

'Mann Ki Baat' (Episode-89)

My dear countrymen, Namaskar!

Today once again through 'Mann Ki Baat' I have got an opportunity to meet you all; millions of my family members. I welcome all of you to 'Mann Ki Baat'. A few days ago, the country has made an achievement, which inspires all of us... instills a new confidence in India's prowess. You must be feeling happy on hearing of the century of a batsman of Team India on the cricket field. But, India has scored a century in another field and it is very special. On the 5th of this month, the number of unicorns in the country has reached the figure of 100 and you surely know that a unicorn is a start-up worth at least seven and a half thousand crore rupees. The total valuation of these Unicorns is more than 330 billion dollars, that is, more than 25 lakh crore rupees. Certainly, this is a matter of pride for every Indian. You will also be surprised to know that out of our total unicorns, forty four came up last year. Not only that, 14 more Unicorns were formed anew in 3-4 months this year. This means that even in this phase of the global pandemic, our start-ups have been creating wealth and value. The average annual growth rate of Indian Unicorns is more than those of USA, UK and many other countries. Analysts also say that in the coming years there will be a sharp spike in these numbers. The good thing is that our Unicorns are diversifying. They are operating in many fields like E-commerce, Fin-Tech, Ed-Tech, Bio-Tech. Another thing which I consider more important is that the world of start-ups is reflecting the spirit of New India. Today, India's start-up ecosystem is not limited to just big cities; entrepreneurs are emerging from smaller cities and towns as well. This shows that in India, the one who has an innovative idea, can create wealth.

Friends, behind this success of the country, the youth-power of the land, the talent and the government here, all are putting in efforts together... everyone is contributing. But, another thing that is important in the world of Start-Ups is, right mentoring, that is, right guidance. A good mentor can take a start-up to new heights... can guide the founders in every way toward the right decision. I am proud that there are many such mentors in India who have dedicated themselves to promote Start-ups.

Sridhar Vembu ji has recently received the Padma Award. He himself is a successful entrepreneur, but now he has also taken up upon himself the task of grooming other entrepreneurs. Shridhar ji has started his work from a rural area. He is encouraging the rural youth to do something in this area, staying in the village itself. We also have people like Madan Padaaki who had created a platform named One-Bridge in 2014 to promote rural entrepreneurs. Today, One-Bridge is present in more than 75 districts of southern and eastern India. More than 9000 rural entrepreneurs associated with it are providing their services to rural consumers. Meera Shenoy ji is also one such example. She is doing remarkable work in the field of Market Linked Skills Training for rural, tribal and disabled youth. I have mentioned only a few names here, but today there is no dearth of mentors among us. It is a matter of great happiness for us that today a complete support system is evolving in the country for start-ups. I am sure that in the times to come, we will get to see a new flight of progress in the start-up world of India.

Friends, a few days ago I found an interesting and attractive thing which is full of colours of the creativity of the countrymen and their artistic talent. It is a gift sent to me by Self-Help Group from Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu. This gift bears the fragrance of Indianness and the blessings of Matri-Shakti – a glimpse of her affection for me. This is a special Thanjavur Doll, which also has a GI Tag. I offer

special thanks to the Thanjavur Self-Help Group for sending me this gift imbued in the local culture. In a way, friends, this Thanjavur Doll besides being beautiful that it is, is also scripting a new saga of women empowerment. Women's Self-Help Groups stores and kiosks are also opening up in Thanjavur. Because of this, the lives of many poor families have changed. With the help of such kiosks and stores, women are now able to sell their products directly to the customers. The initiative has been named 'Tharagaigal Kaivinai Porutkal Virpanai Angadi'. The special thing is that 22 Self-Help Groups are associated with this initiative. You would also be happy to know that these stores of Women Self Help Groups have opened at very prime locations in Thanjavur. Women themselves are taking full responsibility of their upkeep as well. Apart from GI products like Thanjavur Doll and Bronze Lamp , these women Self Help Groups, also craft toys, mats and artificial jewellery. Due to such stores, the sales of GI products as well as handicraft products have seen a significant rise. Through this campaign, not only have the artisans got a fillip, but the women are also getting empowered by a rise in their income. I also urge the listeners of 'Mann Ki Baat'... find out which Women Self Help Groups are working in your area. You should also collect information about their products and use these products as much as possible. By doing this, you will not only help in increasing the income of the Self Help Groups, but will also give impetus to the 'Self-reliant India Campaign'.

Friends, our country is a rich treasure house of many languages, scripts and dialects. Varied attire, cuisine and culture in different regions is our hallmark. As a nation this diversity strengthens us and keeps us united. I wish to share with all of you a very inspiring example related to this, which is that of beti Kalpana, . Her name is Kalpana, but her endeavor is full of the true spirit of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'. Actually, Kalpana has recently passed her class 10th examination in

Karnataka, but, the very special thing about her success is that, Kalpana did not know Kannada language till some time ago. She not only learned Kannada language in three months, but also proved it by scoring 92 marks. You might be surprised to know this, but it is true. There are many other things about her that will amaze you and will also inspire you. Kalpana is originally from Joshimath in Uttarakhand. She had been suffering from TB earlier and when she was in the class three she lost her eyesight too, but, as they say, 'where there is a will, there is a way'. Kalpana later came in contact with Professor Taramurthy, a resident of Mysuru, who not only encouraged her but also helped her in every way. Today, through her hard work, she has set an example for all of us. I congratulate Kalpana for her fortitude. Similarly, there are many people in our country who are working towards strengthening the linguistic diversity of the country. One such friend Shripati Tudu ji hails from Purulia in West Bengal. Tudu ji is a professor of Santhali language at Sidho-Kaano-Birsa University, Purulia. He has prepared a version of the country's Constitution in his native 'Ol Chiki' script for the Santhali community. Shripati Tudu ji asserts that our Constitution makes every citizen of our country aware of one's rights and duties. Therefore, it is important for every citizen to be familiar with it. Therefore, he prepared a copy of the constitution in his own script for the Santhali community and offered it as a gift. I appreciate this thinking of Shripati ji and his efforts. This is a living example of the spirit of 'Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat'. You will also find information about many such efforts furthering this spirit, on the website of 'Ek Bharat-Shreshtha Bharat'. Here you will get to know about activities on many such subjects including food, art, culture, tourism. You can also take part in these activities, this will give you information about your country, and you will also experience the diversity of the country.

My dear countrymen, the holy pilgrimage of 'Char-Dham' in Uttarakhand is currently underway in our country. Thousands of devotees are reaching every day at 'Char-Dham' and especially in Kedarnath. People are sharing happy experiences of their 'Char-Dham Yatra'. But, I have also seen that some devotees are also very sad because of the filth being spread by some pilgrims in Kedarnath. Many people have expressed their views on social media as well. Going on a holy pilgrimage and coming across a heap of filth there is not right. But friends, in the midst of these complaints, one is getting to see many good pictures too. Where there is faith, there is also creation and positivity. There are many devotees who are worshipping in the Dham of Baba Kedar, as well as performing the sadhna of cleanliness. Some are cleaning near the place of stay, while others are cleaning garbage along the travel route. Many organizations and voluntary organizations are also working there along with the Swachh Bharat campaign team. Friends, just as a pilgrimage is important here; equally important is 'teertha sewa' as has been mentioned and I would also say that without 'teertha sewa', a pilgrimage is also incomplete. There are many people in Devbhoomi Uttarakhand who are engaged in the 'sadhana' of cleanliness and service. You will be greatly inspired by Shriman Manoj Bainjwal hailing from Rudra Prayag. For the last 25 years, Manoj ji has taken it upon himself to look after the environment. Apart from running the campaign of cleanliness, he is also engaged in making holy places plastic free. While, Surendra Bagwadi ji hailing from Guptkashi has also made cleanliness his life mantra. In Guptkashi, he regularly runs cleanliness programmes, and, I have learned that he has also named this campaign as 'Mann Ki Baat'. Similarly, Champa Devi from village Devar has been teaching waste management to women of the village. Champa ji has planted hundreds of trees and through sheer hard work she has set up a stretch of forest full of greenery. Friends, through the efforts of such people the divinity of Dev Bhoomi and holy places has been

maintained...We go there to experience it, so it is our responsibility to maintain this divinity and spirituality. Along with 'Chardham Yatra' in our country, there will be many yatras like 'Amarnath Yatra', 'Pandharpur Yatra' and 'Jagannath Yatra' in the coming times. In the month of Sawan, some fair or the other is held, perhaps in every village.

Friends, wherever we go, let us maintain the dignity of these pilgrimage sites. Purity, cleanliness and a pious environment... we should never forget these and for that, it is imperative that we abide by the resolution of cleanliness. A few days later, the world will celebrate the 5th of June as 'Environment Day'. We should run positive environment campaigns around us and this is a never ending task. This time, you should join everyone together – you should certainly make some effort for cleanliness and tree plantation. Plant a tree yourself and inspire others too.

My dear countrymen, next month on the 21st of June, we are going to celebrate the 8th 'International Yoga Day'. This time the theme of 'Yoga Day' is - Yoga for Humanity. I would urge all of you to celebrate 'Yoga Day' with great enthusiasm. Yes! Also take precautions related to corona. By the way, the situation now is looking better than earlier across the whole world. On account of more and more vaccination coverage, people now are going out more than ever; therefore, a lot of preparations are also being seen all over the world for 'Yoga Day'. The corona pandemic has made all of us realize the overarching importance of health in our lives and Yoga being a great medium in ensuring the same. People are experiencing how much physical, spiritual and intellectual well being is receiving a boost through Yoga. From the world's top business persons to film and sports personalities, from students to common people, everyone is making yoga an integral part of one's life. I do believe that witnessing the increasing popularity of Yoga across the world must be making you happy. Friends, this time I have come

to know about some very innovative examples being held on 'Yoga Day' in the country and abroad. One of these is Guardian Ring - it will be a very unique programme. In this, the Movement of the Sun will be celebrated, that is, as the sun travels, we will welcome it through yoga from different parts of the earth. Indian missions in different countries will organize yoga programs at sunrise according to the local time there. The program will successively commence, following one country after another. The journey from east to west will go on continuously...and on these lines, it will proceed accordingly. Streaming of these programs will also be linked one after the other, that is, it will be a kind of relay Yoga streaming event. Do watch it.

Friends, this time keeping in mind the 'Amrit Mahotsav' in our country, 'International Yoga Day' will also be organized at 75 major places in the country. On this occasion, many organizations and countrymen are preparing to do something innovative at their own level, in their respective fields. I would urge you also this time to celebrate Yoga Day, choose any place in your city, town or village which is most special. This place can be an ancient temple and tourist center, or it could be the banks of a famous river, lake or pond. With this, along with yoga, the identity of your area will also be reinforced and tourism there will also get a boost. At present, the 100 day countdown leading to 'Yoga Day', is also underway; rather, programs based on personal and social efforts, have already begun three months ago. On these lines, there have been countdown programs of 100th day and 75th day in Delhi. Similarly, 50th Countdown Events were organized in Sivasagar, Assam and 25th in Hyderabad. I wish you should also start preparations for 'Yoga Day' on your own right now. Meet more and more people, urge everyone to join the program of 'Yoga Day'; inspire them. I am sure that all of you will participate enthusiastically in the 'Yoga Day', as well as adopt yoga in your daily life.

Friends, a few days ago I had gone to Japan. Amid many of my programmes, I got a chance to meet some wonderful personalities. I want to discuss about them with you in 'Mann Ki Baat'. Though they belong to Japan, they harbour amazing attachment and love for India. One of them is Hiroshi Koike ji, who is a well-known Art Director. You will be very happy to know that he has directed the Mahabharat Project. This project was started in Cambodia and it is continuing for the last 9 years. Hiroshi Koike ji performs every task in a very different way. Every year, he travels to one country in Asia and produces parts of the Mahabharata with local artists and musicians there. Through this project, he has done productions and given stage performances in nine countries including India, Cambodia and Indonesia. Hiroshi Koike-ji brings together artists who have had a diverse background in Classical and Traditional Asian Performing Art. Because of that, different hues are seen in his work. Performers from Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and Japan make it more attractive through Java dance, Balinese dance, Thai dance. The special thing is that in this each performer speaks in his own mother tongue and the choreography very beautifully displays this diversity and the diversity of music makes this production more lively. Their aim is to bring to the fore the importance of Diversity and Co-existence in our society and what peace should really be like. Besides them, the other two people I met in Japan are Atsushi Matsuo-ji and Kenji Yoshi-ji. Both of them are associated with TEM Production Company. This company is associated with the Japanese Animation Film based on Ramayana that was released in 1993. This project was associated with Japan's very famous film director Yugo Sako Ji. About 40 years ago, in 1983, he came to know about Ramayana for the first time. 'Ramayana' touched his heart, after which he started researching deeply on it. Not only that, he read 10 versions of Ramayana in Japanese language, and not only did he stop at this, he also wanted to showcase it through animation. In this, Indian animators also helped him a lot, he was guided

about the Indian customs and traditions shown in the film. He was told how people in India wear the dhoti, how they wear the saree, how they groom their hair... How children respect each other within the family, what the tradition of blessing is! Waking up in the morning, offering salutation to the elders of the household, seeking their blessings - all these things! Now, after 30 years this animation film is being re-mastered in 4K. This project is likely to be completed soon. People living thousands of kilometers away from us in Japan, who don't know our language, who don't know much about our traditions, their dedication to our culture, this reverence, this respect, is very commendable - which Indian would not be proud of that!

My dear countrymen, the mantra of serving the society by rising above the self, is a part of our values, our sanskar. Countless people in our country are making this mantra their life goal. I came to know about Ram Bhupal Reddy ji, a friend living in Markapuram, Andhra Pradesh. You will be surprised to know that Ram Bhupal Reddy ji has donated all his earnings after retirement for the education of daughters. He got accounts opened for about 100 daughters under 'Sukanya Samridhi Yojana', and deposited more than 25 lakhs in it. Another example of such service is of Kachora village of Agra in U.P. There was a shortage of fresh water in this village for many years. Meanwhile, Kunwar Singh, a farmer of the village found water in his field 6-7 km away from the village. It was a matter of great joy for him. He thought... why not serve all the other villagers too with this water! But, 30-32 lakh rupees were needed to transport the water from the farm to the village. After some time, Kunwar Singh's younger brother Shyam Singh came to the village after retiring from the army, and he came to know about it. He handed over all his money received on retirement for this work and by laying a pipeline from the farm to the village; he supplied fresh water to the villagers. If there is

dedication, seriousness towards one's duties, how even a single person can change the future of the whole society, this endeavor is a big inspiration. Only by walking on the path of duty can we empower the society; empower the country. In this 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', this should be our resolution and this should also be our sadhana....which has only one path - duty, duty and duty.

My dear countrymen, today in 'Mann Ki Baat' we discussed many important topics related to society. All of you send important suggestions related to different topics to me, and on the basis of them our discussion moves forward. Don't forget to send your suggestions for the next edition of 'Mann Ki Baat'. At present, the ongoing programs related to the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav; the events in which you are participating... do let me know about them. I look forward to your suggestions on Namo app and MyGov. Next time we will meet once again... we will again talk on similar topics related to our countrymen. Take care of yourself and also take care of all the living being around you. In this summer season, you should continue to fulfill your humane responsibility of providing food and water for the animals and birds...Do remember this. Thank you very much.