

Mann Ki Baat (Episode 103)

Broadcast Date: 30.07.2023

My dear countrymen, Namaskar.

A warm welcome to all of you in 'Mann Ki Baat'. The month of July means the month of monsoon, the month of rain. The past few days have been full of anxiety and hardships on account of natural calamities. Owing to flooding in many rivers including the Yamuna, people in many areas have had to suffer. Landslides have also occurred in hilly areas. Meanwhile, in the western part of the country, Biparjoy cyclone also hit the areas of Gujarat some time ago. But friends, in the midst of these calamities, all of us countrymen have once again brought to the fore the power of collective effort. The local people, our NDRF jawans, those from the local administration have worked day and night to combat such calamities. Our capabilities and resources play a big role in dealing with any disaster - but at the same time, our sensitivity and the spirit of hand-holding is equally important. This spirit of Sarvajan Hitaaya is the hallmark of India as well as the strength of India.

Friends, this phase of rain is equally important for 'tree plantation' and 'water conservation'. More than 60 thousand Amrit Sarovars built during the 'Azaadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' are increasingly radiating their glow. Presently, the work of building more than 50 thousand Amrit Sarovars is going on. Our countrymen are making novel efforts for 'water conservation' with full awareness and responsibility. You might remember, sometime ago, I had gone to Shahdol, M.P. There I met tribal brothers and sisters of Pakaria village. At the same time, I had a discussion with them to save nature and water. Now I have come to know that the tribal brothers and sisters of Pakaria village have already started working on this. Here, with the help of the administration, people have converted about a hundred wells into water recharge systems. Rain water now flows into these wells, and from the wells, the water enters the ground. This will gradually improve the ground water level in the area. Now all the villagers have set a target of using about 800 wells in the entire area for recharging. One such encouraging news has come in from U.P. A few days ago, in Uttar Pradesh, a record of planting 30 crore trees in a single day has been made. This campaign was started by the state

government; it was completed by the people there. Such efforts are great examples of public participation as well as public awareness. I would like all of us to be a part of these efforts to plant trees and save water.

My dear countrymen, at present the holy month of 'Saawan' is going on. Along with worshipping Sadashiv Mahadev, 'Sawan' is associated with greenery and joy. That's why, 'Sawan' has been very important from the spiritual as well as cultural point of view. The swings of Sawan, the mehendi of Sawan, the festivities of Sawan... that is, 'Sawan' itself means joy and enthusiasm.

Friends, there is yet another facet to this faith and these traditions of ours. These festivals and traditions of ours make us dynamic. Many devotees undertake the Kanwar Yatra to worship Shiva in Sawan. These days numerous devotees are reaching the 12 Jyotirlingas on account of 'Sawan'. You would also be happy to know that the number of people reaching Banaras is also breaking records. Now more than 10 crore tourists are reaching Kashi every year. The number of devotees visiting pilgrimages like Ayodhya,

Mathura, Ujjain is also increasing rapidly. Due to this lakhs of poor are getting employment; their livelihood is being taken care of. All this is the result of our collective cultural awakening. Now, for 'darshan', people from all over the world are coming to our pilgrimage sites. I have come to know about two such American friends who had come here from California to perform the Amarnath Yatra. These foreign guests had heard somewhere about the experiences of Swami Vivekananda related to the Amarnath Yatra. They got so inspired that they themselves came for the Amarnath Yatra. They consider it as the blessings of Lord Bholenath. This is the specialty of India that she accepts everyone, gives something or the other to everyone. Similarly there is a woman of French origin – Charlotte Chopin. Recently, when I had gone to France, I had met her. Charlotte Chopin is a Yoga Practitioner, Yoga Teacher, and she is more than a 100 years old. She has crossed a century. She has been practicing yoga for the last 40 years. She gives credit for her health and this age of 100 years only to yoga. She has become a prominent face of India's science of yoga and its strength, in the world. Everyone should learn from her. Let us not only embrace our heritage, but also

present it responsibly to the world. And I am happy that one such effort is going on in Ujjain these days. Here 18 painters from all over the country are making attractive picture story books based on the Puranas. These paintings will be made in many distinctive styles such as the Bundi style, Nathdwara style, Pahari style and Apabhramsh style. These will be displayed in Ujjain's Triveni Museum... after some time, when you visit Ujjain; you will be able to see another divine site along with Mahakal Mahalok.

Friends, while referring to these paintings being made in Ujjain, I am reminded of another unique painting. This painting had been made by Prabhat Singh Modbhai Barhat, an artist from Rajkot.

This painting was based on an incident in the life of Chhatrapati Veer Shivaji Maharaj. Artist Prabhat Bhai had depicted that Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was going to visit his Kuldevi 'Tulja Mata' after the coronation, and what the atmosphere there at that time was. To keep our traditions, our heritage alive, we have to save it, live it, teach it to the next generation. I am happy that, today, many efforts are being made in this direction.

My dear countrymen,

Many a time, when we hear words like Ecology, Flora, Fauna, Bio Diversity, some people think that these are specialized subjects; subjects related to experts. But it is not so. If we really love nature, we can do a lot even with our small efforts. Suresh Raghavan ji is a friend from Vadavalli in Tamil Nadu. Raghavan ji is fond of painting. You know, painting is a work related to art and canvas, but Raghavan ji decided that he would preserve the information about plants and animals through his paintings. He documents the information related to them by making paintings of varied Flora and Fauna. Till now he has made paintings of dozens of such birds, animals, orchids, which are on the verge of extinction. This example of serving nature through art is really amazing.

My dear countrymen, today I want to tell you one more interesting thing. A few days ago an awesome craze appeared on social media. America has returned to us more than a hundred rare and ancient artefacts. After this news came to the fore, there was a lot of discussion on social media about these artefacts. The youth displayed a sense of pride in their heritage.

These artefacts returned to India are 2500 to 250 years old. You will also be happy to know that these rare items are related to different regions of the country. These have been made using Terracotta, Stone, Metal and Wood. Some of these are such that they will fill you with wonder. If you have a look at them, you will be left mesmerised. You will also get to see a beautiful sandstone sculpture of the 11th century among these. This is an artwork of an 'Apsara' dancing, which belongs to Madhya Pradesh. Many idols of the Chola era are also part of these. The idols of Devi and Lord Murugan date back to the 12th century and are associated with the rich culture of Tamil Nadu. Nearly a thousand year old bronze statue of Lord Ganesha has also been returned to India. An idol of Uma-Maheshwara in Lalitasan is said to be of the 11th century, in which both of them are seated on Nandi. Two stone idols of Jain Tirthankaras have also come back to India. Two idols of Bhagwan Surya Dev will also enthrall you. One of these is made of Sandstone. Among the items returned is a panel made of wood, which brings to the fore the story of the churning of the ocean. This panel of 16th-17th century is associated with South India.

Friends, I have mentioned just a few names here, whereas, if you see, this list is very long. I would like to thank the American government, who have returned this valuable heritage of ours. Even when I visited America in 2016 and 2021, many artefacts were returned to India. I am sure that with such efforts, awareness will increase across the country to stop the theft of our cultural heritage. This will further deepen the attachment of the countrymen with our rich heritage.

My dear countrymen, the letters written by some mothers and sisters of Devbhoomi Uttarakhand to me are touchingly heart-warming. They have given many blessings to their son, their brother. They have written that - 'They had never imagined that our erstwhile cultural heritage 'Bhojpatra' could become a means of their livelihood. You must be wondering what the entire matter is!

Friends, this letter has been written to me by the women of Niti-Mana valley in Chamoli district. These are the women who had presented me a unique artwork on Bhojpatra in October last year. I was also overwhelmed on receiving this gift. After all, since

ancient times, our scriptures and books have been preserved on these Bhojpatras. Mahabharata was also written on the Bhojpatra. Today, these women of Devbhoomi are making very beautiful artefacts and souvenirs from the Bhojpatra. During my visit to Mana village, I had appreciated his unique effort. I had appealed to the tourists coming to Devbhoomi to buy as many local products as possible during their visit. It has had a great impact there. Today, the products of Bhojpatra are very much liked by the pilgrims coming here and are also buying it at good prices. This ancient heritage of Bhojpatra is filling new hues of happiness in the lives of the women of Uttarakhand. I am also happy to know that the state government is also imparting training to women to make novel products from Bhojpatra.

The state government has also started a campaign to preserve the rare species of Bhojpatra. The areas which were once considered as the last point of the land are now being developed considering them as the first villages of the country. Along with preserving our tradition and culture, this effort is also becoming a means of economic progress.

My dear countrymen, I have also received a large number of such letters this time in 'Man Ki Baat' that give a lot of satisfaction to the mind. These letters have been written by those Muslim women who have recently come from Haj pilgrimage. This journey of theirs is very special in many ways. These are the women, who have performed Hajj without any male companion or mehram, and the number is not fifty or hundred, but more than four thousand - this is a huge transformation. Earlier, Muslim women were not allowed to perform 'Hajj' without Mehram. Through Mann Ki Baat, I also express my heartfelt gratitude to the Government of Saudi Arabia. Women coordinators were specially appointed for women going on 'Haj' without Mehram.

Friends, the changes that have been made in the Haj Policy in the last few years are being highly appreciated. Our Muslim mothers and sisters have written a lot to me about this. Now, more and more people are getting the chance to go for 'Haj'. The blessing given by the people who have returned from Haj pilgrimage, especially our mothers and sisters through their letters, is very inspiring in itself.

My dear countrymen, whether be the Musical Nights in Jammu -Kashmir, Bike Rallies at High Altitudes, local clubs in Chandigarh, and the many sports groups in Punjab,... it sounds like we are talking about entertainment and adventure. But it's something different..., this event is also related to a 'common cause'. And this common cause is the awareness campaign against drugs. To save the youth of Jammu and Kashmir from drugs, many innovative efforts have been visible. Programs like Musical Night, Bike Rallies are happening there. To spread this message in Chandigarh, Local Clubs have been linked with it. They call these VADA clubs. VADA means Victory Against Drug Abuse. Many sports groups have also been formed in Punjab, which are running awareness campaigns to focus on fitness and get rid of drug addiction. The increasing participation of youth in the campaign against drug abuse is very encouraging. These efforts lend a lot of strength to the campaign against drugs in India. If we want to save the future generations of the country, we have to keep them away from drugs. With this thought, 'NashaMukt Bharat Abhiyan' was launched on the 15 August 2020. More than 11 crore people have been connected with this

campaign. Two weeks ago, India has taken a huge action against drugs. After seizing about 1.5 lakh kg consignment of drugs, it has been destroyed. India has also created a unique record of destroying 10 lakh kg of drugs. The cost of these drugs was more than Rs 12,000 crore. I would like to appreciate all those who are contributing in this noble campaign of de-addiction. Drug addiction becomes a big problem not only for the family, but for the whole society. In such a situation, for this danger to end forever, it is necessary that we all move forward in this direction in unison.

My dear countrymen, while talking about drugs and the young generation, I would also like to tell you about an inspiring journey from Madhya Pradesh. This is the Inspiring Journey of Mini Brazil. You must be thinking that from where Mini Brazil came in Madhya Pradesh, well, that is the twist. In MP, Bicharpur is a village in Shahdol. Bicharpur is called Mini Brazil. 'Mini Brazil', since, today this village has become a stronghold of the rising stars of football. When I had gone to Shahdol a few weeks ago, I met many such football players there. I felt that our countrymen and especially our young friends must know about this.

Friends, The journey of Bichharpur village to become Mini Brazil commenced two-and-a-half decades ago. During that time, Bicharpur village was infamous for illicit liquor,... it was in the grip of intoxication. The biggest brunt of this kind of environment was being borne by the youth here. Raees Ahmed, a former national player and coach, recognized the talent of these youngsters. Raees ji did not have many resources, but he started teaching football to the youth with full dedication. Within a few years, football became so popular that Bicharpur village itself was identified with football. Now a program called Football Kranti is also going on here. Under this program, youth are connected with this game and they are given training. This program has been so successful that more than 40 national and state level players have emerged from Bicharpur. This football revolution is now slowly spreading in the entire region. More than 1200 football clubs have been formed in Shahdol and its surrounding areas. A large number of players are emerging from here, who are playing at the national level. Today, many noted former football players and coaches are imparting training to the youth here. Just imagine a tribal area which was known for illicit liquor,

infamous for drug addiction, has now become the Football Nursery of the country. That's why it is said - where there is a will, there is a way. There is no dearth of talent in our country. There is certainly a need to find and nurture them. Subsequently, these youth also bring laurels to the country and lend direction to the development of the country as well.

My dear countrymen, on the occasion of completion of 75 years of independence, all of us are celebrating 'Amrit Mahotsav' with full enthusiasm. About two lakh programs have been organized in the country during the 'Amrit Mahotsav'. These programs were adorned with a spectrum of colours... were full of diversity. The beauty of these events has been that a record number of youth participated them. During this, our youth got to know a lot about the great personalities of the country. If we talk about just the first few months, we got to see many interesting programs related to public participation. One such program was - 'Writers' Meet' organized for Divyang writers. The participation of a record number of people was observed. At the same time, 'National Sanskrit Conference' was organized in Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh. We all know the importance

of forts in our history. A campaign depicting this, 'Qile aur Kahaniyan' i.e. stories related to Forts were also liked by people.

Friends, in the midst of the ongoing reverberations of Amrit Mahotsav and the 15th of August round the corner, another great campaign is on the verge of being launched in the country. 'Meri Mati Mera Desh' campaign will be launched to honour our martyred braveheart men and women. Under this, many programs will be organized across the country in the memory of our immortal martyrs. In the memory of these luminaries, special inscriptions will also be installed in lakhs of village panchayats of the country. Under this campaign, 'Amrit Kalash Yatra' will also be organised across the country. This 'Amrit Kalash Yatra' carrying soil in 7500 urns from every corner of the country will reach Delhi, the capital of the country. This journey will also carry with it saplings from different parts of the country. 'Amrit Vatika' will be built near the National War Memorial by fusing the soil and saplings that would arrive in 7500 urns. This 'Amrit Vatika' will also become a grand symbol of 'Ek Bharat Shresth Bharat'. I had talked about 'Panch Prana' for the next

25 years of Amritkal from Red Fort last year. By participating in the 'Meri Mati Mera Desh' campaign, we will also take an oath to fulfil these 'five resolves'. All of you should certainly upload your selfies on yuva.gov.in while taking oath, holding the sacred soil of the country. Last year on the occasion of Independence Day, the whole country came together for 'Har Ghar Tiranga Abhiyan',... similarly this time too we have to hoist the Tricolor at every house, and continue this tradition. With these efforts, we will realize our duties... we will realize the innumerable sacrifices made for the freedom of the country; we will realize the value of freedom. Hence, every countryman must join in these efforts.

My dear countrymen, that's all for today in 'Mann Ki Baat'.

In a few days we will be a part of this great festival of independence on the 15th of August. We should always remember those who laid down their lives for the freedom of the country. We have to work day and night to make their dreams come true and 'Mann Ki Baat' is just the medium to bring this hard work and collective

efforts of the countrymen to the fore. See you next time, with some new topics. Thank you very much