

MANN KI BAAT – Episode 82

My dear countrymen, Namaskar...namaskar a billion times! And I am saying 'koti-koti namaskar' also since after crossing the 100 crore vaccine doses, the country is surging ahead with a new zeal; renewed energy. The success of our vaccine programme displays the capability of India...manifests the might of our collective endeavour.

Friends, the figure of 100 crore vaccine doses might surely be enormous, but there are lakhs of tiny inspirational and pride-evoking experiences, numerous examples that are associated with it. Many people are asking in their letters to me how, with the commencement itself of the vaccine, I had developed the belief that this campaign would achieve such a huge success! I had this firm faith, since I am well acquainted with the capabilities of my country and her people. I knew that our healthcare workers would leave no stone unturned in the vaccination of our countrymen. Our health workers, through their tireless efforts and resolve, set a new example...they established a new benchmark in service to humanity through innovation and sheer determination. There are innumerable instances about them that convey how they crossed all hurdles and provided the security shield to the maximum number of people. We've often read in newspapers, heard elsewhere as well how hard our people have worked to undertake this task; numerous inspiring examples are there in front of us, one better than the other. Today in Mann ki Baat, I want to introduce to the listeners, one such healthcare worker, Poonam Nautiyal ji from Bageshwar in Uttarakhand. Friends, she is from Bageshwar, part of the very land of Uttarakhand which accomplished the task of administering cent percent of the first dose. The government of Uttarakhand also rightfully deserves accolades since it's a remote area with difficult terrain. Similarly, Himachal too has completed the task of cent-percent doses amid such difficulties. I am

given to understand that Poonam ji has persevered day and night for the vaccination of people in her area.

PM – Poonam ji Namaste

Poonam – Sir Pranam

PM – Poonamji, just tell the country's listeners something about yourself!

Poonam – Sir, I am Poonam Nautiyal. Sir, I work at the Chaani Koraali Centre in Bageshwar District, Uttarakhand. I am an ANM Sir.

PM – Poonam ji, I am fortunate to have got an opportunity to come to Bageshwar. In a way, it has been a pilgrimage site...there's an ancient temple as well...I was deeply touched...wonder how people would have managed the task centuries ago!

Poonam – Yes Sir

PM – Poonam ji, have you undertaken the vaccination of all the people in your area?

Poonam – Yes Sir, all people are done with it...

PM – Did you also have to face hurdles of any kind?

Poonam – Yes Sir. Sir, when it used to rain there, the road used to get blocked. We've gone crossing the river Sir. And we have gone house to house, just as we've gone under the NHCVC...for people who were not able to come to the centre...the elderly, divyang people, pregnant women, lactating women...these people Sir!

PM – But there in the hills, houses too are situated rather distantly!

Poonam – Ji

PM – So, in a day, how much could you manage?

Poonam – Sir in terms of kilometres – 10 kilometres; at times 8!

PM – Well, people who stay in the terai plains would not be able to understand what 8-10 kilometres mean! I know that 8-10 kilometres in the hills mean consuming an entire day!

Poonam – Yes...

PM – But since for an entire day, it must have been an arduous task...along with lugging and carrying all the vaccination apparatus...did any assistant accompany you or not?

Poonam – Yes...team members...we were five people Sir!

PM – Yes...

Poonam – That comprised a doctor, then the ANM, the pharmacist, the ASHA worker and the data entry operator.

PM – O...was connectivity available there or you would do it after returning to Bageshwar?

Poonam – Sir, at places it was available...at times we would do it after coming to Bageshwar.

PM – Okay. I've been told Poonam ji, that you went out of the way to get people vaccinated. What was this idea...how did the thought come to your mind and how did you manage it?

Poonam – All of us...the entire team had taken a resolve that not a single person should be left out...the Corona ailment should be made to run away from our country. ASHA and I together prepared a village wise DUE list...and then accordingly, people who came to the centre were administered at the centre itself. Then we went from home to home. Sir, after that, people who were left out...those who could not make it to the centre...

PM – Okay...did you have to explain people?

Poonam – Yes...had to explain...

PM – Are people still keen to get vaccinated?

Poonam – Yes Sir, Yes...Now people have realized. Initially we faced a lot of problems. People had to be convinced that this vaccine is safe; effective as well...that we too had been vaccinated and we are well...right in front of you...all our staff have had it...we are fine!

PM – At any place, was any complaint received from anyone? Later?

Poonam – No no Sir. This did not happen.

PM – Nothing happened?

Poonam – Ji

PM – All were satisfied?

Poonam – Yes

PM – That it's fine...

Poonam – Yes

PM– Well...you have accomplished a great feat. And I know how difficult the entire area is, along with trudging through the hills! One climbs up a hill...then descends...then walk up another hill...houses too are located afar! Despite that, you accomplished this impressive task!

Poonam – Thank you Sir. Am fortunate to have spoken to you!

PM - It is on account of the hard work put in by lakhs of health workers like you that India could cross the hundred crore vaccine doses mark. Today, I am gratefully expressing thanks, not just to you but to every Bharatvasi, every Indian who raised the 'Sabko vaccine – Muft vaccine' campaign to such lofty heights of success. Many good wishes to you and family from my side.

My dear countrymen, you are aware that next Sunday, the 31st of October is the birth anniversary of Sardar Patel ji. On behalf of every listener of Mann ki Baat...and from myself...I bow to the Lauh Purush, the Iron Man. Friends, we celebrate the 31st of October as National Unity Day.

It is our duty that we must associate ourselves with some activity that conveys the message of national unity. You must have noticed that recently Gujarat Police took out a Bike rally from the Lakhpat Fort in Kutch to the Statue of Unity. To celebrate Unity Day the personnel of Tripura Police are organising a Bike Rally from Tripura to the Statue of Unity... That is connecting the country from East to West.

Personnel of Jammu- Kashmir police too are giving this message of unity of the country by taking out a similar Bike Rally from Uri to Pathankot. I salute all these jawans. I have also come to know of many sisters from Kupawara district of Jammu-Kashmir itself. In Kashmir, these sisters are working to make the Tricolour for the Army and government offices. This work is brimming with the sentiment of patriotism. I appreciate the spirit of these sisters. You too must do something for the unity of India, for the greatness of India. You will see how satisfying this is.

Friends, Sardar Sahab used to say- “We can take our country to loftier heights only through our united efforts. If we don’t have unity amongst ourselves, we will get entangled in ever new calamities”.

That is, with national unity, the nation has stature and has development. We can learn a lot from the life and thoughts of Sardar Patel. The Information and Broadcasting Ministry of the country has recently published a pictorial biography of Sardar Saheb too. I would want that all our young friends must read this. By this you will get a chance to know of Sardar Saheb in an interesting way.

Dear countrymen, life desires continuous progress, desires development, desires to surpass heights. However much science may

advance, however much the pace of progress may be, however grand the buildings may be, life feels incomplete. But when song-music, art, drama-dance, literature is added to these, their aura , their liveliness increases many times. In a way if life has to be meaningful, all these too are as necessary....that is why it is said that all these forms act as a catalyst in our lives, act to enhance our energy. The role of songs – music and other art forms is major in developing the inner self of humans, in creating the path of journey of our inner self. And another strength of these is that neither time nor boundaries can limit them...not even beliefs or discordance can limit these. The colours of one's art, culture, song, music must certainly be filled in Amrit Mahotsav too. I too am getting several suggestions from you regarding Amrit Mahotsav and this strength of songs-music-arts. These suggestions are very valuable for me. I had sent them to the Culture Ministry for analysis. I am happy that in such a short time span the Ministry took up the suggestions very seriously and has also worked on it. One of these suggestions is of a competition on patriotic songs! During the freedom struggle patriotic songs and devotional songs in different languages, dialects had united the entire country. Now in this Amrit kaal, our young people can instill this event with energy by writing such patriotic songs. These patriotic songs can be in the mother tongue, can be in national language, and can be written in English too. But it is essential that these creations reflect the thought of new India; inspired by the current success of the country, it should be such that fuels the country's resolve for the future. The Culture Ministry is geared to conduct a competition related to this from tehsil to the national level.

Friends, similarly a listener of “Mann Ki Baat” has suggested that Amrit Mahotsav should be connected to the art of Rangoli too. For centuries, we have had a tradition of lending colours to festivals through Rangoli. The diversity of our country is visible in Rangoli. Rangoli is drawn in different states with different names and on

different themes. Therefore, the Ministry of Culture is also going to conduct a National Competition associated with this. Just imagine, when a Rangoli related to the freedom movement will be created, people will draw a picture of a hero of the freedom struggle at their door, on their wall and depict an event of our independence movement with colours, hues of the Amrit festival will also increase manifold.

Friends, we also have another art form known as *Lori*. Here, samskars are inculcated in young children through lullabies and they are introduced to the culture. Lullabies also have their own diversity. So why don't we, in the *Amritkaal* period, revive this art also and write lullabies pertaining to patriotism, write poems, songs, something or the other which can be easily recited by mothers in every home to their little children. In these lullabies there should be reference to modern India, the vision of 21st century India and its dreams. The ministry has decided to organize a competition related to it after receiving suggestions from the listeners.

Friends, these three competitions are going to commence on the birth anniversary of Sardar Sahib from 31st October. In the coming days, the Ministry of Culture will provide all the information related to these events. This information will also be available on the website of the ministry, and will be circulated through social media. I want you all to be associated with this. Our young friends must showcase their art, their talent in this. Through this the art and culture of your area will also reach every nook and corner of the country, your stories will be heard by the whole country.

Dear countrymen, during this period of Amrit Mahotsav, we are remembering the brave sons and daughters of the country, those great and virtuous souls. Next month, the birth anniversary of one such icon and a brave warrior, Bhagwan Birsa Munda ji is falling on the 15th of November. Bhagwan Birsa Munda is also known as 'Dharti Aaba'. Do you know what this epithet means? It means the father of earth. The way Bhagwan Birsa Munda fought to protect his culture, his forest,

his land, it could have only been done by 'Dharti Aaba'! He taught us to be proud of our culture and roots. The foreign rule subjected him to countless threats and applied immense pressure, but he did not relinquish the tribal culture.

If we have to learn to love nature and the environment, then for that too, Dharati Aaba Bhagwan Birsa Munda is one of our greatest inspirations. He strongly opposed every such policy of foreign rule, which was detrimental for the environment. Bhagwan Birsa Munda was always at the forefront while helping the poor and the distressed. He also made the society aware towards eliminating social evils. Who can forget his leadership during the Ulgulan movement! This movement shook the British and as an aftermath the British had placed a huge reward on Bhagwan Birsa Munda. The British government put him in jail; he was tortured to such an extent that he left us at the age of less than 25 years. He left us, but only in the body; in the public psyche, Lord Birsa Munda resides forever! His life remains an inspirational force for the people. Even today folk songs and stories, full of his courage and valour are very popular in the central region of India. I bow to 'Dharti Aaba' Birsa Munda and urge the youth to read more about him. The more you know about the unique contribution of our tribal populace in the freedom struggle of India, the more you will feel proud.

My dear countrymen, today on 24th October, UN Day i.e. 'United Nations Day' is celebrated. This is the day when the United Nations was established; India has been a member since the formation of the United Nations. Do you know that India had signed the Charter of the United Nations in 1945 prior to independence. A unique feature related to the United Nations is that the woman power of India has played a large role in increasing the influence and strength of the United Nations.

In 1947-48, when the Universal Declaration of UN Human Rights was being drafted, it was being inscribed in that Declaration "All Men are Created Equal". But a Delegate from India objected to this and then it was written in the Universal Declaration - "All Human

Beings are Created Equal". This was in consonance with India's age-old tradition of Gender Equality. Did you know that Smt. Hansa Mehta was the delegate because of whom this became possible? At the same time, another delegate Smt. Lakshmi Menon had strongly put forth her views on the issue of gender equality. And not only this, in 1953, Smt. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit became the first woman President of the UN General Assembly.

Friends, we are the people of a land, who believe and pray:

Om Dyau Shanti-Rantariksha-GwamShantih,
Prithvi Shanti-Rapah Shanti-RoshadhayahShantih|
Vanas-Patayah Shanti-VishwedDevah Shanti-Brahma Shantih,
Sarvag-WamShantih Shanti-Reva Shantih Sa Ma Shanti-Redhi||
Om ShantihShantihShantih||

India has always strove for world peace. We are proud of the fact that India has been a part of UN peacekeeping missions continuously since the 1950s. India is also playing a leading role in addressing issues related to poverty alleviation, climate change and workers. Apart from this, India is working closely with WHO or World Health Organization to popularize Yoga and AYUSH. In March 2021, WHO announced that a Global Centre for Traditional Medicine would be set up in India.

Friends, today while talking about the United Nations I'm also remembering the words of Atal ji. In 1977, he made history by addressing the United Nations in Hindi. Today I want to play an excerpt of Atal ji's address for the listeners of 'Mann Ki Baat'. Listen to Atal ji's resounding voice -

" Here I am not thinking about the supremacy and prominence of nations. The esteem and advancement of the common man are of more importance to me. Ultimately, the only criterion to measure our successes and failures is whether we strive to assure justice and dignity to the entire humanity, virtually every man, woman and child."

Friends, these words of Atal ji show us the way even today. India's contribution in making this earth a better and safer planet is a big inspiration for the entire world.

My dear countrymen, just a few days ago, on the 21st of October, we celebrated Police Commemoration Day. On this day we especially remember our brave hearts of the police who have laid down their lives in the service of the country. Today I would like to remember these policemen along with their families. A tough service like the police is very difficult without the support and sacrifice of the family.

There is one more thing related to police service that I want to convey to the listeners of 'Mann Ki Baat'. Earlier it was believed that services like army and police are meant only for men. But today it is not so. The statistics from the Bureau of Police Research and Development show that in the last few years, the number of women police personnel has doubled. In 2014, while their number was close to 1 lakh 5 thousand, by 2020 it has increased by more than double and this number has now reached up to 2 lakh 15 thousand.

Even in the Central Armed Police Forces, the number of women has almost doubled in the last seven years. And I'm not talking just about numbers. Today the daughters of the country are performing even the toughest duties with full force and zeal. For example, many daughters are currently undergoing one of the most difficult trainings, that of Specialized Jungle Warfare Commandos. They will be a part of our Cobra Battalion. Friends, today when we go to airports, metro stations or see government offices, brave women of CISF are seen guarding every sensitive place.

The most positive effect of this is on the morale of our police force as well as society. The presence of women security personnel naturally instills a sense of confidence among the people, especially women. They naturally feel connected to women security personnel. Because of the sensitivity in women, people tend to trust them more. These policewomen of ours are also becoming role models for lakhs of other daughters of the country. I would like to request the women police personnel to visit the schools in their areas once the schools open and talk to the girls there. I am sure that this conversation will give a new direction to our new

generation. Not just that, it will also increase public confidence in the police. I hope that more women will join the police service in future, lead the New Age Policing of our country.

My dear countrymen, in the last few years, the pace at which the use of modern technology has increased in our country, the listeners of 'Mann Ki Baat' often keep writing to me about it. Today I want to discuss with you one such topic, which has caught the imagination of our country, especially our youth and even little children. This topic is of Drones, of the Drone Technology. Up until a few years ago, when the name of Drone used to come up, what used to be the first feeling in the minds of the people?... Of the army, of weapons, of war. But today if we have any wedding procession or function, we see a drone shooting photos and videos. The spectrum of a drone's usage and its capabilities is not just limited to that. India is one of the first countries in the world, which is preparing digital records of land in its villages with the help of drones. India is working extensively on using drones for transportation. Whether it is farming in the village or delivery of goods at home; Providing help in emergency or monitoring law and order ; it is not long before we will see drones being deployed for all these needs of ours. Most of these have already started. Like a few days ago, nano-urea was sprayed in the fields through drones in Bhavnagar, Gujarat. Drones are also playing their role in the Covid vaccine campaign. We got to see a picture of this in Manipur, where vaccines were delivered via a drone to an island. Telangana has also done trials for vaccine delivery by drone. Not just that, drones are also being used to monitor many big infrastructure projects. I have also read about a young student who, with the help of his drone, worked to save the lives of fishermen. Friends, earlier there were so many rules, laws and restrictions in this sector that it was not possible to unlock the real capabilities of a drone. The technology that should have been seen as an opportunity was seen as a crisis. If you have to fly a drone for any work, then there was such a hassle of license and permission that people would give up on the mere mention of the name of drone. We decided that this mindset has to be changed and new trends have to be adopted. Which is why on the 25th of August this year, the country brought forward a new drone policy. This policy has been

formulated according to the present and future prospects related to drones. With this, you will neither have to be entangled in the web of multiple forms anymore, nor will you have to pay as much fees as before. I am happy to inform you that after the introduction of the new drone policy, foreign and domestic investors have invested in many drone start-ups. Many companies are also setting up manufacturing units. The Army, Navy and Air Force have also placed orders worth more than Rs 500 crores with the Indian drone companies. And this is just the beginning. We must not stop here. We have to become a leading country in Drone Technology. For this, the Government is taking all possible steps. I will also urge the youth of the country to certainly think about taking advantage of the opportunities created after the Drone Policy and come forward.

My dear countrymen, a listener of 'Mann Ki Baat', Shrimati Prabha Shukla from Meerut in UP has sent me a letter related to cleanliness. She has written – “We all celebrate cleanliness during festivals in India. Similarly, if we make cleanliness a daily habit, then the whole country will become clean.” I appreciate Prabha ji's message. Indeed, where there is cleanliness, there is health, where there is health, there is capability, and where there is capability, there is prosperity. That is why the country is giving so much emphasis on Swachh BharatAbhiyan.

Friends, I was happy to know about Saporom Naya Sarai, a village near Ranchi. There used to be a pond in this village, but people had started using this pond area for defecating in the open. Under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, after toilets were built in everyone's homes, the villagers thought why not make the village clean as well as beautiful. Lo and behold! Everyone got together and made a park at the place of the pond. Today that place has become a community spot for people, for children. This has brought a big change in the life of the whole village. I also want to tell you about the women of Deur village of Chhattisgarh. The women here run a self-help group and work together to clean the village squares, roads and temples.

Friends, the people of Ghaziabad in UP know Ramveer Tanwar as the

'Pond Man'. Ramveer ji was doing a job after completing his mechanical engineering. However, such a sense of devotion for cleanliness ignited in his mind that he left his job and started cleaning ponds. So far, Ramveer ji has revived many ponds by cleaning them.

Friends, the efforts of cleanliness can be fully successful only when every citizen understands cleanliness as his or her responsibility. Now, during Diwali, we are all about to get involved in cleaning our houses. But during this time we have to take care that our neighbourhood along with our house should also be clean. It should not be that we clean our house, but the dirt of our house reaches outside, on our roads. And yes, when I talk about cleanliness, then please do not forget the mantra of getting rid of Single Use Plastic. Come, let us take a pledge that we will not let the enthusiasm of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan diminish. Together, we will make our country completely clean and keep it clean!

My dear countrymen, the whole month of October is painted in the hues of festivals and after a few days from now Diwali will be around the corner. Diwali, then Govardhan Puja, then Bhai Dooj, these three festivals shall of course be there and there will also be Chhath Puja during this interregnum. It is also the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji in November. When so many festivals happen together then their preparations also start long before. All of you must have started planning for shopping from now on, but do you remember, shopping means 'VOCAL FOR LOCAL'. If you buy local, then your festival will also be illuminated and the house of a poor brother or sister, an artisan, or a weaver will also be lit up. I am sure that the campaign which we all have started together will be stronger this time during the festivals. Do share on social media about the local products you buy from there too. Inform those around you too. We'll meet again next month, and we'll once again discuss many such topics.

Many thanks to all of you! Namaskar !