There is a proverb which says, “Give me knowledge, so I may have kindness for all”. We know that a nation cannot develop without knowledge, and it is important that all members of society have the opportunity to share their knowledge. Bangladesh is a nation blessed with many ethno-linguistic communities who have an impressive archive of cultural material, including literature and history. Each culture is distinct and unique. Communities may have similar worldviews, but their cultures are based on different histories, environments, and creative approaches.

SIL International Bangladesh works with ethno-linguistic communities who want to develop and use their languages more widely. In some cases, language use is in decline and there is very little written material to preserve the language and culture. SIL Bangladesh supports speakers of these languages in developing their scripts and spelling systems. It was lovely to visit multilingual education schools run with SIL’s support for Kol Community in the Rajshahi district, and to see how community members are increasingly realizing the value of their language. Children from different communities are now learning to read and write in their mother tongues.

It is everyone’s responsibility to work together to empower them to access education and health services. It is also important to appreciate the contribution that these communities make to enriching the nation.
Diversity is a Blessing to Society . . . . Cont’d

The government of Bangladesh has announced the digitalization of Bangladesh, which will include the development of open source technology to support education, health, employment, poverty reduction, innovation and human rights. Knowledge from all sectors of society will be essential in achieving a digital Bangladesh. Raising literacy levels in minority communities and enabling people to preserve and pass on their language and local culture will help to enrich the bank of knowledge in Bangladesh, as well as empowering people to ensure the delivery of government services.

Many smaller ethno-linguistic communities are facing challenging economic and social problems. It is everyone’s responsibility to work together to empower them to access education and health services. It is also important to appreciate the contribution that these communities make to enriching the nation. Over the centuries they have helped to make Bangladesh the country that it is today. We look forward to seeing them grow in confidence and influence in our digitalized society.

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