africa Forum Summits and ITEC programmes in nation building of Kenya.

The Deputy Speaker of Kenya National Assembly lauded the outstanding role of Indian community in making of Kenya of today. She narrated several instances of their involvement in local development. She mentioned how Indian community had been a bridge between India and Kenya to develop stronger cultural and economic ties. She announced that Kenya is also setting up a diaspora division under the Kenyan government to mobilise and utilize its diasporic resources on the pattern of India.

The Indian delegation comprised Prof. Ajay Dubey (JNU), Dr. Markandey Rai, Shri Jawahar Karnawat, Shri Sanjay Bhalla, Shri Rakesh Panday, Shri Narayan Kumar and Shri Amit Gupta. In the second half the participants were divided in five major groups to focus on specific subthemes of - 1)The Historic Pattern of Indian Diaspora Migration to East Africa; 2)Indian Diaspora in East Africa: Its Historical Experience and Contribution in Socio-Economic Development in Their Adopted Countries; 3) Role of Indian diaspora in Freedom Struggles of African Countries; 4) Indian Diaspora as an Important Cultural Connect Between India and Adopted Countries; 5) Indian Diaspora in Promoting the Ethos of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam".

Each group made a summary presentation which highlighted that:

1. India Diaspora continued to play a crucial role in economies of East Africa countries after independence. They own and operate many small, medium and some big size businesses creating jobs for locals and contributing to the economic growth.

2. Indian diaspora community play crucial role in establishing schools and hospital across East Africa. They provide financial support, expertise to help build, maintain and run these institutions, which has significant impacts on the region's development.

3. India Diasporic community play an active role in politics of East Africa. They hold positions in government and parliament contributing to the development of their countries in the region.

4. The India Diaspora in the region play a vital role in the promoting and preserving Indian culture. They organize cultural events, establish community centers, conduct Hindi-Sanskrit classes and provide supports to Indian artiste and performers which greatly contribute to cross cultural understanding and appreciation with local people.

Overall Indian Diaspora plays an essential role in nation building of East Africa after independence. They contribute to economic growth, education, healthcare, politics and cultural exchange, helping to shape the region's development in a significant ways.

Declaration and Action Plan

1. "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" was well recognized and endorsed by everybody to promote through the process of learning to Give, Love, and service to all unconditionally irrespective of color, tribe and faith. This needs a proper education at all the levels through value-based education, training and health care services. Training in truth, non-violence and spirituality is desirable.

2. Respect for culture and elderly people, feeding poor and helping through relevant and affordable technologies to the East African countries is expected from India.

3. The programs and activities run by the Diaspora people should be scaled up in the area of solar energy including lamps, books and

equipment's and setting up of some academic institutions for tertiary and higher-level training and research. Tree planting, school feedings and other activities should be promoted and it should be brought to the knowledge of the people and the government through periodicals and newspapers reports publications and media. These is no such information available on the diaspora level collectively.

4. Young people to be inspired and original culture and tradition should be preserved and promoted through various media channels and education including exchange programs.

5. More activities to be created to involve the young generation. Indian should take an active part in policymaking for nation building. A coffee table book on Indian Diaspora's contribution should be published on a regular basis.

6. Role of India and Indian diaspora in freedom movement of African Countries should be showcased through publications, exhibition and documentaries for the public awareness both the diaspora and the local people. The Indian heroes such as Makan Singh, J. N. Desai, Gama Pinto A. M, Jeevanjee, Apa Pant and many more should be remembered and young generation should know about them and should in the schools 'curriculum of East African Countries as well as Hindi chairs should be established by the Government of India in East African countries and Hindi teachers should be deputed to various colleges and universities in the regions by Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR).

7. Major sectors where support from India is needed are in the area of value-based education and training, Health services, Technical know-how, vocational and skill-based training, SMEs, Agriculture etc.

8. More closure relation of India diaspora with India is desirable. During the conference, the welcome address was given by the National Chairman of Hindu Council of Kenya Eng. Kamal Gupta and Key note address was delivered by Dr. Markandey Rai and the concluding remarks and vote of thanks was given by Mr. Sanjay Bhalla.

(A Report)

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VASUDHAIVA KUTUMBAKAM

SEEDS, DEVELOPMENT, CONTINUITY AND RELEVANCE

The world today is shattered by bombs, humanity is terrorized by a few, political, financial and muscle power is gained at the cost of others' lives, common people are in crisis/jeopardy. Several countries have come together forming groups to find out solutions. G20 is meant for sharing ideas and knowledge for sustainable development, peace and prosperity, offering every country and its people to have equal opportunities to flourish. None should be left behind, voice of the voice is to be heard, find out ways to empower everyone and so on. The world is looking for remedial measures. It is looking back to look forth, to get lessons from the mirror of the past,

The Hon. Prime Minister of India being the host for 22-23 has chosen the motto ancient Sanskrit literature – vasudhaivakutumbakam, meaning – one earth, one family, one future. This means common aspirations and sharing of strengths and responsibilities living life not only for oneself but caring and sharing with others.

The questions that flash in mind are— what is its true meaning, how it was developed, how can it be beneficial to educate and inspire from the topmost to the lowermost strata of society, and is it possible to apply it or is it just a nice motto to be written on walls.

Vasudhaivakutumbakam is the last

portion of shloka in Mahopanishad. Its date and author is not known but scholars often agree it to be written sometime during fifth century to tenth century. The whole shloka is - अयं निजः परो वेत्ति गणना लघुचेतसाम् उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम् । Meaning –the people who divide the world into mine and thine are taken as small hearted while those who are generous and broad-minded, take the entire world as one family. The Hindi word Parivar means family but Kutumba means a huge one. In this shloka Kutumba takes into its fold the entire earth including plant and animal world, the living and the non-living, the movable and the immovable.

The seeds of taking the world as one family goes thousand of years back when the Vedas were composed by the rishis and munis sitting under pure blue sky, under shady trees, near banks of rivers, where there was everything in abundance. They could watch the rivers flowing for others, not for themselves, trees bearing fruits, not for themselves but for others. Thus, the ideas of living for others must have developed. The nature gives everything like a mother and the sky protects like a father.

Establishing a blood relation among the entire humanity the sages wrote.

माता भूमिः पुत्रोहम् पृथिवयाः पर्जन्य पिता उ नः पिपस्तु- It comes in the Prithivi-

s u k t a
12.1.12 of
Atharvaveda
. T h e
meaning is -
Oh earth, you
a r e o u r
mother and
parjanya is



Prof. Dr. Shashibala
Dean, Centre for Indology,
Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan,
Member – International
Advisory Committee,
C20 / G20

our father. Earth has life; it breathes. As a mother she gives everything to live life. The life is further sustained by rain. Trees are said to be the lungs of mother earth, let us not cut them. This led to respecting peasants in India. Even during wars, the fighting kings did not disturb them, did not cut trees or set the land on fire. Environment was not allowed to be disturbed.

All the human beings are equal and members of one family as they are called अमृतस्य पुत्राः in 10.3.1, and later in श्वेताश्वेतरोपनिषद् श्रीष्वन्तु विश्वे अमृतस्य पुत्रा आ ये धामानि दिव्यानि तस्थुः| Everyone born on this earth is a child of the immortal, may all the sons of the immortal (Prajâpati) who in habit the celestial regions hear (the sound). Talking about this concept Swami Vivekananda said, “Children of immortal bliss” — what a sweet, what a hopeful name! Allow me to call you, brethren, by that sweet name — heirs of immortal bliss — yea, the Hindu refuses to call you sinners. Ye are the Children of God, the sharers of immortal bliss, holy and

perfect beings. Ye divinities on earth — sinners! It is a sin to call a man so; it is a standing libel on human nature. Come up, O lions, and shake off the delusion that you are sheep; you are souls immortal, spirits free, blest and eternal; ye are not matter, ye are not bodies; matter is your servant, not you the servant of matter”.

The world is divine creation. So, as members of one global family we care and share with others as said in Ishavasyopanishad - ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत्! तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम्!!

The entire world, the movable and the immovable, living or non-living, pleasing or not pleasing, planets or ourselves, is a divine creation and pervaded by it. The second part of the shloka is for a greed-free world leading to non-exploitation of natural resources. The entire universe is His manifestation, let us rejoice and experience it, realize oneness, don't be greedy to grab, do not cut or destroy, and do not even cut anything more than the required. As Mahatma Gandhi said there is enough for need but not for greed.

When we are family members, we pray for wellbeing of all which brings happiness. Following is prayer that can be used as a universal prayer-

सर्वेषां स्वस्ति भवतु सर्वेषां शान्तिर्, भवतु सर्वेषां पूर्णं भवतु सर्वेषां मंगलं भवतुए सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः, सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु मा काश्चिद् दुःख भाग्भवेतु ।

Meaning - may good befall all, may there be peace for all, may there be

fulfilment and may all experience that which is auspicious.

May all be happy, may all be healthy, may all experience what is good and let no one suffer. People living alone look for happiness by being together with their families. Togetherness fills colours of joyfulness in life and saves from being depressed. It is celebrated in a Sanskrit mantra, commonly recited as a devotional prayer before sacred Hindu scriptures are studied, at the start of a school class or at the beginning of a yoga practice, originally found in the Krishna Yajurveda Taittiriya Upanishad (2.2.2),

The mind has to be and vision to be clear before embarking upon any action- ॐ असतो मा सद्गमय । तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय । मृत्योर्मा अमृतं गमय शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः । ॐ May I be led from unreal to the real, from darkness to light (of knowledge) and from death to immortality (so that) there is peace within, peace among human beings and peace in the cosmos.

Nurtured by such an idea one proceeds with a sense of brotherhood . ॐ सह नावतु, सह नौ भुनक्तु सह वीर्यं करवावहै. Meaning, may we eat together, May He nourish us together, May, we work together with great energy. One can keep giving such quotes from Indian literary source which show us the way for living a peaceful life.

This ideal has been nurtured and nourished by visionary rishis, munis, gurus and acharyas who gained knowledge and gave it to all those who wanted it without any copyright

and patent because the entire world was looked upon as one family by them. You may name Agastya, Gautama, Parashara, Vamadeva, Atri, Bharadwaj, Vashishtha, Bhrigu or Angiras, the female rishis like Aditi, Apala, Atreyi, Paulomi, Kamayani, Roamsha or brahmavadian; the great philosopher of Nyaya philosophy like Vatsyayana, Jayanta Bhatta, or Vachaspati Mishra; Gangesha, Vardhamana, RaghunathaShirimani of Navya Nyaya; Kapila, Vachaspati Mishra, Jayanta Bhatta, Vaisheshik – V y o m a S h i v a c h a r y a , Shridharacharya, Udayanacharye, Annambhatta.

Yoga has become a tool for mental and physical well-being globally. But no one has to pay any royalty to Maharshi Patanjali or to the commentator Vyas or any of the later scholars who bequeathed the knowledge to the unknown even in the distant lands like Mongolia to the island countries in the Southeast Asia. Mimansa has made notable contribution in the field of epistemology. It offers a pluralistic and realistic world view. But the sage Jaimini who gave this to the one global family where any member can use it the way he needs it. Today when the world is undergoing fast scientific and technological development all the Sanskrit texts on physics, chemistry, biology, astronomy, or mathematics, the texts on Ayurveda can be studied freely. For all such masters the world is one family, we share our knowledge for wellbeing of all, One global family means being responsible for others, loving and caring without any ulterior

motive or any expectations in return. All of us are interdependent. The concept is respected when we live like a family. The Jain Munis lived lives of intense tapa and tyaga, a monastic life, beginning with Bhagavan Mahavira and his eleven disciples. Disposing off the material wealth, getting initiated entering the monastic order, the whole line of acharyas, elacharyas, upadhyayas, munis, brahmacharis and shravakas set outstanding examples of living for others as their own kins.

The Buddhist masters travelling from India to unknown distant lands, through deserts where sometimes even a drop of water was not available for days, or crossing the turbulent oceans, mingling with unknown people, not knowing their languages, living in harsh climates, and the food that did not suit them. Their objective was to spread the light of knowledge for transcendence in life. The knowledge contributed immensely to cultural and civilizational development, gave them systems of administration, helped them establishing states. All this could happen because for them there was no distinction between their own people and those living in far off lands. Today a millions of people are following the path of the Buddha. They even venerate those masters for the sacrifices that they made.

Whosoever came to India in olden times whether they are Jews or Parsis, India gave them space not only to live but to develop in whatever way they liked or had the capacities. They became a part of the Indian society without harming or disturbing

the social fabric. But on the either side thousands and thousands of Roma (the forgotten children of India) were brutally killed in concentration camps; their body parts were sold because they looked different, spoke a different language, their ways of living and thinking were different; they are eliminated, even today they are discriminated and demeaned living in difficult conditions without enough avenues of education and progression. The countries who were behind all this brutality did not have the philosophy of life of Vasudhaivakutumbakam. They lived behind closed four walls of their own, thinking of themselves, inhuman actions were a result of discrimination, dividing the society into two – the known and the unknown. Another lesson from history is diving the world into believers and non-believers and going to the extent of torturing, destruction and killing believing in the philosophy of survival of the fittest.

India does not accept and promote such ideas or ideologies. Everybody is born with a divine spark, everyone has the same right to live. Indian philosophy of Vasudhaivakutumbakam can be instrumental in solving a number of problems globally by nurturing and nourishing the minds, by offering ought values that are relevance in all times and all corners of the world.

Let us promote – one earth, one family, one future. Everything is interdependent. The ideal of One family, one earth, one future dose not confine only human beings but extends to the animal and plant life,

the living and the non-living, the movable and immovable, the stones and mountains, the rivers and ponds. Everything has to be protected not merely for ourselves but for others as well.

Let us have a collective approach. Let us nurture collective consciousness, let there be common goals of peaceful co-existence – the aim and objective of G20. All the nations look for being generous and broad-minded, living a selfless life, doing good with a pious mind for material fulfilment, sustainable development, becoming friends in need, and follow the virtuous path resulting in destruction of bad intentions and qualities like cheating, telling lies, following the path that disturbs the social fabric, the powers that terrorise others for gaining money or muscle power.

Let us save the world where sacred is eroding in the name of modernity, where whole civilization is organized around greed , the world is fast entering into turmoil, conflicts and violence, terrorism because of sacred being fading and secular being overpowering, The world is suffering from environmental pollution – trees are dying, waters are being polluted, marine life s being killed, underground water is receding, overconsumption and consumerism is fueled by ostentatious ways of living, needs are converted to massive mountains of greed. Let us have insight and inspiration, pure knowledge and experience, strength and tenacity through eternal values like VASUDHAIVA KTUMABAKAM. ■

65th Know India Programme (KIP)

✍ Dr. Ruchi Verma
Research Fellow DRRC-ARSP



population groups that speak non-dominant languages, languages of minority groups and indigenous languages.

Heads of Mission and diplomatic representatives briefed the participants especially from the view point of their respective countries about the strengths of Indian economy, higher education, technology and the democratic institutions.

On Wednesday, 22 February 2023 Diaspora Research and Resource Centre (DRRC) – Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad (ARSP) hosted participants of 65th KIP batch from 11 countries- Guyana, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Argentina, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, South Africa, Chile, Malaysia, and Fiji.

Earlier on 20 February 2023, as an extension to ARSP's objective to offer a wider networking opportunity to the KIP batch with their counterpart youth in India, DRRC-ARSP in collaboration with Hansraj College, University of Delhi, hosted this KIP batch at Hansraj College. Amb. Virendra Gupta, President, Prof Gopal Arora, Secretary and Dr Ruchi Verma, Research Fellow, DRRC-ARSP were also present during this event. The KIP batch was enthusiastically received and felicitated by faculty and students of the college. There were cultural performances also which were really enjoyed by the delegates. The programme ended with a tour of the college.

Later in the interactive session held at Pravasi Bhawan on 22 February, **Ms. Koentelakoemarie Hardwarsing**, First Secretary, Embassy of Suriname, **Mr. Nilesh Kumar**, Counselor, High Commission of Republic of Fiji, and **Mr. Khairul Amri Ishak**, Attaché, High Commission of Malaysia graced the occasion with their presence. **Mr. Anil Joshi**, Vice President, Central Hindi Institute, Ministry of Education, and **Mr Sanjay**

Bhalla, Vice President, ARSP also addressed the gathering. **Mr. Amardeep Barnwal**, Under Secretary, OIA-II, MEA also attended the event.

Prof. Gopal Arora, Secretary of ARSP introduced the works of ARSP and its linkages with diaspora for nearly five decades. He also informed them about the diaspora related activities organised by DRRC. He also informed the participants about the short term course on Indian diaspora initiated by DRRC in collaborations with higher academic institutions. He mentioned that DRRC is trying to bring the youth from diaspora and from India in the same platform so that they can discuss and share their vision and dreams, since the best ideas and practices emerged through discussion.

Mr Anil Joshi, Vice President, Central Hindi Institute, briefed the participants about the importance of language in flourishing any culture. He mentioned about the International Mother Language Day. He stated 21 February was declared to be the International Mother Language Day by UNESCO in 1999, which was observed throughout the world since 21 February 2000. The declaration came up in tribute to the Language Movement done by the people of Bangladesh (then East Bengal of Pakistan). Mr Joshi also talked about the theme of this year which is "Multilingual education". He also added that multilingual education based on mother-tongue will facilitate access to and inclusion in learning for

Ms. Koentelakoemarie Hardwarsing, First Secretary, Embassy of Suriname, briefed the participants that diaspora can play an important role in every sphere of life. She further added that KIP helps the PIO's youth to connect with their roots and get exposure about the Indian way of life.

Mr. Nilesh Kumar, from Fiji High Commission said that initiatives such as Know India Programme, help the youth to gain exposure and knowledge. He asked the participants to spread awareness about this programme so that more diaspora youth can benefit from this scheme. He added further that KIP is a great opportunity to engage and connect with India.

Mr. Khairul Amri Ishak, Attaché, High Commission of Malaysia, highlighted the vibrant relationship between India and Malaysia. He also **suggested the KIP participants to use this KIP platform as a foundation to connect with diaspora youth as people to people connections are very important for any country's successful bilateral relations.**

During the interactive session the participants were also given a short questionnaire on the occasion of Indian Mother Language Day, which they filled with great zest. Most of them appreciated the role of Indian High Commission in promoting the Indian languages in their respective countries. They also suggested start

an exchange programme on language basis, generating more awareness about the scholarships provided by the Indian government etc. They were quite interested in learning Indian language especially Hindi. The participants were quite impressed with their visit not only to reconnect with their roots but also to witness what India had achieved in various spheres of socio, economic development and technology.

Heads of Mission, diplomatic

representatives and the participants appreciated the efforts of ARSP and DRRC not only for their outreach initiatives but also for their campaign for creating an online database of diaspora organisations in India and abroad. They were also happy to learn that DRRC would support in publications of research and other articles by diaspora youth.

In his concluding remarks, **Shri Narayan Kumar**, Hon. Director, ARSP acknowledged the

contributions of Indian diaspora all over the world. He highlighted that the KIP delegation plays a great role in filling the gap in India's outreach with the diaspora youth and also helps enhancing the image of India across the globe.

The programme ended with a vote of thanks and distribution of certificates to the KIP batch for their active participation. ■

World Roma Day: An Opportune Occasion for Introspection & Commemoration

✍ *Zameer Anwar*
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Each and every one of around twenty five million of Roma scattered across the five continents celebrates 'WorldRoma Day' on 8th April to commemorate the First World Roma Congress, held in 1971 at the suburb of south-east London. The Congress was a watershed in the history of political movement and transnational unity of the Roma Community. It kicked off an array of the emancipatory activities including fight for equality and social justice as well as the preservation of their language and cultural identity. The most imperative outcomes of the Congress were the unanimous consent to adopt the Roma flag embossed with the red wheel containing 16 spokes (known as the Dharma Chakra in recognition of its Indian origin) and to call the community 'Roma' instead of then prevalent various stigmatizing foreign appellations.

It is a day to acclaim the vibrant Romani culture and to illustrate contributions of Roma in their host societies. This day also characterizes

the acknowledgement of the perennial and systemic racial discrimination against Romani population, which happens to be the most marginalized group in Europe despite being the largest ethnic minority. April 8 marks the advent of international collaboration and transnational cooperation among Romani people and institutions. The importance of national day of Roma nation has been expanding every year.

The emergence of Roma's aspiration towards civil emancipation and struggle for egalitarian status can be traced as back as the 19th CE in the Balkans within the realms of the Ottoman Empire. The first Roma/Gypsy organization in 1926 was founded in Romania, subsequently other local or regional Romani organizations sprung up. It is imperative to note that Asociatia Generala a Tiganilor din Romania (General Association of the Gypsies in Romania) came in to existence in 1933 and was perhaps the most

influential organization at that time and it contributed considerably to mobilizing Romani individuals. In 1939 another important Romani institution Panhellenios Syllogos EllinonAthinganon (Pan Hellenic Cultural Association of the Greek Gypsies) was established in Athens. Its main objective was to facilitate or support Roma/ Gypsy immigrants to Greece from Asia Minor to obtain Greek citizenship as well as passports for travelling.

The London Congress paved the way for the formation of International Romani Union(IRU) by Dr. Jan Cibula at the 2nd Congress in Geneva in 1978, but later IRU was divided in three separate factions due to internal fights and antipathy among Roma leaders and rivalries between organizations. The splits and divisions amongst Romani organizations have become a major impediment which is circumventing Roma collectively from realizing their full potential in politics,

administration, judiciary, science and technology, art and culture.

The community representatives, political leaders of Roma communities and heads of the Romani institutions need to corner their differences and come to the common platform for the better life and the bright future of the communities. As, it is an exigency of the 21st century to get united and collectively and jointly strive for their emancipation from the xenophobic mindset, ethnic slanders, and tacit acceptance of fallacious discourse intending to cover up primitive responses to historical fears, imprisonment in nationalism and territorial boundary, submission to pernicious ideologies. Though the history witnesses that Roma have always been as the epitome of constructive integration, living as equal among equals vis a vis preserving their magnificent heritage.

Romani people continue to be the most prosecuted ethnic group of Europe till today. Almost everywhere, their fundamental rights are grossly violated. Racist violence and prejudices against Roma is commonplace. Their situation still remains critical as they continue to face discrimination and unequal access to vital services especially health care, housing, education and employment. Myriads of underlying reasons have been keeping Roma at the higher risk of impoverishment and marginalization. On almost every indicator of human development, in every European country, the Roma lag far behind the national average.

More than 80 per cent of Roma have been lurching under abysmal poverty throughout Europe. On average 83 per cent Romani children younger than 18 dwell in the households at risk of poverty and 45 per cent of Romani population have been living in severe material deprivation. 61 per cent Roma are scarcely or with great difficulty able to make their ends meet. By and large 43 per cent of Roma aged between 20 and 64 are in paid work including full time, part time, ad hoc jobs, occasional work and self-employment.

According to European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)'s Survey on Roma in 2021, over 25 per cent of the respondents to the survey said that they felt discriminated against owing to their ethnic origin. European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey 2 (EU MIDIS-2018) reports, 30 per cent of Roma interviewed experienced hate-motivated harassment, and points out that Roma continue to face intolerable levels of discrimination in daily life – whether looking for work, at work, in education, healthcare, housing or when in contact with administrative bodies or offices and private services such as entering a shop, restaurant, bar, night club, hotel or public transport. The life expectancy of the Roma is 10-15 years lower than that of their fellow Eastern European citizens; Romani women on average live 11 years less than women in the general population whereas men 9.1 years less than those in general population.

56 per cent Roma do not have a bank account. They lack an access to credit or loan due to ambiguous property ownership, as they generally reside in settlements and in remote areas, so they want required documents to claim credit assistance. Therefore they are not in position to embark upon their own business or venture. Even now Roma are subjected to discrimination, racism, forced eviction, police brutality as well as faced with the lower literacy rates, dilapidated housing, meager incomes, poorer health, and higher level of unemployment than the rest of the population.

April 8 is also occasion for Romani people to reaffirm their belief in their strong kinship with the glorious culture of their “Baro Than” (holy place – India) and reminisce about excruciatingly harrowing dislocation of their forefathers from north India. As the history of Roma is part of shared history of India and Roma and Indians shared the same fate. Roma were enslaved and displaced by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni in 1018 CE, whereas numerous Indian villages and towns were burnt and desolated as well as a multitude of Indians were killed by the same sultan. In reality, despite an elapse of more than thousand years of Roma's exodus, Indians and Roma are knit together by a sense of shared culture and values. This is not only a historical and traditional kinship but also a physical and genetic symmetry. ■

INDIA ELECTED TO UN STATISTICAL COMMISSION

United Nations: India secured an overwhelming 46 out of 53 votes in a secret ballot in a highly competitive election for membership to the Statistical Commission.



United Nations: In a significant achievement, India has been selected to the United Nations' highest statistical body for a term of four years. After a gap of two decades in a competitive election, India got elected to the UN Statistical Commission, returning to the world organisation's highest statistical body.

Meanwhile, South Korea won over China for the other seat in the Asia Pacific States category through a draw of lots after inconclusive rounds of secret-ballot voting. India was elected by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as a member of the UN Statistical Commission, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Programme Coordinating Board of the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS),

an important subsidiary body of the UN organ focussed on economic, social and environmental issues.

EAM Jaishankar extends congratulatory message

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar took to Twitter to congratulate the Indian Mission in the United Nations for this feat. "India elected to the highest UN statistical body for a 4-year term beginning on 1 January 2024! Congrats Team @IndiaUNNewYork for coming through so strongly in a competitive election," he stated.

India secured an overwhelming 46 out of 53 votes in a secret ballot in a highly competitive election for membership to the Statistical Commission. India, along with South Korea, UAE and China were in the

fray for two seats from the Asia Pacific States category.

India was a member of the Statistical Commission in 2004

India was elected by acclamation to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs along with Argentina, Burundi, Chile, China, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Peru, Qatar, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay and Zimbabwe for a four-year term of office, beginning January 1, 2024.

It should be mentioned here that India was a member of the Statistical Commission last in 2004 and the country is returning to the UN agency after a gap of two decades. The United Nations Statistical Commission, established in 1947, is the highest body of the global statistical system bringing together the Chief Statisticians from member states from around the world. It is the highest decision-making body for international statistical activities, responsible for setting statistical standards and the development of concepts and methods, including their implementation at the national and international levels. ■

GovTech INAUGURATES JOINT SATELLITE GROUND STATION



The launch of the BHUTAN-1 satellite in June 2018 marked the beginning of Bhutan's space journey. Four years later, Bhutan's next giant leap came in the form of the India-Bhutan satellite, launched in November of last year. And today, Bhutan now has a fully operational ground station to receive information from the India-Bhutan satellite and other satellites in

a day, taking high-resolution images of the Earth's surface. The satellite has a lifespan of about six to eight months.

To receive images and communicate with the satellite, the ground station in Thimphu was developed. With the installation of this ground station, the

the future. The ground station was officially inaugurated on 14 March 2023.

The 15-kilogram nanosatellite revolves around the Earth about three times

entire chain of the system is coming into place. There is a satellite up there in the sky and the ground station is also there with all the data processing facilities. Moreover, the Bhutanese scientists are trained to handle all of these themselves.

Currently image data were received from the joint satellite. Once the images from the satellite are processed, it will be distributed to the relevant agencies that can use the images to study Bhutan's landscape. Images will also be used for applications such as mapping forest coverage, human settlement growth, and landslide studies.

The ground station was jointly developed by the Government Technology (GovTech) Agency and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).



BIMSTEC MINISTERIAL MEETING: BHUTAN CALLS FOR FREE TRADE AREA FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT



The 19th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting was held in preparation for the 6th BIMSTEC Summit.

The seven Ministers, amongst other important matters, approved/endorsed the reports of the 23rd Senior Officials meeting; BIMSTEC Bangkok Vision 2030; Agreement on Maritime Transport Cooperation; Rules of Procedure for BIMSTEC Mechanisms and the Terms of Reference for Eminent Persons' Group in the Future Directions of BIMSTEC.

Additionally, Reporting schema for various dialogue mechanisms operating under the Security Sector

of BIMSTEC cooperation; and the host country agreement between the Government of India and BIMSTEC Secretariat for establishing the BIMSTEC Centre for Weather and Climate in India were also deliberated.

Furthermore, the Mountain Economy was also approved to be included as a sub-sector under Environment and Climate Change sector.

The 6th BIMSTEC Summit has been proposed to be held on 30th November in Thailand and is expected to be the first in-person summit in five years.

The Summit will be preceded by the 20th Ministerial Meeting which will be held in conjunction with the 24th Senior Officials Meeting on 29th November 2023.

Founded in 1997 with the aim of promoting economic and technical cooperation in the Bay of Bengal Region, its seven member states today house 1.73 billion people and have a combined GDP of USD 4.4 trillion.

Bhutan has actively engaged in the proceedings of BIMSTEC since its membership to the organization in 2004. ■

BHUTAN'S GRADUATION FROM LDC GROUP: A TIME FOR REFLECTION AND ACTION

Bhutan's recent graduation from the Least Developed Countries (LDC) group is a significant achievement for the country. However, this achievement is not a cause for complacency or celebration, but rather a time for reflection and action.

Firstly, we must recognise that the LDC graduation is not a guarantee of sustained economic growth and development. While Bhutan has made impressive strides in reducing poverty and increasing access to education and healthcare, there is still much work to be done. The country's economy remains heavily reliant on hydropower exports, and there are concerns about the sustainability of this model in the long term. There is also a need for greater diversification of the economy, as well as investment in infrastructure and human capital.

Secondly, we must acknowledge that the LDC graduation does not mean the end of international support and cooperation. Bhutan will still require assistance in various areas, such as climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and technology transfer. Therefore, it is essential to maintain and strengthen partnerships with development partners, including the United Nations, multilateral organisations, and bilateral donors.

Thirdly, we must recognise that the LDC graduation is not the end of Bhutan's development journey. The country must continue to pursue inclusive and sustainable development, with a focus on reducing inequality, improving governance, and protecting the environment. This requires a long-term vision and strategy that is grounded in Bhutan's unique culture, values, and development philosophy

of Gross National Happiness.

Finally, we must ensure that the benefits of LDC graduation are shared equitably across society. While Bhutan has made significant progress in reducing poverty, there are still pockets of vulnerability and marginalisation that require attention. It is crucial to address the root causes of inequality and exclusion, including gender discrimination, social norms, and access to basic services.

Bhutan's graduation from the LDC group is a significant milestone for the country, but it is not the end of the road. It is a time for reflection and action, to build on the progress made and address the remaining challenges. We must ensure that Bhutan's development journey continues to be guided by the principles of inclusivity, sustainability, and happiness. ■

भूटान नरेश के सामने प्रधानमंत्री नरेन्द्र मोदी ने उठाया डोकलाम का मुद्दा



में भारत का रुख पहले से स्पष्ट है।

डोकलाम के बारे में आगे विदेश सचिव ने कहा कि भारत सरकार इससे जुड़े हर मुद्दे पर नजर रखती है और सुरक्षा के लिहाज से जो भी जरूरी है वह कदम उठाती है। विदेश सचिव ने पत्रकारों को यह भी बताया कि भूटान के आग्रह पर भारत उससे खरीदी जाने वाली पनबिजली की ज्यादा कीमत भी देने को तैयार हो गया है। भारत जो पनबिजली खरीदता है उसकी भूटान की इकोनोमी में बहुत ही अहम भूमिका है। भूटान की एक और पनबिजली परियोजना से भी भारत बिजली खरीदने को तैयार हो गया है।

प्रधानमंत्री नरेन्द्र मोदी ने भूटान नरेश जिग्मे खेसर नामग्याल वांगचुक के समक्ष भारत-भूटान-चीन की सीमा पर स्थित डोकलाम का मुद्दा उठाया। मोदी और वांगचुक के बीच हुई वार्ता में द्विपक्षीय संबंधों से जुड़े हर मुद्दे पर विस्तार से बात हुई जिसमें आपसी सुरक्षा हितों से जुड़े तमाम मुद्दे भी शामिल थे। बैठक में भारत सरकार की तरफ से भूटान की आर्थिक स्थिति को बेहतर बनाने के लिए हर तरह की मदद देने पर भी सहमति बनी है। इसमें भूटान को अधिक वित्तीय सुविधा उपलब्ध कराने से लेकर भूटान में पैदा होने वाले कृषि उत्पादों को दूसरे देशों में ज्यादा निर्यात करने की सहूलियत देना भी शामिल होगा। दोनों देश रक्षा संबंधों को भी और मजबूत करेंगे।

भूटान के राजा वांगचुक दो दिवसीय भारत यात्रा पर आये हैं। इस दौरान उनकी मुलाकात विदेश मंत्री एस जयशंकर से भी हुई। राष्ट्रपति द्रौपदी मुर्मु से भी उन्होंने मुलाकात की। पीएम मोदी के साथ हुई उनकी बैठक की जानकारी देने के लिए मीडिया के समक्ष आए विदेश सचिव विनय क्वात्रा से जब यह पूछा गया कि क्या डोकलाम का मुद्दा उठा था। क्वात्रा ने कहा कि सुरक्षा से जुड़े हर मुद्दे पर भारत और भूटान लगातार एक दूसरे से संपर्क में हैं और इनके बीच हर मुद्दे पर बात हुई है। जहां तक हाल ही में दिए गए कुछ बयान के संबंध का मामला है तीनपक्षीय सीमा (डोकलाम) की स्थिति के बारे

भूटान ने भारत को नई पनबिजली परियोजना लगाने का भी प्रस्ताव भेजा है। पीएम मोदी ने इस पर विचार करने का आश्वासन दिया है। इस क्रम में भारत संकोष पनबिजली परियोजना जैसी नई पनबिजली परियोजना को वित्तीय मदद दे सकता है।

DAYS TO REMEMBER

in May, 2023

May 01 : International Worker's Day

May 05 : Purnima

May 08 : Red Cross Day

May 11 : National Technology Day

May 15 : International Day of Families

May 17 : Norway - Constitution Day

May 19 : Amavasya

May 22 : Yemen - National Day

May 26 : Guyana - Independence Day

May 28 : Azerbaijan - Republic Day

May 28 : Ethiopia - National Day

May 29 : International Day of United Nations Peace Keepers

सूरीनाम में भारतीय संस्कृति और हिन्दी भाषा सुरक्षित और संरक्षित हैं



सूरीनाम में भारत से गए अनुबंधित श्रमिकों के 150वीं वर्षगांठ के अवसर पर अंतर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद के डायस्पोरा रिसर्च एंड रिसोर्स सेंटर द्वारा 'सूरीनाम में भारतवंशी' विषय पर आयोजित परिचर्चा और हिन्दी की सुप्रसिद्ध कवियत्री एवं लेखिका डॉ० पुष्पिता अवस्थी, अध्यक्ष-हिन्दी यूनिवर्स फाउंडेशन नीदरलैंड के पुस्तक 'Separated Emotions' के लोकार्पण किया। परिषद की अध्यक्ष भूतपूर्व राजदूत श्री वीरेंद्र गुप्ता ने अपने अध्यक्षीय भाषण देते हुये कहा की भारत से जिन देशों में गिरमितिया मजदूर बहुत ही प्रतिकूल परिस्थिति में श्रमिक के रूप में भेजे गए उनमें मॉरीशस, फिजी और सूरीनाम ऐसे देश हैं जहां भारतीय संस्कृति के साथ-साथ हिन्दी भाषा का भी प्रचलन और प्रयोग हो रहा है। हमारा यह कर्तव्य हो जाता है की इन देशों में भारतीय भाषाओं और संस्कृति को सुरक्षित रखने के लिए सरकारी और गैर सरकारी तौर पर सभी संभव प्रयास किए जाएँ।

इस अवसर पर मुख्य अतिथि के रूप में बोलते हुये सूरीनाम में भारत के पूर्व राजदूत एम०एस० कान्याल ने कहा ही भारत सरकार द्वारा चलाई जा रही विभिन्न परियोजनायों द्वारा प्रवासी भारतीयों को सहायता प्रदान की जाती है। इनमें नवयुवकों के लिए Know India Programme के अतिरिक्त विभिन्न विश्व विद्यालयों में शिक्षावृत्ति तथा हिन्दी एवं हिन्दी भाषा के शिक्षण की व्यवस्था उल्लेखनीय हैं। इस परिचर्चा में स्वागत भाषण देते हुए परिषद के महासचिव श्याम परांडे ने गिरमितिया देशों एवं संसार के अन्य देशों में प्रवासी भारतीयों की उपलब्धियों पर प्रकाश डाला तथा परिषद के

सचिव गोपाल अरोड़ा ने कहा की साहित्य, संगीत, व्यापार और विज्ञान के क्षेत्रों में गिरमितियाँ मजदूर के रूप में गए भारतीय अब उन देशों में शीर्ष स्थान पर हैं।

'Separated Emotions' की पुस्तक की लेखिका ने कहा की यह पुस्तक मेरे हिन्दी उपन्यास छिन्नमुल का अँग्रेजी अनुवाद है जिसमें भारत से कैरेबियन देशों में भेजे गए श्रमिकों के बारे में

विस्तार से बताया गया है। छिन्नमूल पुस्तक की पृष्ठभूमि प्रस्तुत करते उन्होने कहा की यद्यपि भारतीय श्रमिक अत्यंत प्रतिकूल परिस्थिति में टग-फुसलाकर सूरीनाम तथा अन्य देशों में ले जाए गए थे तथा उन्होने वहाँ अनेक प्रकार की यातनाएँ सही लेकिन आज जिन देशों में ले जाए गए उनके निर्माण में भारतीय श्रमिकों के संतानों की महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका है। वे आज भी भारत माता को अपनी माँ समझते है तथा विश्वास रखते हैं की माँ का स्नेह उन्हें हमेशा मिलता रहेगा। इस पुस्तक का 'Separated Emotions' अँग्रेजी अनुवाद पर दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय की प्राध्यापिका डॉ० निधि शर्मा ने अपना एक सारगर्भित वक्तव्य प्रस्तुत किया। इनके अतिरिक्त हिन्दी के सुप्रसिद्ध पत्रकार हरेन्द्र प्रताप ने छिन्नमुल पुस्तक की विशेषताओं पर प्रकाश डालते हुये कहा की यह पुस्तक हिन्दी के सभी पाठकों के लिए संग्रहणीय प्रकाशन है तथा इसके अँग्रेजी

अनुवाद होने से देश-विदेश के लोग भारतीय श्रमिकों की कथा-व्यथा को जान सकेंगे। प्रवासी संसार के संपादक डॉ० राकेश पाण्डेय ने इस बात पर चिंता व्यक्त की कि सूरीनाम में हिन्दी में रचनात्मक लेखन में कमी आ रही है। आचार्यकुल के सचिव मुजीब आजाद ने इस पुस्तक के प्रकाशन पर पुष्पिता जी को बधाई दी। कार्यक्रम के समापन वक्तव्य में अंतर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद के मानद निदेशक नारायण कुमार ने कहा की आज के कार्यक्रम द्वारा परिषद सूरीनाम में



भारतवंशियों के आगमन की 150वीं जयंती का शुभारंभ कर रहा है। सूरीनाम में भारतीय श्रमिक डच शासकों द्वारा ले जाए गए थे लेकिन कठोर यातना कठिन संघर्ष तथा अपने त्याग और तपस्या के कारण हिन्दी भाषा, भारतीय संस्कृति, रीति-रिवाज, पर्व-त्योहार को सुरक्षित रखा है। उन्होने बताया की आज से 125 वर्ष पहले मुंशी रहमान को वहाँ जबरन ले जाया गया था लेकिन उन्होने वहाँ जाकर हिन्दी शिक्षण, हिन्दी लेखन तथा भारतीय समुदाय के बीच सौहार्द्ध बनाने में महत्वपूर्ण कार्य किए। कार्यक्रम के प्रारम्भ में प्रो० रुचि वर्मा ने अंतर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद की विभिन्न कार्यक्रमों पर प्रकाश डाला तथा 'Separated Emotions' की प्रकाशक संस्था Diamond Publication के प्रबंध निदेशक श्री नरेंद्र ने धन्यवाद ज्ञापन दिया।

फिजी में 12वें विश्व हिंदी सम्मेलन का आयोजन



12वां विश्व हिंदी सम्मेलन फिजी में 15 से 17 फरवरी 2023 तक संपन्न हुआ। फिजी में इस सम्मेलन का महत्व इसलिए भी विशेष रहा कि गिरमिटिया देशों में फिजी विश्व का एकमात्र ऐसा देश है जिसकी संविधान सम्मत राजभाषा हिंदी भी है। इस सम्मेलन का आयोजन पूर्व में सितंबर 2022 में फिजी में होने की घोषणा हुई थी किंतु फिजी के आम चुनाव की प्रक्रिया होने से सम्मेलन की तिथि को आगे बढ़ाना पड़ा। यह सम्मेलन भाषा और सांस्कृतिक आदान-प्रदान के साथ ही नई सरकार के साथ भारत के सौहार्दपूर्ण राजनयिक संबंधों को सुदृढ़ करने का माध्यम भी बना क्योंकि विपक्षी पार्टी के सत्तासीन होने से राजनीतिक संबंधों को पूर्ववत् गतिमान रखने की आवश्यकता भी थी। यही कारण था कि भारत के विदेश मंत्री श्री सुब्रमण्यम जयशंकर, विदेश राज्य मंत्री श्री वी. मुरलीधरन और गृह राज्य मंत्री श्री अजय कुमार मिश्र की तीनों दिन सम्मेलन में उपस्थिति रहने की साथ ही वे अन्य राजनयिक गतिविधियों में भी सक्रिय रहे।

फिजी सम्मेलन का उद्घाटन समारोह अन्य विश्व हिंदी सम्मेलनों की तुलना में विशिष्ट रहा। दोनों देशों के राष्ट्र ध्वजों से सुसज्जित मंच पर केवल फिजी के राष्ट्रपति श्री रातू

विल्यम कटोनिवेरे और भारत के विदेश मंत्री श्री सुब्रमण्यम जयशंकर ही विराजित रहे। समारोह में औपचारिक उद्घाटन के अवसर पर वैदिक मंगलाचरण और अलौकिक मंगलाचरण के साथ ही लगभग 30 मिनट तक फिजी के कलाकारों ने सेवु-सेवु विधि (Sewu Sewu Ceremony) के माध्यम से नैसर्गिक शक्तियों का पारंपरिक आह्वान कार्यक्रम प्रस्तुत किया। इस आह्वान में विश्व को सुख शांति देने की प्रार्थना की गई। यह एक प्रकार का साधना क्रम है जिसमें सामूहिक रूप से प्रार्थना की जाती है। यह प्रकृति संरक्षण का सुंदर विधान भी है जो फिजी के पारंपरिक जीवन का अभिन्न अंग है। फिजी गणराज्य के शिक्षा मंत्री श्री असेरी रेड्डोडो ने स्वागत वक्तव्य देते हुए कहा कि उनकी सरकार ने हिंदी भाषा को बहुत महत्व दिया है और इसके लिए वे भविष्य में भी कार्य करते रहेंगे। फिजी के राष्ट्रपति श्री रातू विल्यम ने कहा कि आधुनिक फिजी के निर्माण में भारतवंशियों का महान योगदान है। विश्व की लुप्त हो रही भाषाओं को बचाना बहुत जरूरी है। यह सम्मेलन इस दिशा में फलदायी होगा। विदेश मंत्री श्री जयशंकर ने कहा कि यह सम्मेलन विश्व में हिंदी को सम्मान दिलाने का उपक्रम है। वह युग पीछे छूट गया है, जब प्रगति को पश्चिमीकरण के समान माना जाता

था। ऐसी कई भाषाएं, परम्पराएं जो औपनिवेशिक युग के दौरान दबा दी गई थी, फिर से वैश्विक मंच पर आवाज उठा रही हैं। ऐसे में आवश्यक है कि विश्व को सभी संस्कृतियों और समाजों के बारे में जानकारी हो। सम्मेलन में विशेष डाक टिकट भी जारी किया गया। इस अवसर पर सम्मेलन स्मारिका गगनांचल, राजभाषा भारती एवं आरम्भिका पत्रिका के विशेषांकों का विमोचन भी हुआ। विदेश राज्य मंत्री श्री वी. मुरलीधरन ने घोषणा की कि भारत सरकार फिजी में भाषा प्रयोगशाला की स्थापना करेगी, जो यहां के हिंदी प्रेमियों के लिए उपहार होगा।

इस सम्मेलन की मुख्य विषय वस्तु 'हिंदी पारंपरिक ज्ञान से कृत्रिम मेधा' तक रखा गया था। सम्मेलन के उद्घाटन के पश्चात इस विषय से सम्बंधित महत्वपूर्ण सत्र का आयोजन मुख्य सभागार में हुआ। इस सत्र में शिक्षा संस्कृति उत्थान न्यास के सचिव श्री अतुल कोठारी, तकनीकीविद एवं माइक्रोसॉफ्ट में भारतीय भाषाओं के प्रभारी श्री बालेंदु दाधीच, केंद्रीय जनजातीय विश्वविद्यालय के कुलपति श्री टी.वी. कट्टिमणि के विचार प्रभावोत्पादक रहे। श्री कोठारी ने कहा कि भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा सिर्फ भारत ही नहीं अपितु पूरे विश्व की

आवश्यकता है। प्राचीन ज्ञान को आधुनिक तकनीक से जोड़ने और आज के संदर्भ में ढालने की जरूरत है। टी.वी. कट्टिमणि ने कहा कि हमें यहां निसंकोच स्वीकार करना चाहिए कि भारतीय भाषाओं की स्थिति अच्छी नहीं है। आज सब कुछ बदल गया है किंतु हिंदी का पाठ्यक्रम नहीं बदला है। हिंदी के पाठ्यक्रम में कौशल विकास और आधुनिक तकनीक का समावेश नहीं है। हमें अपडेट होने की जरूरत है। हमारे प्राध्यापकों को भी कृत्रिम मेधा में दक्ष होना पड़ेगा। श्री बालेंदु दाधीच ने कृत्रिम मेधा को स्पष्ट करते हुए कहा कि तकनीक के क्षेत्र में पैदा होने वाले प्रश्नों का जवाब आज नई तकनीक ही दे रही है और हमारी मदद के लिए प्रौद्योगिकी नए तरीके खोज रही है। भविष्य में चौट जीपीटी साहित्य का अनुवाद करने में सक्षम होगी। कृत्रिम मेधा के जरिए अनुवाद संभव है और भविष्यवाणी भी की जा सकती है। हिंदी में कृत्रिम मेधा के माध्यम से अनेक संभावनाएं मौजूद हैं। प्रथम दिवस में इस मुख्य सत्र के अलावा अन्य समांतर सत्रों में 'सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी और 21वीं सदी की हिंदी', 'फिजी और प्रशांत क्षेत्र में हिंदी', 'मीडिया और हिंदी का विश्व बोध' और 'गिरमिटिया देशों में हिंदी' पर वक्ताओं ने अपने विचार व्यक्त किए। सम्मेलन के दूसरे दिन 'भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा का वैश्विक संदर्भ और हिंदी', 'भाषिक समन्वय और हिंदी अनुवाद', 'हिंदी सिनेमा के विविध रूप और वैश्विक परिदृश्य', 'विश्व बाजार और हिंदी बदलता परिदृश्य', 'बदलते परिदृश्य में प्रवासी हिंदी साहित्य' तथा 'देश-विदेश में हिंदी शिक्षण और चुनौतियां' विषय पर वक्तव्य और चर्चा हुई। सम्मेलन का समापन तृतीय दिवस विश्व हिंदी सम्मान के साथ हुआ। भारत के 10 विद्वानों और दो संस्थाओं तथा अन्य 12 देशों के विद्वानों और हिंदी संस्थाओं को विदेश मंत्री श्री सुब्रमण्यम जयशंकर तथा फिजी के उप प्रधानमंत्री श्री बिमान प्रसाद ने सम्मानित किया। उन्होंने इस सम्मेलन को फिजी में आयोजित अब तक का सबसे बड़ा वैश्विक सम्मेलन बताया। सम्मेलन में परम्परा अनुसार समापन अवसर पर न तो कोई विशेष प्रस्ताव पारित हुए और न ही अगले सम्मेलन के स्थान की घोषणा हुई।

यदि सम्मेलन के उद्घाटन पश्चात आयोजित कृत्रिम मेधा के मुख्य सत्र को छोड़ दिया जाए तो समानांतर सत्रों में विशेषज्ञ वक्ताओं का अभाव दिखाई दिया और श्रोताओं की उपस्थिति की भी समस्या रही। प्रतिनिधिमंडल के अनेक सदस्यों और अन्य प्रतिभागियों को फिजी के मनमोहक प्राकृतिक वातावरण के भ्रमण मोह ने सत्रों से दूर ही रखा। यदि 3 दिन के सम्मेलन में सम्पन्न दस सत्रों का आकलन किया जाए तो निराशा ही हाथ लगती है। अनेक सत्रों में ऐसे वक्ताओं का समावेश था जो विषय के विशेषज्ञ नहीं थे। यदि सत्र के विषय के अनुरूप वैश्विक स्तर पर विशेषज्ञ वक्ताओं का चयन ठीक समय पर होता तो अकादमिक सत्रों की गुणवत्ता कुछ और ही होती। कुछ सत्रों की अध्यक्षता एवं वक्ताओं का निर्धारण तो कुछ घंटों पहले उपस्थित प्रतिनिधियों में से किया गया। जागरण समाचार पत्र के एसोसिएट सम्पादक श्री अनंत विजय ने हिंदी सिनेमा सत्र में अपने विचार व्यक्त करते हुए कहा कि पहले उन्हें इस सत्र के संचालन के लिए कहा गया, फिर बदलकर वक्ता बना दिया गया और सत्र की शुरुआत के पहले अध्यक्षीय दायित्व दिया गया। सम्मेलन में अनेक देशों से प्रतिनिधि के रूप में आमंत्रित मूर्धन्य विद्वान मूक दर्शक की तरह ही उपस्थित रहे।

इस प्रकार यह सम्मेलन आयोजन के अंतिम क्षणों तक अनिश्चितता की स्थिति बनाए रखने के लिए भी याद किया जाता रहेगा। सम्मेलन में प्रदान किए जाने वाले विश्व हिंदी सम्मान, प्रतिनिधिमंडल में शामिल प्रतिनिधियों की सूची, सम्मेलन के विविध सत्रों के वक्ताओं, मंच संचालकों आदि का निर्णय सामान्यतः सम्मेलन की निर्धारित तिथि के काफी समय पहले हो जाता है। 2018 में मॉरीशस विश्व हिंदी सम्मेलन में प्रतिनिधिमंडल में शामिल महानुभावों को लगभग एक माह पूर्व ही सूचना प्राप्त हो गई थी किंतु फिजी के इस सम्मेलन में सहभागिता की सूचना मात्र दो दिन पूर्व ही दी गई। फलस्वरूप 24 घंटे से अधिक समय की हवाई यात्रा के दबाव के कारण भी विश्व हिंदी सम्मान प्राप्त कुछ

महानुभाव, सत्रों हेतु चयनित वक्ता और वरिष्ठ साहित्यकार तथा लेखक सम्मेलन में सहभागिता नहीं कर पाए। दूसरी और सम्मेलन में शामिल होने हेतु कई दिनों से अपनी हवाई यात्रा का टिकट आरक्षित करवाकर प्रस्थान हेतु तैयार बैठे अनेक महानुभावों को वित्त मंत्रालय की पहल पर जाने से रोक दिया गया। विदेश मंत्रालय ने एक सप्ताह पूर्व ही अनेक देशों के हिंदी एवं भारतीय साहित्य के विद्वानों को सम्मेलन में शामिल होने के लिए आमंत्रण भेजा और दूतावासों के माध्यम से उनकी यात्रा की व्यवस्था भी की गई किंतु सत्रों के विषयों की जानकारी न होने के कारण उनकी सक्रिय सहभागिता भी नगण्य ही रही।

अकादमिक विचार-विमर्श से हटकर सम्मेलन की अन्य सभी व्यवस्थाएं माकूल रही। फिजी सरकार, फिजी स्थित भारतीय दूतावास और फिजी की विविध संस्थाओं के युवा कार्यकर्ता स्वागत और सहयोग के लिए सदैव तत्पर दिखाई दिए। भारत और फिजी की सांस्कृतिक परम्परा और आधुनिकता को समाविष्ट करते हुए प्रस्तुत सांध्यकालीन कार्यक्रम भी प्रभावी रहे।

1975 से अब तक सम्पन्न 12 विश्व हिंदी सम्मेलनों के बाद अब यह आवश्यक है कि इसके स्वरूप में परिवर्तन किया जाए। वैश्विक स्तर पर विभिन्न महाद्वीपों में हिंदी के प्रयोग की स्थितियां और चुनौतियां भी भिन्न हैं। केवल कुछ सत्रों के आयोजन, पुस्तकों के विमोचन और सम्मान वितरण से विश्व हिंदी सम्मेलन का आयोजन सार्थक नहीं हो सकता। पूर्व के विश्व हिंदी सम्मेलनों में पारित प्रस्तावों और निर्णयों पर की गई कार्रवाई का लेखा-जोखा भी प्रस्तुत किया जाए। सम्मेलन के सत्रों में विभिन्न देशों के विद्वानों और हिंदी के लिए समर्पित कार्यकर्ताओं को भी पर्याप्त अवसर मिलना चाहिए। सम्मेलन के आयोजन में विश्व हिंदी सचिवालय की सक्रिय भूमिका होने के साथ ही आधुनिक तकनीक का भी अधिकाधिक उपयोग किया जाना चाहिए।



भारतीय स्वाधीनता के अमृत महोत्सव के अवसर पर विशेष



रघुवीर नारायण
(31 अक्टूबर 1884- 1 जनवरी 1955)

रघुवीर नारायण का जन्म बिहार के सारण जिले के दहियावां गाँव में 31 अक्टूबर 1884 में हुआ था। वे हिन्दी साहित्यकार तथा भारतीय स्वतंत्रता संग्राम के सेनानी थे। उनके द्वारा रचित 'बटोहिया' नामक भोजपुरी राष्ट्रीय गीत को पूर्वी भारत में वन्दे मातरम के बराबर सम्मान मिला। जन-जागरण गीत की तरह गाया जाने वाला यह गीत पूर्वी लोकधुन में लिखा गया है। यह गीत भारत के अधिरिक्त गिरमिटीया देशों में अस्तविक श्रद्धा एवम सम्मान के साथ गाया जाता है।



बटोहिया

सुंदर सुभूमि भैया भारत के देसवा से
मोरे प्राण बसे हिम-खोह रे बटोहिया ।
एक द्वार घेरे रामा हिम-कोतवलवा से
तीन द्वार सिंधु घहरावे रे बटोहिया ॥

जाहु-जाहु भैया रे बटोही हिंद देखी आउ
जहवां कुहुंकी कोइली बोले रे बटोहिया ।
पवन सुगंध मंद अगर चंदनवां से
कामिनी बिरह-राग गावे रे बटोहिया ॥

बिपिन अगम घन सघन बगन बीच
चंपक कुसुम रंग देबे रे बटोहिया ।
द्रुम बट पीपल कदंब नींब आम वृछ
केतकी गुलाब फूल फूले रे बटोहिया ॥

तोता तुती बोले रामा बोले भेंगरजवा से
पपिहा के पी-पी जिया साले रे बटोहिया ।
सुंदर सुभूमि भैया भारत के देसवा से
मोरे प्राण बसे गंगा धार रे बटोहिया ॥

गंगा रे जमुनवा के झिलमिल पनियां से
सरजू झमकी लहरावे रे बटोहिया ।
ब्रह्मपुत्र पंचनद घहरत निसि दिन
सोनभद्र मीठे स्वर गावे रे बटोहिया ॥

उपर अनेक नदी उमड घूमड नाचे
जुगन के जदुआ जगावे रे बटोहिया ।
आगरा प्रयाग काशी दिल्ली कलकतवा से
मोरे प्राण बसे सरजू तीर रे बटोहिया ॥

जाउ-जाउ भैया रे बटोही हिंद देखी आउ
जहां ऋषि चारो बेद गावे रे बटोहिया ।
सीता के बीमल जस राम जस कृष्ण जस
मोरे बाप-दादा के कहानी रे बटोहिया ॥

ब्यास बालमीक ऋषि गौतम कपिलदेव
सूतल अमर के जगावे रे बटोहिया ।
रामानुज-रामानंद न्यारी-प्यारी रूपकला
ब्रह्म सुख बन के भंवर रे बटोहिया ॥

नानक कबीर गौर संकर श्रीरामकृष्ण
अलख के गतिया बतावे रे बटोहिया ।
बिद्यापति कालीदास सूर जयदेव कवि
तुलसी के सरल कहानी रे बटोहिया ॥

जाउ-जाउ भैया रे बटोही हिंद देखि आउ
जहां सुख झूले धान खेत रे बटोहिया ।
बुद्धदेव पथु विक्रमाजुन सिवाजी के
फिरि-फिरि हिय सुघ आवे रे बटोहिया ॥

अपर प्रदेस देस सुभग सुघर बेस
मोरे हिंद जग के निचोड़ रे बटोहिया ।
सुंदर सुभूमि भैया भारत के भूमि जेही
जन 'रघुबीर' सिर नावे रे बटोहिया ॥