

**Mann ki Baat ( Episode:13)**

My dear countrymen, Namaskar! Mann Ki Baat has now attained the halfway mark in its journey for the year 2020. During this period, we touched upon a multitude of subjects. Naturally, much of our conversation revolved around the global pandemic; the calamity that confronted the human race but, I have been noticing these days, an endless topic of discussion among people is, “when will this year go by!” Phone conversations tend to begin with the lament, “why is this year moving on so sluggishly?” People are writing, conversing with friends on how the year is not good. Some of them are expressing that 2020 is not auspicious. People just want the year to be over, one way or the other.

Friends, there are times when I feel why it is so! It is possible that there are reasons behind such remarks. Just 6-7 months ago, little did we know about the catastrophe that Corona is, nor had one expected the fight to go on this long! As if one calamity weren't enough, the country has had to face an unending slew of challenges, day after day. A few days ago, our east coast had to face the fury of cyclone Amphan; on the West coast it was cyclone Nisarg. In many a state, our farmer brothers and sisters had to bear the brunt of swarming locusts.... if nothing else, many parts of the country have

been witnessing intermittent earthquakes. Amidst all these, the country has had to deal with the designs of some of our neighbours. As a matter of fact, rare are the occasions when one gets to hear of adversities of this kind that too simultaneously. We have come to a stage where people are linking even minor incidents to these challenges. Friends, adversities do descend upon us; calamities do confront us.... but the question is – should they lead us into the belief that the year 2020 is not good? Is it rational to presume on the basis of the first half that the entire year would be so? Not at all, my dear countrymen, absolutely not. In a given year, challenges could vary between one and say, fifty; the number does not determine the goodness of that year. Historically, India has always emerged brighter and stronger, ensuring victory over all kinds of disasters and challenges. For centuries, myriad tyrants invaded India pushing her to the edge of such an abyss of adversities that people once used to feel that the very idea, the fabric of Bharat would be wiped out: her culture would be annihilated. But India overcame the scourge, and more gloriously so.

Friends, we are familiar with our adage- ‘Creation is permanent.... creation is continuous.’ I am reminded of a few lines of a song.

*YEH KALKAL CHALCHAL BEHTI, KYA KEHTA GANGA DHARA?  
YUG YUG SE BEHTA AATA, YEH PUNYA PARWAAH HAMARA.*

Gurgling and burbling, what do the ripples of the Ganga say?

For eons and eons, unstoppable has been our mighty divine flow.

The song further says,

*KYA USKO ROK SAKENGE, MITNE WALE MIT JAYIEN,*

*KANKAD-PATHAR KI HASTI, KYA BADHA BANKAR AAYE.*

Who has the might to stem the steady flow....

many sank without a trace!

Can pebbles and stones,

Ever be an impediment to the divine grace?

India too, on the one hand, witnessed a series of colossal adversities;

on the other, numerous forms of creations kept evolving,

overcoming hurdles. Literature saw resurgence, new researches

emerged, new concepts were propounded. This means, even in the

worst of times, the process of creation went on undeterred in every

field, enriching our culture, leading to our country's progress. India

has always transformed adversities into stepping stones to success.

With the same sentiment, we have to move on, march on, in today's

troubled times. If you advance, in step with 130 crore countrymen,

this year will prove to be a record setter, path breaker on new fronts

for the country. This very year the country will attain newer goals,

reaching newer heights with all new wings. I firmly believe in the collective might of 130 crore countrymen.....all of you...I have firm belief in the glorious heritage of the country.

My dear countrymen, irrespective of the magnitude of the calamity confronting us, India's *sanskar*...way of life inspires one and all to serve selflessly. The way India extended a helping hand to the world during difficult times, it has reinforced India's role in ushering in peace and development. This period also saw the world realising India's spirit of universal brotherhood...at the same time it also noticed India's commitment and might when it comes to safeguarding her sovereignty and territorial integrity. Those who cast an evil eye on Indian soil in Ladakh have got a befitting response. India honours the spirit of friendship...she is also capable of giving an appropriate response to any adversary, without shying away. Our brave soldiers have proven that they will not let anyone cast an evil eye on the glory and honour of Mother India.

Friends, the entire country comes together in paying tributes to the bravery of our *jawans* who attained martyrdom in Ladakh. The entire country bows to them in reverence, with gratitude. Just like their family members, every Indian painfully regrets the loss. The inner sense of pride that families feel on the supreme sacrifice of their

brave sons...their sentiment for the country, constitutes the true power, the might of the country. You might have seen parents of martyrs referring to sending other sons, other young family members too, to join the army. The words of the father of Shaheed Kundan Kumar of Bihar, keep echoing. He had mentioned sending even his grandsons to the army to defend the country. This spirit permeates across all martyr families. Truly, the sense of sacrifice displayed by these family members is worthy of veneration. The resolve with which our jawans made the supreme sacrifice for the security of Mother India, should be the aim of our lives....and this applies to each and every one of us. Our pursuits and endeavours should be in the same direction...we should strive towards enhancing the country's capabilities and capacities in safeguarding our borders. A self-reliant India would be a tribute to our martyrs in the truest, deepest sense. Rajni ji has written to me from Assam. She says, after watching what happened in eastern Ladakh, she has taken a vow...and the vow is that she will buy only 'local'....and for the sake of 'local', she will also be vocal. I am receiving messages on these lines from every corner of the country. Many have expressed through their letters that they have adopted this very path. Similarly, Mohan Ramamurthy from Madurai, writes that he wishes India to be self-reliant in the defence sector.

Friends, before independence, in the realm of the defence sector, our country was ahead of many countries in the world. There used to be a multitude of ordnance factories. Many countries that lagged behind us then, are ahead of us now. After independence, we should have made efforts in the defence sector, taking advantage of our prior experience.... we did not. But today, in the fields of defence and technology, India is relentlessly endeavouring to advance on those fronts.... India is taking strides towards self-reliance.

Friends, no mission can be successfully achieved without people's participation. And that is why, on the path towards a self-reliant India, as a citizen, our collective resolve, commitment and support is necessary; rather imperative. When you buy 'local', become vocal for local you play a role in strengthening the country. This, too, in its own way, is service to one's country. Whatever be your profession; wherever, there is ample scope in the realm of service to the country. Keeping in mind the requirement of the country, whatever you do, comes under this very spirit of service. And this very spirit on your part lends strength to the country, one way or the other. We should also remember that the stronger our country is, the possibilities of peace in the world will proportionately be bolstered.

It is said,

*VIDYA VIVADAYA DHANAM MADAAAY, SHAKTIH PARESHAAN  
PARIPEEDNAYA*

*KHALASYA SADHOH VIPAREETAM ETAT, GYAANAY DAANAY CH  
RAKSHANAY.*

Which means, a person who is wicked by nature, uses education to foster conflict, wealth for conceit and strength to trouble others.

Whereas, a gentleman uses education for knowledge, wealth for helping and strength for protecting. India has always used her might, echoing the same sentiment. India's solemn resolve is to safeguard her honour and sovereignty. India's aim is – a self-reliant India.

India's tradition is -trust and friendship. India's spirit is brotherhood. We shall keep moving ahead abiding by these principles.

My dear countrymen, in these times of the corona crisis, the country has moved out of the lockdown phase to the unlock phase. During this unlock period, one will have to focus deeply on two points- defeating corona and strengthening the economy and bolstering it. Friends, during the unlock period, we have to stay more vigilant compared to the lockdown period. Only your alertness can save you from corona. Always, remember, if you do not wear a mask, do not observe the two-yard social distancing norms or do not take other precautions, you are putting others at risk besides yourselves, especially the elderly and children at home. Hence, I urge all countrymen...and I repeatedly do so...do not be negligent...take care of yourselves and others too.

Friends, during this unlock phase, many other things are getting unlocked, which had hitherto, shackled the country for decades. For years our mining sector was in a state of lockdown. The decision to allow commercial auction has altered the scenario completely. Just a few days ago, historic reforms in the space sector were brought in. Through these reforms, the sector which was in a state of lockdown for years was set free. This will not only pace up the movement towards self-reliant India, it will also boost up the advancement of technology in India. If you glance at our agricultural sector, you will notice that many aspects of this sector too were in a state of lockdown for decades. This sector too has now been unlocked. This, on the one hand grants freedom to farmers to sell their produce to anyone they wish to, anywhere; on the other hand, this has paved the way for enhanced loans. There are many such sectors in which, amidst, all crises, our country is opening up new avenues of development through historic decisions.

My dear countrymen, every month, we come across stories in the News that touch our hearts. They remind us how every Indian is earnestly ready to help one another, to the best extent possible, according to one's capacity.

I got an opportunity to read one such inspiring story from Arunachal Pradesh on the media. Mirem village of Siang district

attempted a unique feat, that has become an inspiration for India. Most residents of this village stay elsewhere working for their livelihood. During the Corona pandemic, they were returning to the village. The villagers, on noticing that, decided to make arrangements for their quarantine, outside the village, in advance. They came together and erected 14 temporary huts at a short distance from the village, deciding that when those people would reach the village, they would first be quarantined for a few days in these huts. The huts were equipped with toilets, water, and electricity, including essential items for daily needs. It is not surprising that this awareness and collective effort on the part of village folk of Mirem attracted widespread attention and accolades.

Friends, it is said in our scriptures -

*Swabhavam: na Jahati eva, sadhuh: aapadratopi san I*

*Karpoor: Pawak saprishta: Saurabham labhteetrama ||*

Which means, just like camphor does not abandon its fragrance even while burning in fire, the virtuous do not forsake their qualities or their true nature while facing a disaster. Today, the labour force of our country, our worker brethren are an embodiment of this mantra. You can witness for yourself - these days there are so many stories of

our migrant workers who have become a source of inspiration for the entire country. In U.P. the migrant workers who returned to the village of Barabanki took an initiative to return the Kalyani River to its pristine, natural form. Upon witnessing this resolve to salvage the river, the farmers and other people from nearby areas also got enthused. After returning to their respective villages, whilst spending their mandatory time in isolation or quarantine centres, the manner in which our worker brethren have employed their skills to transform the conditions around them is amazing! But, friends, there are many such stories from lakhs of villages in our country, which still have not reached us.

As is the nature of our country, I firmly believe, friends that many such incidents must have occurred in your village or in your vicinity. If such an incident has come to your attention, you must write an account of such an inspiring event to me. In this time of calamity, these positive events, these stirring stories will inspire the others.

My dear countrymen, the corona virus has definitely changed the way we live. I was reading a very interesting article in the Financial Times published from London. It was written that, during the Corona pandemic, the demand for spices including ginger, turmeric and other spices has increased not only in Asia but also in America. The entire world is focused on increasing their immunity at this time, and

these immunity enhancing ingredients are linked with our country. We should be able to communicate about their speciality in such easy and simple language to the people of the world, that they can understand it easily and we can make our own contribution towards making a healthier planet.

My dear countrymen, if there would not have been a crisis like the Corona pandemic we mightn't have pondered questions like-, What is life? Why there is life? How is our life? These are points we may have not thought of! This is the very reason why many people have been living under mental stress. And, on the other hand, people also shared with me how, during lockdown, they have re-discovered the small facets of happiness in our lives. Many people have sent me their experiences of playing traditional in-door games and revelling with the entire family.

Friends, our country has a very rich heritage of traditional sports. For example, you may have heard the name of a game called "Pachisi". This game is played as "Pallanguli" in Tamil Nadu, is called "Ali Guli Mane" in Karnataka and is known as "VamanGuntlu" in Andhra Pradesh. It is a type of game employing strategy in which a board is used with many pits, in which the players have to catch hold of the pellet or seed. It is said that this game has spread from South India to Southeast Asia and then to the rest of the world.

Friends, today every child knows about the game of snakes and ladders. But, do you know that this is also another traditional Indian game, called “Moksha Patam” or “Parampadam”. We also have another traditional game in our country called “Gutta.” This game is popular with elders and the children alike and involves simply getting hold of five small stones of the same size and Behold! - you are ready to play Gutta! You’ve to throw one stone into the air and while that stone is in the air, you have to grab the remaining stones on the ground. Usually there isn’t a need of any major contraptions in the indoor games prevalent in our country. Someone just brings along a chalk or a stone, draws a few lines with it on the ground and a game is ready to be played! In games requiring a dice, improvisation is made with cowrie shells or tamarind seeds.

Friends, I do know that today while I’m narrating about these games many must have returned to their childhood! Many of you must have got nostalgic about your childhood days. I reiterate - why have you forgotten those days? Why have you forgotten those games? My request to the grandparents and the elders of the house, if you do not handover these games to the new generation, then who shall do it? Now that it has come to studying online, in order to strike a balance and also to get rid of online gaming we must do so for the

sake of our children. Herein also lies a novel and a strong opportunity for our start-ups and even for our younger generation.

Let us present the traditional Indoor Games of India in a new and attractive avatar. Those mobilizing the resources pertaining to these games, the suppliers and start-ups associated with these traditional indoor games will become very popular, and, we have to remember that, our Indian sports are also local, and we have already pledged to be vocal for local. And, my little friends, to the children of every household, and my young friends, today, I am making a special request. Children, will you accept my request? See, I appeal that you must do one thing that I am saying - whenever you have a little time on your hands, ask your parents to use the mobile and record the interview of your Dada-Dadi, Nana-Nani or whosoever elder in the house! You would have seen journalists conducting interviews on TV, you also do a similar kind of interview and record it on the mobile! And what will be the questions you would be asking them? Let me give you some suggestions.

You must ask them about their lifestyle as children, what sports they played, sometimes if they went to the theatre? Or went to the cinema? Sometimes if they had gone to their maternal uncle's house during holidays? Or visit a field or a barn? How they celebrated the festivals? There are many a topics upon which you can ask questions.

They too will like reminiscing about life 40 to 50 years or say 60 years ago and it will give them a lot of joy! And for you too it would be great fun to learn about India 40-50 years ago, how the area was where you presently live? How were the nearby precincts and what the ways and customs of the people then were? You will get to learn and know about these things quite easily. You will find for yourself that it will be fun and it can become a good video album, a very invaluable treasure for the family!

Friends, it is true that an autobiography or biography is a very useful tool to get closer to the veracity of history. You too while chatting with your elders will be able to understand about their times, their childhood and the facets of their youth. This is an excellent opportunity that the elders will get to narrate about their childhood and about their period to the children of their home.

Friends, Monsoon has now reached large parts of the country and meteorologists are very enthusiastic about the rains and are full of hope. If the rains are bountiful, our farmers will reap a bumper harvest and the environment will also be green. In the rainy season, nature also rejuvenates itself. As human beings exploit natural resources, nature in a way, during rains, replenishes and restocks them. But, this refilling is possible only if we support our mother earth and carry out our responsibilities. A little effort by us helps

nature and environment quite significantly. Many of our countrymen are putting extraordinary efforts in this endeavour.

In Mandavali, Karnataka there is an 80-85 year old elder Kamegowda. Kamegowda ji is an ordinary farmer, albeit possessing an extraordinary personality. He has achieved a personal feat that will leave anyone awestruck! Kamegowda ji, aged 80-85 takes out his animals for grazing but at the same time he has taken it upon himself to build new ponds in his area. He wants to overcome the problem of water scarcity in his area; therefore, in the work of water conservation, he is engaged in the work of constructing small ponds. You will be surprised that an octogenarian like Kamegowda ji, till now, has dug 16 ponds, through his hard work and the sweat of his brow. It is possible that the ponds he has constructed may not be very big but then his efforts are huge. Today, the entire area has got a new lease of life on account of these ponds

Friends, Vadodara in Gujarat is also an inspirational example. Here, the district administration and the local residents together organized an interesting campaign. Due to this campaign, today rain water harvesting has been initiated in one thousand schools of Vadodara. Consequently, it is estimated that, on an average about 100 million litres of water is being conserved annually.

Friends, during this rainy season we should also take the initiative to think and do something similar to protect nature and to protect the environment. Just like at many places, preparations would have begun for Ganesh Chaturthi. Can we try this time to make eco-friendly Ganesh statues and worship only them? Can we forego the worship of such idols, which, after being immersed in rivers or ponds, become a hazard for the water and the living organisms in it? I firmly believe that you will respond to my call. Amidst this, we should be on guard from various ailments that surface with Monsoon. During the corona pandemic, we have to protect ourselves from these diseases also. Keep using Ayurvedic medicines, herbal decoction and hot water to stay healthy.

My dear countrymen, today on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June, India is paying homage to one of her former Prime Ministers, who led the country through a critical phase. This day marks the commencement of the birth centenary year of our former Prime Minister Shri PV Narasimha Rao ji. When we talk about Shri PV Narasimha Rao ji, naturally, his image that emerges before us is that of a political leader, but it is also true that he was a polyglot! He used to speak many Indian and foreign languages. He was rooted in Indian values; and had knowledge of western literature and science as well.

He was one of the most experienced leaders of India. But, there is another aspect of his life which is remarkable that we should

know. Friends, Narasimha Rao ji had joined the freedom movement in his teens and when the Nizam of Hyderabad refused permission to sing Vande Mataram, he took an active part in the movement against the Nizam and at that time, he was only **17** years old. From a young age, Shriman Narasimha Rao was ever onward in raising his voice against injustice. He left no stone unturned to raise his voice.

Narasimha Rao ji also understood history very well. His rise from a very simple background, his emphasis on education, his eagerness to learn, and, along with all these qualities, his leadership ability are all memorable. I urge you - in the birth centenary year of Narasimha Rao ji, let all of us, try to know as much as possible about his life and thoughts. I once again pay my tributes to him.

My dear countrymen, in this ' Mann Ki Baat', many topics were discussed. Next time we meet, some more new topics will be touched upon. You must keep on sending your messages and innovative ideas to me. We shall all move forward together, and the days to come will be even more positive, as I said in the beginning, we will not only do better in this year i.e. **2020**, but we will move forward and the country will touch new heights. I am confident that **2020** will give a new direction to India in this decade. With this belief, you too should march forward, stay healthy and stay positive. With these good wishes, I thank you very much.

Namaskar

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