

My Mother Tongue

While I was filling up the voter registration form-in Bangla, I discovered how weak I was in my own mother tongue. I hate to admit this, but I even had trouble writing my name in Bangla. I discovered that I actually did not write Bangla after my O Level Bangla Language exam, which was about three years ago. After I struggled through the form, making several spelling mistakes that I had to correct later and a handwriting that was really hard to read, I was frustrated with myself. But I know that I am not the only one, there are so many teenagers like me who do not have the minimum level of skill or knowledge about our language. What's worse, there are even some youngsters who wrongly (i.e. stupidly) view our language as 'uncool'. What a shame!

If this is the condition of so many young people in Bangladesh today, what will be the situation after a few decades? The struggle our ancestors had faced and the legendary revolution they engineered for our mother tongue does not deserve such disrespect.

Salehin Ibrahim
A private university student
Dhanmondi

The Sweet and Sour Fight

IT was a beautiful winter night and I came out cheerfully from the Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF) after completing my day's work. Visitors were rushing home. There were very few taxis and auto rickshaws. Many people were walking, looking for a vehicle. I was standing beside a couple, who were also looking for a vehicle to take them home. The wife's hands were full of household utensils, plastic buckets, jugs and other things. She was struggling hard to carry them. The wife kept on requesting her husband to help her carry her things. The husband, however, was extremely irritated and asked her to carry them herself since she bought them! He then turned towards me and exclaimed that these things could be bought from any shop in Dhaka City. "Why do we have to come all the way here and buy them?" he asked, even though I was a total stranger. "I also have to pay an extra amount to the CNG driver just to take us home!" he added. I couldn't help smiling and nodding in agreement to his argument, thinking how difficult it is sometimes to win a battle against your wife.

Mohammed Sohel Hara
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Diary from Chittagong

An Interesting Rickshaw Ride

THE other day, I was returning home by rickshaw. I noticed that the rickshaw puller was in a jolly mood because he was going to his village the next day. As the conversation between us continued, he informed me that he and his wife had two sons. I openly appreciated the fact that he and his wife were raising two children, unlike many families in the villages. However, he said that he plans to produce more children, at least two more sons! He will teach two of his sons to fight since he needed to protect his family and property from his close relatives, as they were all betraying him. The other two will work and feed him when he is older. I was traumatised hearing his ridiculous future plan. Then I asked what would happen if his 'fighter-sons' fought off their other brothers and betrayed them as well. And how in the world does he plan to raise four kids by just pulling a rickshaw? I then spoke to him about raising his kids properly and making sure that they get a proper education. That is how they will be able to protect the family and also earn a proper income. I discovered myself giving him a brief lecture on family planning and education the rest of the way home.

When I offered him his fare, he said that he could not take it. That day, he had learnt a lot of lessons that would be important to him and his family.

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