

## **Mann Ki Baat 31.05.2020**

My dear countrymen, Namaskar! Our Mann kiBaat too has not remained untouched by the effectof Corona. The last time I spoke to you through 'Mann Ki Baat' , passenger train services, busses and flights had come to a standstill. This time around much has resumed-Shramik special trains are operational; other special trains too have begun. With utmost precautions, flights have resumed; industry too is returning to normalcy; thus, opening up a major segment of the economy. In such a scenario, we need to be even more alert and careful. Whether it's the mandatory two yards distancing, wearing face masks or staying at home to the best extent possible, there should be no laxity on our part in complete adherence.

The battle against Corona is being fiercely waged in the country through collective efforts. When we glance at the world, we can actually experience the magnitude of the achievements of the people of India. Our population itself is many times that of most countries. The challenges facing the country too are of a different kind, yet Corona did not spread as fast as it did in other countries of the world. The mortality rate of corona too is a lot less in our country. All of us deeply regret the loss that we had to undergo. But whatever we have been able to save is a result of the collective resolve of the country. In a country as big as ours, everyone is determined to put up a fight; the entire campaign is people driven.

Friends, in this fight, besides the resolve of our countrymen, the other biggest strength is their spirit of service. In fact, during this pandemic, we, the people of India have visibly proved that the notion of service and sacrifice is not just our ideal; it isa way of life in India. We are familiar with the dictum- *SewaParamoDharmah*; service is a joy in itself....service is a satisfaction in itself. You must have observed that a

person devoted to the service of others never suffers from any kind of depression or tension. Every moment of his life and attitude towards life exudes immense self-confidence, positivity and vivacity.

Friends, I have often referred to the spirit of service on part of our doctors, nursing staff, sanitation workers, police personnel and media persons. I have touched upon this in 'Mann Ki Baat' too. There are innumerable people who are willing to give their all in the service of others. One such gentleman is K.C. Mohan of Tamilnadu. Shri Mohan ji runs a salon in Madurai. Through sheer hard work, he had saved five lakh rupees for his daughter's education. But he spent the entire amount in the service of the needy and the underprivileged in these difficult times. Similarly, Gautam Das ji of Agartala whose only means of sustenance is plying a handcart is feeding the needy by buying rice and pulses out of savings from his daily earnings. I have come to know of a similar example from Pathankot, Punjab. Divyang Raju through a small investment raised with help from others got over three thousand masks made and distributed them. In these difficult times, Brother Raju has arranged for feeding of around a hundred families.

Numerous stories of perseverance of women's self help groups are coming to the fore from all corners of the country. In villages and small towns, our sisters and daughters are making thousands of masks on a daily basis. Many social organizations too are helping them in this endeavor.

Friends, one is getting to see and hear of many such examples day by day. There are many people who are conveying their efforts to me through the NAMO app and other media. Many a time, on account of paucity of time I am unable to name a lot of people, organizations and institutions. I appreciate all such people who are helping others with a

spirit of service..... I respect them and express my gratitude to them from the core of my heart.

My dear countrymen, one more thing that has touched my heart is innovation at this moment of crisis. A multitude of countrymen from villages and cities, from small scale traders to start ups, our labs are devising even new ways of fighting against Corona; with novel innovations.

The example of Rajendra Yadav of Nasik is very interesting. Rajendraji is a farmer from Satna village in Nasik. To protect his village from the spread of Corona, he has devised a sanitization machine attached to his tractor and this innovation is performing very effectively. Similarly I was observing numerous photographs on social media. Many shopkeepers in order to adhere to the two yard distancing have installed big pipe lines in their shops. Merchandise is released from one end and collected at the other end by the customer. Meanwhile teachers and students have come together with myriad innovations in the field of education. Online classes, video classes are being innovated in different ways.

Work being done in our labs on Corona vaccine is being keenly observed by the world and we are hopeful too. In order to change circumstances, besides resolve, a lot depends on innovation too. The journey of the human race, spanning thousands of years has reached this modern phase on account of continuous innovation. Thus, these special innovations form the firm basis of our victory over the pandemic.

Friends, the path of our fight against Corona goes a long way. It is a calamity, a scourge that does not have an antidote in the entire world; there is no prior experience on that. Amid this scenario, we are facing newer challenges and consequent hardships. This is the situation of

every Corona affected country in the world- India is no exception. There is no stratum in our country unaffected by the difficulties caused by the affliction-the most gravely affected by the crisis are the underprivileged labourers and workers. Their agony, their pain, their ordeal cannot be expressed in words. Who amongst us cannot understand and feel what they and their families are going through! All of us are trying to share their distress; the torment.....the entire country is doing that. Our railway personnel are at it day and night. From the centre, states, to local governance bodies, everybody is toiling around the clock. The way our railway men are relentlessly engaged, they too are front line Corona Warriors. Safely transporting lakhs of labourers in trains and busses, caring for their food, arranging for their quarantine in every district, testing, check up and treatment is an ongoing process on a very large scale. But friends, the current scenario that we are witnessing is an eye opener to happenings in the past to the country;it is also an opportunity for scrutiny and lessons for the future. Today, the distress our workforce is undergoing is representative of that of the country's eastern region. The very region which possesses the capacity to be the country's growth engine, whose workforce possesses the capability and the might to take the country to greater heights...the eastern region needs development. It is only the development of the eastern region that can lead to a balanced economic development of the country. Ever since the country offered me the opportunity to serve, we have accorded priority to the development of eastern India. In the last few years, much has been done in this direction which gives me inner satisfaction. And now, considering the migrant labourers, the need of the hour is devising a new solution - paradigm....we are ceaselessly taking steps in that direction. For example, at places skill mapping of labourers is being carried out; at other places start ups are engaged in doing the same...the establishment of a migration commission is being deliberated upon. Besides that,

recent decisions taken by the Central government have opened up vast possibilities of village employment, self employment and small scale industry. The objective of these decisions is finding solutions to the situation, for the sake of a self-reliant India. Had our villages, towns, districts and states been self-reliant, problems facing us would not have been of such a magnitude as is evident today. But moving from darkness toward light is a human trait. Amidst multiple challenges, it gives me joy to see extensive deliberation in the country on *Aatmnirbhar Bharat*, a self-reliant India. People now have begun to take it as a movement of their own. Our countrymen are picking up the reins of leadership of this mission in their own hands. Many people have mentioned the fact that they have made complete lists of the products being manufactured in their vicinity. These people are now buying only these local products, promoting “Vocal for Local”. In order to encourage “Make in India” everyone is expressing one’s own resolve.

One of our friends from Bihar, ShrimanHimanshu has written to me on the Nammo App that he dreams of the day when India reduces imports to the bare minimum...be it the import of Petrol, Diesel, fuels, electronic items, urea or even edible oils. I understand his sentiments. There are many products that find their way into the country from outside resulting in wasteful expenditure on part of the honest Tax payers. Their substitutes can easily be manufactured in India.

Sudeep from Assam has written to me that he trades in local bamboo products crafted by women. He has decided that in the next two years, he will transform his bamboo products into a global brand. I firmly believe that the *Atmanirbhar Bharat* campaign will take the country to greater heights in this decade.

My dear countrymen, during the ongoing Corona crisis, I spoke to many world leaders. I would like to share a secret today- I’ve observed that

during deliberations between world leaders; a lot of interest is evinced in Yog and Ayurved. Many leaders asked me if Yog and Ayurved could be of help in this calamitous period of Corona.

Friends, 'International Yoga Day' is arriving soon. As 'Yoga' is getting integrated with people's lives, the awareness about their health, is also continuously on the rise among them. During the present Corona pandemic it is being observed from Hollywood to Haridwar that, while staying at home, people are paying serious attention to 'Yoga'. People everywhere want to know more about 'Yoga' and along with it 'Ayurveda' and adopt it as a way of life. Many people, who have never practiced yoga, have either joined online yoga classes or are also learning yoga through online videos. Truly, 'Yoga' is good for community, immunity and unity!

Friends, during the present Corona pandemic, Yoga becomes all the more important, because this virus affects our respiratory system maximally. In yoga, there are many types of Pranayama that strengthen the respiratory system; the beneficial effects of which we have been witnessing for long. These are time tested techniques, which have their own distinct significance. Most people will be familiar with 'Kapalbhati' and 'Anulom-Vilom Pranayam'. But there are many other forms of Pranayamas like 'Bhastrika', 'Sheetali', 'Bhramari' etc, which also have many benefits. By the way, the Ministry of AYUSH has also done a unique experiment this time to increase the practice of yoga in your life. The Ministry of AYUSH has started its International Video Blog competition entitled 'My Life, My Yoga'.

Not only Indians, but people from all over the world can participate in this competition. To participate in this International Video Blog competition, you will have to make a three-minute video and upload it. In this video, you have to show performing Yoga, or Asana, that you usually do and also tell about the changes that have taken place

in your life through yoga. I request all of you too participate in this competition, and through this novel way, be a part of the International Yoga Day also.

Friends, in our country, for decades, crores of impoverished citizens have been living their lives engulfed by the constant concern- what will happen if they fall ill...to seek medical treatment or worry about earning bread for the family? Realizing this distress, the 'Ayushman Bharat' scheme was launched about one and a half years ago to ameliorate this constant worry. A few days ago, the number of beneficiaries of 'Ayushman Bharat' scheme crossed over one crore. More than one crore patients implies that more than one crore families of our country have been served. Do you know what more than one crore patients means? It means the cumulative population of two Norways and two Singapores have been provided free treatment in such a short time.

If the poor had to pay for the treatment post hospitalization, had they not received free treatment, according to a rough estimate, more than rupees 14 thousand crores would have been required to be paid out of their own pockets. The 'Ayushman Bharat' scheme has saved spending this huge amount of money belonging to the poor. I congratulate not only the beneficiaries of 'Ayushman Bharat' but also all the doctors, nurses and medical staff who treated patients under this scheme. An important feature with the 'Ayushman Bharat' scheme is its portability facility. This portability of the scheme has also helped to paint the country in the color of unity, which means, an underprivileged person from Bihar will get the same medical facility in Karnataka, which he would have got in his home state. Similarly, if a deprived person from Maharashtra is in need of medical treatment then he would get the same treatment facility in Tamil Nadu. Due to this scheme, the underprivileged in any area where the system of health is weak are able to seek the best medical treatment in any corner of the country.

Friends, you will be surprised to know that 80 percent of the one crore beneficiaries hail from the rural areas of the nation. About 50 percent of

these beneficiaries are our mothers and sisters and daughters. And most of these beneficiaries were suffering from diseases which could not be treated with standard medicines. Of these, 70 percent people have had surgical intervention. You can guess how these people have got rid of their trouble.

Kelansang, a six-year-old child in Chura-Chandpur, Manipur, has also got a new lease of life from the Ayushman scheme. Kelansang suffered from severe brain disease at such a tender age. Kelansang's father, a daily wage laborer, and the mother working as a weaver faced a situation where it was becoming very difficult to seek treatment for their child. But due to the 'Ayushman Bharat' scheme now, their son received free treatment. AmurthaValli of Puducherry had a similar experience. For her also, 'Ayushman Bharat' scheme appeared as a saviour! AmurthaValli's husband had tragically died of a heart attack. Her 27-year-old son Jeeva also had heart disease and Doctors had suggested surgery for Jeeva, but, for Jeeva, a daily wage laborer, it was near impossible to get such a large operation done on his own earnings. However, AmurthaValli registered her son in the 'Ayushman Bharat' scheme, and nine days later son Jeeva had heart surgery performed on him.

Friends, I have only narrated a meagre three to four incidents but then there are more than one crore stories linked with 'Ayushman Bharat'. These stories are of live people and of our own families who have been salvaged from suffering. I request you, whenever you get time, you must definitely converse with a person who has benefitted from his treatment under the 'Ayushman Bharat' scheme. You will see that when an underprivileged steps out of the circle of the disease, you can witness in him a new vigour to combat poverty. And I want to tell the honest Tax payer of our country that the credit for happiness and satisfaction derived by the beneficiaries treated free under the 'Ayushman Bharat' scheme makes you the rightful stakeholder of the benefic deed, our honest tax payer also deserves the *Punya*, the fruit of this altruistic deed.

My dear countrymen, on one hand we are busy combating the Corona pandemic whereas on the other hand, we were recently confronted with natural calamity in certain parts of Eastern India. During the last few weeks, we have seen the havoc wreaked by Super Cyclone Amfan in West Bengal and Odisha. Many houses were razed by the storm. Farmers also suffered heavy losses. I went to take stock of the situation last week to Odisha and West Bengal. The courage and bravery with which the people of West Bengal and Odisha have faced the ordeal is commendable. In this hour of crisis, the country also stands in unison with the people of these two states in every manner whatsoever!

Friends, on the one side where Eastern India is facing cyclonic calamity; on the other many parts of the country have been affected by locust attacks. These attacks again remind us of the great damage this small creature can inflict! The locust attack lasts for several days and affects a large area. Be it at the level of the Government of India, State Government, Agriculture Department or Administration, all are involved using modern techniques to not only help the farmers but also lessen the loss accruing due to this crisis. And attention is being paid to new inventions, and I am sure that together not only will we be able to battle out this crisis that is looming on our agricultural sector, but also manage to salvage our crops.

My dear countrymen, a few days later, on 5<sup>th</sup> June, the entire world will celebrate 'World Environment Day'. The theme for this year's 'World Environment Day' is Bio Diversity. This theme is especially pertinent in the current circumstances. During Lockdown in the last few weeks the pace of life may have slowed down a bit but it has also given us an opportunity to introspect upon the rich diversity of nature or biodiversity around us. Much of the avian fauna had sort of disappeared due to sound and air pollution, and now after years people can once again listen to their melodic chirping in their homes.

There are also reports from many places of uninhibited behavioural patterns of animals. You must have read and seen these clips in social media just like I have. Many people are commenting, writing and sharing pictures that they are now able to see the hills far away from their homes, are able to see the sparkle of distant lights. By gazing at these pictures, a pledge must have arisen in the hearts of many of us – can we preserve scenes like these forever? These images have also inspired people to do something for nature. For ensuring that the rivers remain clean, animals and birds have the right to live freely and the sky remains pollution free, we must derive inspiration to live life in harmony with nature.

My dear countrymen, we repeatedly hear the refrain that 'Water is life! If there is water there is a tomorrow', but we have a responsibility towards water as well. We have to save Rain water. Every drop has to be saved! How do we save rainwater in each and every village? The traditional conservation methods are in the form of very simple remedies, and employing these we can tap the water. If the water is retained for five days or a week, not only will it quench the thirst of mother earth, it will seep into the ground, and the same percolated water will become endowed with the power of life and therefore, in this rainy season, all of us should strive to save water, conserve water.

My dear countrymen, a clean environment is directly an integral part of our lives, and of our children's future too. Therefore, we have to ponder over this issue on individual level as well. I request you to serve nature on this 'Environment Day' by planting some trees and making some resolutions so that we can forge a daily relationship with nature. Yes! Summer is on the rise, so do not forget to facilitate water for the birds.

Friends, all of us also have to bear in mind that after such austere penance, and after so many hardships, the country's deft handling of the situation should not go in vain. We must not let this fight weaken. Becoming careless or lackadaisical can not be an option. The fight against Corona is still equally serious!

You, your family, may still face grave danger from Corona. We have to save the life of every human being, therefore, distancing of two yards, face masks and washing of hands are all those precautions that are to be meticulously followed in the same manner as we have been observing them so far. I am sure that you will take these precautions for yourself, your loved ones and for your country. With this assurance, my best wishes for your good health. We will meet in another episode of 'Mann Ki Baat' next month with many new topics.

Thank you

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