

MANN KI BAAT EPISODE 86

My dear countrymen, Namaskar!

Welcome to 'Mann Ki Baat' once again. Today we will commence 'Mann Ki Baat' mentioning India's success. In the beginning of this month, India has been successful in bringing home an invaluable heritage of hers from Italy. This heritage is the over one thousand years old idol of Avalokiteshvara Padmapani. This idol was stolen a few years ago from Kundalpur temple, *Devi Sthan* of Gaya ji in Bihar. But after innumerable efforts, India has now got this idol back. Similarly, a few years ago the idol of Lord Anjaneyaar, Hanuman ji was stolen from Vellore in Tamil Nadu. This idol of Hanuman ji was also 600-700 years old. Earlier this month, we retrieved this in Australia; our Mission has received it.

Friends, in our history of thousands of years, idols, one better than the other were always being made in various parts of the country; it also comprised reverence, capability, skill and was full of varied diversity. And the history of each of our idols also depicts the influence of their respective times. Not only were they a wonderful artistic example of Indian sculpture; our faith was also connected with them. But, in the past, many idols were stolen and kept being taken out of India.

Sometimes in this country, at times in another, these idols were sold... and for them they were just pieces of art. Neither did they have anything to do with their history, nor with reverence attached to them. It is our responsibility towards Mother India to bring home these idols. These idols embody a part of the soul of India; faith as well. They also have a cultural-historical significance. Realising this responsibility, India increased her efforts. And resultantly, it fostered a deterrent fear against

the tendency to steal. The countries where these idols were stolen and taken away to, also started to feel now that it could also have immense significance in the diplomatic channel of soft power in relations with India. India's feelings are associated with it; India's reverence is attached as well, and, in a way, it creates a lot of strength in people-to-people relations as well. Just a few days ago you must have noted that the idol of Ma Annapurna Devi, which was stolen from Kashi, was also brought back. This is an example of the changing global outlook towards India. Till the year 2013, nearly 13 idols had been brought back to India. But, in the last seven years, India has successfully brought back more than 200 precious idols. Many countries such as America, Britain, Holland, France, Canada, Germany, Singapore have understood this sentiment of India and helped us to retrieve these idols. When I went to America in September last year, I came across a lot of very old idols and many artefacts of cultural importance there. Whenever any priceless heritage returns to the country, it is naturally a matter of great satisfaction for all of us....as an Indian, as one who has reverence for history and archaeology, one connected with faith and culture.

Friends, talking about Indian culture and our heritage, today I want to introduce you to two people in 'Mann Ki Baat'. These days, two Tanzanian siblings, Kili Paul and his sister Nima, are in the news a lot on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, and I'm sure you too, must have heard about them. They have a passion, a craze for Indian music and for this reason they are also very popular. Their technique of Lip Sync shows how hard they work at it. Recently, a video of him singing our National Anthem 'Jana Gana Mana' on the occasion of Republic Day went viral. A few days ago, he also paid a soulful tribute to Lata didi by presenting her song. I really appreciate these two siblings Kili and Nima very much for

their wonderful creativity. A few days ago, he has also been honoured at the Indian Embassy in Tanzania. The magic of Indian music is such that it fascinates everyone. I recall, a few years ago, singers-musicians from more than one hundred and fifty countries of the world, in their respective countries, in their respective costumes, made a successful presentation of 'Vaishnav Jan', the beloved bhajan of revered Bapu, the favourite composition of Mahatma Gandhi.

Today, when India is celebrating the important festival of 75th year of its Independence, similar initiatives can be carried out regarding patriotic songs, wherein foreign nationals or famous singers from abroad are invited to render Indian patriotic songs. Not only this, if Kili and Neema in Tanzania can lip sync the songs of India in this manner, aren't there many types of songs in my country... in many languages of our country... can't any Gujarati children do that with Tamil songs....some children of Kerala could do that with Assamese songs.... some Kannada children could do that with songs of Jammu and Kashmir! We can create such an environment in which we will be able to experience 'Ek Bharat-Shreshtha Bharat'. Not only this, we can definitely celebrate Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav in a novel way. I urge the youth of the country to make videos of the popular songs of Indian languages in their own way.... you will become very popular! And the diversity of the country will be introduced to the new generation.

My dear countrymen, just a few days ago, we celebrated International Mother Language Day. Those who are learned can give a lot of academic input about where the word mother tongue came from, how it originated. I would emphasise about mother tongue that as our mother moulds our life, in the same manner, mother tongue also shapes our life.

The mother and mother tongue, both together strengthen the foundation of life; lending it permanence. Just like we cannot abandon our mother, similarly, we cannot leave our mother tongue either. I remember an incident of yesteryears, when I had gone to America, I would get a chance to visit different families. Once I went to a Telugu family and I got to see a very happy scenario there. They told me that they had made a rule in the family that no matter how busy one were to be, if they were not outstation, then all the family members would have dinner sitting at the table together and equally compulsory on the dinner table was conversing in Telugu language only. This was also the rule for the children who were born there. Seeing this love for the mother tongue, I was highly impressed by this family.

Friends, even after 75 years of independence, some people are facing a mental dilemma due to which they have reservations with regard to their language, their dress, their food and drink, whereas, it is not like this anywhere else in the world. It is our mother tongue; we should speak it with pride. And, our India is so rich in terms of languages that it just cannot be compared. The biggest beauty of our languages is that from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, from Kutch to Kohima, hundreds of languages, thousands of dialects which are different from each other but are mutually integrated...many languages - one expression. For centuries, our languages have been evolving whilst learning from each other and have been refining themselves, developing each other. The world's oldest language Tamil is in India and every Indian should be proud that we have such a **significant** heritage of the world. In the same way, many ancient scriptures are also there; their expression too is in our Sanskrit language. The people of India are proud to be associated with 121 forms of mother tongues and 14 of these languages are spoken by more than

1 crore people in everyday life. That is, many European countries do not have a total population than the people who are associated with 14 different languages in our country. In the year 2019, Hindi was ranked third among the most spoken languages of the world. Every Indian should be proud of this too. Language is not just a medium of expression, but also serves to preserve the culture and heritage of the society. Surjan Parohi ji is doing similar work in Suriname to save the heritage of his language. He turned 84 on the 2nd of this month. His forefathers also went to Suriname years ago, along with thousands of workers, to earn a living. Surjan Parohi ji writes very good poetry in Hindi; his name is considered among the national poets there. That is, even today Hindustan beats in his heart; there is a fragrance of the soil of India in his works. The people of Suriname have also built a museum in the name of Surjan Parohi ji. It is very heartening for me that in the year 2015 I had the opportunity to honour him.

Friends, today, that is, 27th February is also Marathi Bhasha Gaurav Divas.

“सर्व मराठी बंधु भगिनिना मराठी भाषा दिनाच्या हार्दिक शुभेच्छा।”

This day is dedicated to Marathi Kaviraj, Vishnu Vaman Shirvadkar ji, Shriman Kusumagraj ji. Today is also the birth anniversary of Kusumagraj ji. Kusumagraj ji wrote poems in Marathi, wrote many plays, and took Marathi literature to new heights.

Friends, our languages have their own special characteristics; mother tongue has its own science. For understanding this science, emphasis has been laid on studies in the local language in the National Education

Policy. Efforts are being made that our professional courses should also be taught in the regional languages. In Azadi Ka Amrit Kaal, we all should lend momentum to this effort together; this is a work indicative of self-respect. I would like you to know about the qualities of whatever mother tongue you speak and write something in it.

Friends, A few days ago I had a meeting with my friend and former Prime Minister of Kenya, Raila Odinga. This meeting was interesting but also very emotional. Since we are very good friends, we also discuss freely. While both of us were in a conversation, Odinga ji told about his daughter. His daughter Rosemary had a brain tumour and because of this she had to undergo surgery. However, one side-effect of this was that Rosemary almost lost her eyesight; she stopped seeing. You can imagine what must have happened to the daughter.... and we can also guess the condition of the father, we can understand his feelings. In hospitals all over the world... there was not any major country in the world, where he had not tried his best for the treatment of his daughter. He searched the big countries of the world, but, there was no success and in a way, giving up all hopes, there was an atmosphere of despair in the entire household. Meanwhile, someone suggested him to come to India for Ayurveda treatment and even though he had tried a lot and was tired, yet he thought that let's try once again... see what happens! He came to India, started getting his daughter treated at an Ayurvedic hospital in Kerala. The daughter stayed here for a long time. The effect of this Ayurvedic treatment was such that Rosemary's eyesight returned to a great extent. You can imagine, as if a new lease of life was given and light came back into Rosemary's life. As the new light has come in the whole family, Odinga ji was so emotional while telling me this and that he wishes, that the knowledge and science of Ayurveda of India,

should be brought to Kenya. The type of plants that are used in it will be cultivated by them and he will do his best to get more people to benefit from it.

It is a matter of great happiness for me that from our land and our tradition have alleviated such a great suffering from someone's life. You will also be happy to hear this. Which Indian would not be proud of it? We all know that not only Odinga ji but lakhs of people across the world are reaping similar benefits from Ayurveda.

Prince Charles from Britain is also one of the big admirers of Ayurveda. Whenever I meet him, he definitely mentions Ayurveda. He is also aware of many Ayurvedic institutions of India.

Friends, in the last seven years a lot of attention has been paid to the promotion of Ayurveda in the country. The formation of the Ministry of AYUSH has further strengthened our resolve to popularise our traditional methods of medicine and health. I am very happy that in the last few years many new start-ups have emerged in the field of Ayurveda. The AYUSH Start-up Challenge started earlier this month. The goal of this challenge is to identify and support the start-ups working in this field. I urge the youth working in this field, that they should take part in this challenge.

Friends, once people are determined to do something together, they do wonderful things. There have been many such big changes in the society, in which public participation, collective effort, has played a significant role. One such mass movement named "Mission Jal Thal" is underway in Srinagar, Kashmir. This is a unique effort to clean the lakes and ponds of Srinagar and restore their old glory. The focus of "Mission

Jal Thal” is on “Kushal Saar” and “Gil Saar”. Along with public participation, a lot of help of technology is also being taken in this. To find out where there has been encroachment, where illegal construction has taken place, a formal survey of this area was carried out. Along with this, a campaign to remove plastic waste and clean up the waste was also launched. In the second phase of the mission, a lot of effort was also made to restore the old water channels and 19 springs filling the lake. In order to spread more and more awareness about the importance of this Restoration Project, local people and youth were also made Water Ambassadors. Now the local people here are also taking efforts for increasing the number of migratory birds and fish in "Gil Saar Lake" and are also happy to see it. My heartiest congratulations to the people of Srinagar for this wonderful effort.

Friends, the 'Clean India Mission' started by the country eight years ago, with the passage of time, it expanded manifold... new innovations were also added. Wherever you go in India, you will find that some effort is being made for cleanliness everywhere. I have come to know about one such attempt in Kokrajhar, Assam. Here a group of morning walkers have taken a very commendable initiative under the 'Clean and Green Kokrajhar' mission. All of them gave a motivational message of cleanliness by cleaning the three kilometre long road in the new flyover area. Similarly, under the 'Clean India Campaign' in Visakhapatnam, cloth bags are being promoted instead of polythene. People here are also campaigning against Single Use Plastic products to keep the environment clean. Along with this, these people are also spreading awareness to segregate the waste at home. The students of Somaiya College in Mumbai have also included beautification in their campaign of cleanliness. They have decorated the walls of Kalyan railway station with

beautiful paintings. An inspiring example from Sawai Madhopur in Rajasthan has also come to my notice. The youth here have started a campaign named 'Mission Beat Plastic' in Ranthambore, in which plastic and polythene have been removed from the forests of Ranthambore. This spirit of *Sabka Prayas*, everyone's effort strengthens public participation in the country and when there is public participation, even the biggest goals are definitely met.

My dear countrymen, just a few days from today, International Women's Day will be celebrated all over the world on 8th of March. We have been sharing many examples related to the courage, skill, and talent of women in 'Mann Ki Baat'. Today, whether it is Skill India, Self Help Group, small or big industries, women have taken the lead everywhere. Wherever you see, women are dispelling old myths. Today, in our country, From Parliament to Panchayat, women are reaching newer heights in different fields. In the Army too, daughters are now playing responsibilities in new and bigger roles and are protecting the country. Last month on Republic Day we saw that daughters were flying modern fighter planes too. The country also lifted the restrictions on the admission of daughters in Sainik Schools, and daughters are taking admission in Sainik Schools all over the country. Similarly, look at the start-up world, in the recent years, thousands of new start-ups began in the country. About half of these start-ups have women in director roles. In the recent past, decisions like increasing maternity leave for women have been taken. The country is trying to give equal rights to sons and daughters by fixing a common age for marriage. Due to this, the participation of women is increasing in every field. You must be noticing another major change happening in the country. This change is the success of our social campaigns. Take the success of 'Beti Bachao, Beti

Padhao'... today the sex ratio in the country has improved. The number of girls going to school has also improved. In this we also have a responsibility that our daughters do not drop out of school. Similarly, women in the country have got freedom from open defecation under the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan'. A social evil like triple talaq is also coming to an end. Ever since the law against triple talaq has come into being, there has been a reduction of 80 percent in triple talaq cases in the country. How are all these changes happening in such a short span of time? This change is coming because women themselves are now leading the change and progressive efforts in our country.

My dear countrymen, tomorrow the 28th of February is 'National Science Day'. This day is also known for the discovery of Raman Effect. Along with CV Raman ji, I pay my respectful tribute to all the scientists who have contributed significantly in enriching our scientific journey. Friends, technology has secured an important place in our lives in the realm of ease and simplicity. Which technology is good and what is the better use of that technology, we are well acquainted with all these subjects. But, it is also true that the basis of that technology, the underlying science is something that we neglect in conveying to the children of our family. On this Science Day, I urge all the families to definitely start with small efforts to develop a scientific temperament in their children.

Now, for example – poor vision... after wearing glasses, vision improves with clarity... children can easily be explained on the science behind it. It's not that one should restrict oneself to just looking at the glasses and enjoying. Now you can simply explain to the child on a small piece of paper. Now the child uses a mobile phone...how does a calculator work, how does a remote control work, what are sensors? Along with this, are

such scientific elements also discussed in the house? Maybe we can easily explain these things behind the everyday functioning of the household, what is the inherent science behind a phenomenon. In the same way, have we ever indulged in stargazing together with the children? There must have been conversations about stars in the night. Different constellations appear, tell them about them. By doing this you can create a new interest in children towards physics and astronomy. Nowadays, there are also many apps through which you can locate the stars and planets, or, you can identify the star which is visible in the sky and can also know about it. I will also tell our start-ups that you should employ your skills and scientific character in the work related to nation-building. This is also our Collective Scientific Responsibility towards the country. Like, nowadays I see that our start-ups are doing very well in the world of virtual reality. In this era of virtual classes, one such virtual lab can be designed keeping children in mind. We can also make children experience a chemistry lab sitting at home through virtual reality. My request to my teachers and parents is to encourage all the students and children to ask questions and together with them find the right answers to those questions. Today, I would also like to appreciate the role of Indian scientists in the fight against Corona. Due to their hard work, it was possible to manufacture the Made In India vaccine, which has helped the whole world a lot. This is the gift of science to humanity.

My dear countrymen, this time too we discussed many subjects. Many festivals are lined up in the coming month of March... Shivratri... A few days later we will all will start preparing for Holi. Holi is a festival that unites us all. In this festival, all differences between near-dear ones and strangers, big and small, rancour and envy disappear. That is why it is said that the colours of love and harmony are thicker than the colours of

Holi. Along with Gujiya in Holi, there is a unique sweetness of relationships as well. We have to strengthen these bonds further, and relations are not only with the people of our family but also with the people who are part of your larger family. You have to remember the most important way to do so. This is the way of celebrating the festival through 'Vocal for Local'. You should buy local products on festivals, so that the lives of the people living around you also become colourful and vibrant. The success with which our country is fighting the battle against Corona and moving forward is imparting enthusiasm to the festivals manifold. With this very zeal, we have to celebrate our festivals, and at the same time, we have to maintain our caution. I wish you all a very Happy festival season. I will always be waiting for your words, your letters and your messages.

Thank you very much!