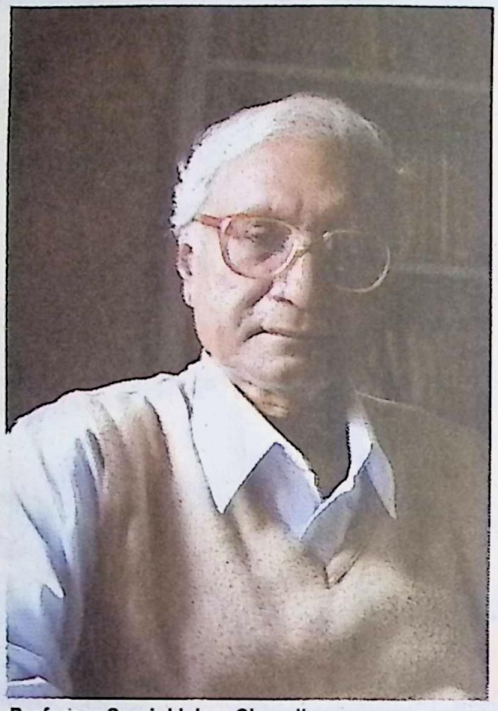
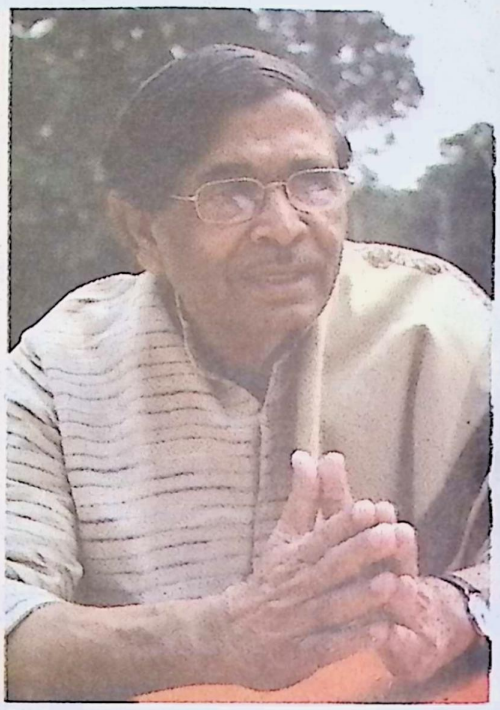
improper or just incorrect Bangla in recent years -- only reflects, among other things, the language spoken in society today. "There must be philosophy and idealism because it is on these that creativity is based."

Language changes and evolves, but it does so naturally, over a long period of time, not in a few years because it is imposed upon by a section of society. What percentage of the Bangladeshi population really speak the language we hear on television or on the radio? Most people speak in their own dialects, or a formal or informal Bangla with hints of a regional accent. But looking around us, we think that the way we speak and the way people on radio or television speak, is how everyone in the country speaks.



Professor Serajul Islam Chowdhury



Professor Abdullah Abu Sayeed

"We assume that the young generation talk in this manner," says Professor Abdullah Abu Sayeed, founder of Biswa Sahitya Kendra, of the heavily accented and mixed Bangla used by radio jockeys on private radio stations. "This may not be true, and even if it is, should we support this low taste, or should we teach them by setting a positive example?" The media is a civil society organisation, says Sayeed, which can enrich, enlighten and give direction to people and it must take on this role.

Some people claim that it is not natural to speak in proper, clipped Bangla in their everyday lives. But, says Professor Sayeed, the language of the home is not the language of literature. "A man may wear a lungi at home, or not wear a shirt, but once he steps out of the house, from the private to the public realm, he is expected to dress in a socially accepted and respected manner. The same goes with language. You can speak any way you want with your near ones, but literature, art, has a separate language, a standard which must be followed.

"When Bankim Chandra Chatterjee began to write for a greater audience, he had to raise his standard of language from 'Syambajarer Sosi babu' to one that was acceptable to the whole nation," says Sayeed.

That does not mean that dialects will not be spoken. "Dialects add vibrancy to a language, helping to depict the unique character of people from different regions. But if a university-educated Dhaka youth is shown to speak in a Noakhali dialect or in a mixed accent, it becomes contradictory," the professor notes.



The Amar Ekushey Boi Mela which takes place every year reflects Bangladeshis' love for books.

An overall degeneration of culture, values, sophistication and language is apparent in our society, says Sayeed, where anyone speaking in formal Bangla is ridiculed for being uppity, as if informal, improper Bangla is what is right.

Television personality Progga Laboni finds the quality of language being used on television these days as "absolutely disgusting".

"Television is a formal medium and not just anyone can appear on it. In the past, there used to be a lot of screening and scrutiny before people could make it on television. But