

## **Mann ki Baat**

### **Episode 17 MKB 2.0**

My dear countrymen, Namaskar. Today is the festival of Vijaydashami, that is Dussehra. On this auspicious occasion, heartiest greetings to all of you. The festival of Dussehra is one of the triumph of truth over untruth. But, simultaneously, it is also the festival of victory of patience over crises. Today, all of you are carrying on with immense patience, celebrating the festival with restraint....and hence, in our ongoing fight, our victory too is assured. Earlier, people used to throng Durga Pandals for a Darshan of Maa. The atmosphere would be almost that of a carnival...but it was not possible this time. Earlier, grand fairs used to be held on the occasion of Dussehra...but in present times, they took on a different form. The festival of Ramleela too was one of its major attractions...but now, that too has been restricted to some extent. Earlier during Navratra, the notes of Garba of Gujarat would reverberate all over....this time all grand events have been curtailed. Many more festivals are on the way in the days to come. There is Eid, Sharad Pournima, Valmiki Jayanti, followed by Dhanteras, Diwali, Bhai dooj, the Pooja of Chatthi Maiyya and the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev ji.....during this crisis-laden period of Corona, we have to exercise patience, observe restraint.

Friends, when we talk about festivals and make preparations for them, the first thought that strikes us is when to go to the market, what all has to be purchased. Children especially are enthusiastic about it, wondering what they would receive this time in the festival season. The fervour of festivals and the glitter and sparkle of the marketplace are interconnected. But this time when you go shopping, do remember our

resolve of 'Vocal for Local'. While purchasing items from the market, we have to accord priority to local products.

Friends, amid the gaiety of festivities, we should spare a thought for the lockdown period. During the lockdown, we closely came to know about those members of society, without whom our lives would be miserable. Sanitation workers, brothers and sisters working as domestic helps, local vegetable vendors, milkmen, security guards....we have now felt the significance of their roles in our lives in a better way. During the moment of crisis, they were with you; they stood by all of us. Now, during the festivities, amid the rejoicing, we must take them along. I earnestly urge you to ensure, in whatever way, in making them a part of your celebrations. Treat them as members of your own family.....you will see for yourself how your joy rises by leaps and bounds.

Friends, we must also think of our braveheart soldiers who are firmly stationed on our borders in the line of duty, even during these festive times...all in the service and security of Mother India. We have to celebrate our festivals bearing them in mind. We have to light a lamp at home in honour of these brave sons and daughters of Mother India. I would also like to assure our brave soldiers that despite they being away at the borders, the entire country is with them, wishing well for them. I also salute the sacrifice of those families, whose sons and daughters are on the border today. I express gratitude to each and every person who is away from home and family on account of discharging duty to the country in one way or the other.

My dear countrymen, today when we are going vocal for local, the whole world are also becoming a fan of our local products. Many of our local products have the potential of becoming global. One such example is Khadi. Khadi has remained a symbol of simplicity over a long period of time but now our khadi is getting known as an eco friendly fabric. In

terms of health, this is a body friendly fabric, an all weather fabric and now it has also become a fashion statement.

Not only is the popularity of khadi rising it is also being produced in many places of the world. There is a place in Mexico called Oaxaca, there are many villages in this area where the local villagers weave khadi. Today the khadi of this place has gained popularity by the name Oaxaca khaadi. How khadi reached Oaxaca is no less interesting. In fact a young person of Oaxaca, Mark Brown once watched a movie on Mahatma Gandhi. Brown got so inspired by watching this movie on Bapu that he visited Bapu's ashram in India, understood him and learnt about him in depth. It was then, that Brown realised that khadi was not just a cloth; it was a complete way of life. Brown was deeply moved by the way khadi was intertwined with the rural economy and self sufficiency. It was here that Brown resolved to work on khadi on his return to Mexico. He introduced the villagers of Oaxaca in Mexico to khadi and trained them. And now Oaxaca khadi has become a brand. The website of this project bears the inscription 'the symbol of Dharma in motion'. You can also find a very interesting interview of Marc Brown on this website. He narrates that initially the people were wary of khadi but ultimately they got interested and a market got ready for it. He states that these are matters related to Ram Rajya, when you fulfill the needs of the people, the people start connecting with you.

Friends, this time on Gandhi Jayanti the khadi store in Cannaught Place at Delhi witnessed purchases of over one crore rupees in just a day. Similarly the khadi masks have also become very popular during Corona. Self help groups and other such institutions are making khadi masks in many places of the country. There is a woman Suman Devi Ji in Barabanki of U.P. Suman ji, alongwith her friends of a self help group started making Khadi masks.

Gradually more and more women started joining her and now together they are producing thousands of khadi masks. Our local products have this beauty that often a complete philosophy is enshrined in them.

My dear countrymen, when we take pride in our own things, the world's curiosity around them also grows – Just like our spirituality, Yoga, Ayurveda has attracted the whole world. Many of our indigenous sports also attract attention the world over. Nowadays our Mallakhambh too is gaining popularity in many countries. When Chinmay Patankar and Pragya Patankar decided to teach Mallakhambh out of their home in America, little did they know how successful it would be. Mallakhambh training centers are running at many locations across America. A large number of American Youth are joining and learning Mallakhambh. Be it Germany, Poland or Malaysia - Mallakhambh is becoming popular in around 20 other countries. And now, its World Championship has also been started which sees participants from many countries. Ancient India had many such sports which would bring about extraordinary growth within oneself - they give new dimensions to our mind and body balance. However, probably our young friends of the new generation are not that acquainted with Mallakhambh. Do search more about it on the internet and see for yourself.

Friends, our country has many forms of martial arts. I would like our young friends to know more about them learn them and over the course of time bring about innovations in the same. When there are no major challenges to face in one's life, the best of one's personality also fails to surface – hence always keep on challenging yourselves.

My dear countrymen, it is said that learning is growing. Today in Mann ki baat I will introduce you to a person who has a novel passion. This is the passion of sharing the joys of reading and writing with others. He is Pon Mariyappan from Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu. Thoothukudi is also known as the Pearl City. Once it was an important centre of the Pandyan Empire. My friend from this town Pon Marriyappan is associated with the profession of hair cutting and runs a salon. A very small salon. He has done an exemplary and an inspiring piece of work. He has converted a small portion of his salon into a library. If a customer, while

waiting for his turn, reads something from the library and writes on that, Pon Mariyappan, offers him a discount.....isn't it interesting?

Come lets go to Thoothukudi ...lets talk to Pon Mariyyapan ji

P.M. Pon Mariyyapan ji Vannakaam, How are you?

Pon : Respected Prime Minister, Vanakkam

P.M: Vanakkam vanakm, how did you get the idea of this library?

Pon Mariyappan: I have studied up to class 8<sup>th</sup>. I could not further my studies beyond that due to family circumstances. When I see educated people, I feel something amiss in me. So, I thought why not establish a library, which would benefit many people, this became an inspiration for me.

Prime Minister: Which book do you like a lot ?

Pon Mariyappan: 'Thirukkural' is very dear to me.

Prime Minister: I felt very happy talking to you. Best wishes to you.

Pon Mariyappan: I too am feeling extremely happy while talking to respected Prime Minister.

Prime Minister: Best wishes

Pon Mariyappan: Thank you Prime Minister Ji.

Prime Minister: Thank you.

We just spoke to Pon Mariyappan ji. See how he dresses people's hair, he gives them an opportunity to dress up their lives too. It felt nice to learn about the popularity of Thirukkural. All of you too heard about the popularity of Thirukkural. Today, Thirukkural is available in all languages of India. Given an opportunity, one must read it. In a way, it is a guide for life.

Friends, but you will be happy to know that all over India there are several people who get immense happiness spreading knowledge. These are people who are always eager to get everyone inspired to study. A teacher from Singrauli in Madhya Pradesh, Usha Dubey ji in fact, has turned a scooty into a mobile library. Every day she goes to some village or the other with her mobile library and teaches children there. Children lovingly call her 'kitabon waali Didi', the elder sister with books. This year in August, at Rayo village in Nirjuli of Arunachal Pradesh, a Self Help Library has been set up. In fact, when Meena Gurung and Dewang Hosayi from this village learnt that there was no library in the area they extended a hand for its funding. You will be surprised to know that there is no membership for this library. Anyone can borrow books for two weeks. One has to return them after reading. This library is open all seven days, 24 hours. Parents around are quite happy that their children are busy reading books... especially when schools too have started online classes. In Chandigarh, Sandeep Kumar who runs an NGO has set up a mobile library in a mini van, through which, poor children are given books to read free of cost. Along with this I know two organisations in Bhav Nagar, Gujarat which are doing marvellous work. Of these one is Vikas Vartul Trust. This organisation is very helpful to students who are preparing for competitive exams. This trust has been working since 1975 and provides 140 magazines, along with 5000 books. 'Pustak Parab' is a similar organization. This is an innovative project which provides literary books along with other books, free of cost. In this library, books related to spirituality, ayurvedic treatment and many other subjects also are included. If you are aware of other such initiatives, I urge you to certainly share that on social media. These examples are not limited just to reading books or opening libraries, but are also symbolic of that spirit of the New India, where in every field, people of every stratum are

adopting innovative ways for the development of the society. It has been mentioned in the Geeta-

*Na hi gyanen sadrishyam pavitramih vidyate.*

Meaning, there is nothing as sacred as knowledge in this world. Those who spread knowledge, who take such noble initiatives, I commend all such great people from the core of my heart.

My dear countrymen, in a few days we will celebrate Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel's birth anniversary, the 31<sup>st</sup> of October as 'National Unity Day'. Earlier too, we have talked in detail on Sardar Patel in Mann Ki Baat. We have talked about the many dimensions of his great personality. You will come across few people whose personality has so many elements- depth of thoughts, moral courage, political genius, in depth knowledge of the field of agriculture and spirit of commitment to national unity. Do you know of one thing that showcases the sense of humour of Sardar Pate? Just visualize the image of the Iron-man who was interacting simultaneously with kings and royalty, managing the mass movements of revered Bapu, and also fighting against the British... and in all these his sense of humour too was in full form. Bapu had said that the jestful banter of Sardar Patel made him laugh so much that he would get cramps in the stomach. This happened not just once but several times during the day. In it there is a lesson for us too... keep alive your sense of humour irrespective of how difficult the situations are, not only will this keep us at ease; we will be able to find solutions to our problems. This is exactly what Sardar sahib did.

My dear countrymen, Sardar Patel devoted his entire life for the unity of the country. He integrated the Indian public with the Freedom Movement. He endeavored to connect the issues of farmers with

Independence. He worked for the integration of the Princely States with our nation. He was invoking the mantra of 'unity in diversity' in the mind of every Indian.

Friends, today through our speech, our bearing and our actions, every moment we have to carry forward the entire spectrum of values that unite us... so that a sense of ease and belongingness is inculcated in the mind of the citizen living in one part of the country for the citizen living in the other. Our ancestors have made these efforts incessantly for centuries. Now, for example His Holiness Adi Shankaracharya was born in Kerala and established four important mathas in all four directions of India... Badrikashram in the North, Puri in the East, Sringeri in the South and Dwarka in the West. He also traveled to Srinagar and that is the reason, a 'Shankracharya Hill' exists there.

Pilgrimage in itself knits India in a common thread; the chain of Jyotirlingas and Shaktipeethas binds India with the common thread. Our centres of faith established from Tripura to Gujarat and from Jammu and Kashmir to Tamil Nadu, unite us as one. The Bhakti movement became a mass movement throughout India, uniting us through Bhakti, devotion. These elements with the strength of unity have been assimilated in our day to day lives. The various rivers in our country are invoked before each ritual, ranging from the Indus located in the far north to the Kaveri, the lifeline of South India. Often people in our country say or chant while bathing with a hallowed belief, the mantra of unity:

***GangeCheYamuneChaive Godavari Saraswati.  
Narmade Sindhu Kaveri Jale asminn Sannidhim Kuru***

Similarly, the holy sites of Sikhs include 'Nanded Sahib' and 'Patna Sahib' Gurdwaras. Our Sikh Gurus too have enriched the spirit of unity through their lives and noble deeds.

In the last century, in our country, we have had luminaries such as Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar who forged unity among us all through the medium of the Constitution.

Friends,

Unity is Power, Unity is strength,  
Unity is Progress, Unity is Empowerment,  
United we will scale new heights

Although, there have also been forces which continuously try to sow the seeds of suspicion in our minds, and try to divide the country. The country too has given a befitting reply to these ill-intentions every time. We have to constantly try through our creativity and love to bring out the beautiful colors of 'Ek Bharat-Shrestha Bharat' even in the smallest of our tasks! New colors of unity have to be filled in, and every citizen must fill them. In this context, I urge all of you to visit a website - [ekbharat.gov.in](http://ekbharat.gov.in). This website displays our many efforts made to advance our campaign of national integration. It also has an interesting corner – The sentence for the day. In this section, we can learn how to speak a sentence in different languages every day. You can also contribute to this website, for example every state and its culture has different kinds of cuisines. These dishes are made with special local ingredients comprising grains and spices. Can we share the recipe of these local foods along with the names of the local ingredients, on the '*Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat*' website?

What can be a better way to propagate unity and immunity! Friends, on the 31<sup>st</sup> of this month, I will have the opportunity to attend many events

to be held in and around the historic Statue of Unity in Kevadiya...do connect with these.

My dear countrymen, on the 31<sup>st</sup> of October we will also celebrate 'Valmiki Jayanti'. I pay my obeisance to Maharishi Valmiki and extend my heartiest greetings to the countrymen on this special occasion. Maharishi Valmiki's lofty ideals continue to inspire millions of people and provide them strength. He is a beacon of great hope for millions of the impoverished and Dalits... instills hope and trust within them. He says that if anyone has will power, one can achieve anything with ease. It is this will power, which provides the strength to many young people to do extraordinary things.

Maharishi Valmiki emphasized positive thinking - for him, the spirit of service and human dignity were of utmost importance. Maharishi Valmiki's conduct, thoughts and ideals are the inspiration and guiding force for our resolve for a New India. We will always be grateful to Maharishi Valmiki for composing an epic like Ramayana to guide the future generations.

On the 31<sup>st</sup> of October we lost former Prime Minister of India, Smt. Indira Gandhi. I most respectfully pay my tributes to her.

My dear countrymen, today, Pulwama in Kashmir is playing an important role in educating the entire country. Today, when children all over the nation do their homework, or prepare notes, somewhere behind this lies the hard work of the people of Pulwama! The Kashmir Valley meets almost 90% demand for the Pencil Slats, timber casings of the entire country, and of that, a very large share comes from Pulwama. Once upon a time we used to import wood for pencils from abroad, but, now our Pulwama is making the country self-sufficient in the field of pencil making. In fact, these Pencil Slats of Pulwama are reducing the

gaps between states! Chinar wood of the valley has high moisture content and softness, which makes it most suitable for the manufacture of pencils. In Pulwama, Oukhoo is known as the Pencil Village. Here, several manufacturing units of Pencil Slats are located, which provide employment, and, in these units, a large number of women are employed.

Friends, Pulwama gained this recognition when individuals of this place decided to do something new, took risks and dedicated themselves towards it. One such enterprising person is Manzoor Ahmad Alai. Earlier, Manzoor bhai was a simple workman involved in woodcutting. Manzoor bhai wanted to do something new so that his coming generations wouldn't have to live in poverty. He sold his ancestral land and established a unit to manufacture Apple wooden boxes. He was engaged in his small business when he came to know that Poplar wood, Chinar wood is being used in manufacturing pencils. After getting this information, Manzoor bhai channeled his entrepreneurial spirit and started the supply of Poplar wooden boxes to some famous pencil manufacturing units. Manzoor Ji found this to be extremely profitable and his income grew considerably at the same time. With the passage of time, he bought pencil slat manufacturing machinery and started the supply of pencil slats to some of the biggest companies of the country. Today, Manzoor bhai's turnover from this business is in crores and is a source of livelihood for around two hundred people. Today, through Mann Ki Baat, I, on behalf of all countrymen commend Manzoor bhai and the enterprising brothers and sisters of Pulwama along with their families - All of you are making invaluable contribution in educating the young minds of our country.

My dear countrymen, during the lockdown, many instances of technology based service delivery were explored in the country and it is

not that only the big technology and logistic companies are capable of the same. A self help group of women in Jharkhand have accomplished this feat. These women worked to deliver vegetables and fruits to households directly from the fields of the farmers. These women got an app 'Ajivika Farm Fresh' designed through which people could directly order vegetables to be delivered at their homes. Through this initiative, the farmers were ensured of a fair price for their produce and fresh vegetables were also available for the buyers. This idea of 'Ajivika farm fresh' app is gaining a lot of popularity there - fruits and vegetables worth more than 50 Lakhs were delivered by them during the lockdown. Friends, with emerging possibilities in the agriculture sector, more and more youth are now engaging themselves in this field. Atul Patidar of Barwani in Madhya Pradesh has connected four thousand farmers in his area through the digital medium. Through the E-platform farm card of Atul Patidar, farmers are now able to get the essentials of agriculture - such as fertilizer, seeds, pesticide, fungicide etc home delivered - the farmers get what they need at their doorstep. Modern agricultural equipment is also available for hire on this digital platform. Even during lockdown, thousands of packets containing seeds of cotton and vegetables were delivered to farmers through this digital platform. Atul ji and his team are working to impart technological knowhow to the farmers and also teaching them about online payment and procurement.

Friends, recently, one incident in Maharashtra caught my attention. There, one farmer producer company procured corn from the corn producing harvesters. This time, the company paid not just the cost of the corn but also an additional bonus with it. This was a pleasant surprise for the farmers. When the company was asked for the same, they said that under the new farm specific laws framed by Government of India, farmers are able to sell their produce in any part of the country

and are getting good prices for the same. Thus, the company thought of sharing their extra profits with the farmers. The farmers had a right to it and hence the bonus was shared with them. Friends, the bonus amount may be small but this initiative is big. Through this, we come to know that on ground, the new agriculture laws are full of possibilities in favour of the farmers.

My dear countrymen, in today's Mann Ki Baat, I have had the opportunity to bring forth extraordinary stories of my countrymen, the country and the facets of our traditions. Our country is full of talented people. If you too know of any such individual, speak and write about them and share their accomplishments. My best wishes to you and your family for the forthcoming festivals. However, do remember and more so during the festivals - wear your masks, keep washing your hands with soap and maintain two yards of social distance. Friends, we will speak again in next month's Mann Ki Baat.

Many Many thanks.