

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS ON GeM

Womaniya initiative seeks to encourage the participation of women entrepreneurs and SHG on GeM. A function was held to commemorate the success of 'Womaniya on Government eMarketplace (GeM)' in New Delhi. Savitri Singh, Deputy Chief Executive, NCUI was the Chief Guest, and was accompanied by Guests of Honor Dr R K Singh, Chief General Manager, Small Industries Development Bank of India, and Dr Ishita Ganguli Tripathi, Additional Development Commissioner, Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), Government of India.

The event was held by GeM in partnership with Self-Employed Women's Association, Bharat (SEWA Bharat) and attended by women entrepreneurs and participants from stakeholder organizations and associations. Highlights of the event included presentations on financial literacy by Piya Bahadur, Co-founder & CEO, MeraBills, presentation by Sanchita Mitra, National Coordinator, SEWA Bharat on the new opportunities created for women entrepreneurs within the informal economy through digital inclusion, short film on GeM seller testimonials, 'Voices from the Ground' by SEWA Bharat and informal discussion by policy experts on 'Womaniya in public procurement'.


Launched in 2019, the 'Womaniya' initiative has sought to encourage the participation of women entrepreneurs and self-help groups (SHG) from the informal sector on the GeM portal and facilitate the sale of their products directly to various Government buyers, sans intermediaries. Generic product categories were created for listing of handicrafts and handloom, accessories, jute and coir products, bamboo products, organic foods, spices, home décor and office furnishings to facilitate ease-in product catalogue listing and procurement from women entrepreneurs.

Presently, 1.44 lakh+ Udyam-verified women micro, small enterprises (MSE) known as 'Womaniya' are registered as sellers and service-providers on the GeM portal and have fulfilled 14.76 lakh+ orders worth INR 21,265 Crore in Gross Merchandise Value (GMV). The ratio of the order value is 74 percent in products to 26 percent in Service categories. Top five (5) product categories in which women have registered their presence include Desktop Computers, Smart Phone-IS:13252, Special Purpose Telephones (Smart Phone For ICDS), Smart Phone and Hopper Tipper Dumper, and top five (5) service categories include Manpower Outsourcing Services - Minimum Wage, Custom Bid for Services, Human Resource Outsourcing Service, Monthly Basis Cab & Taxi Hiring Services, and Manpower Outsourcing Services - Fixed Remuneration.

Speaking at the event, the Chief Guest Savitri Singh, Deputy Chief Executive, NCUI emphasized the contribution of women as entrepreneurs in the society and shared the initiatives of NCUI Cooperative Education Field Projects tailored towards the socio-economic growth of women through advocacy, outreach, mobilization and capacity-building of women from SHGs to Cooperative Societies in North East and underdeveloped areas of India. Guests of Honour Dr. R.K. Singh, and Dr. Ishita Ganguli Tripathi, also addressed the audience and briefed the attendees about the various Government schemes available through SIDBI and the Ministry of MSME for the benefit of women entrepreneurs.

ACEO & CFO, Y K Pathak, highlighted social inclusion as the core value at GeM and complimented all women entrepreneurs on the stellar success of the 'Womaniya' initiative with Government buyers. He thanked members of the business community, emerging and aspiring entrepreneurs, especially; women, tribal and SC/ ST MSEs, SHGs, artisans and weavers, and Startups, among others for their unbound enthusiasm and participation on the GeM portal. The objective of 'Womaniya' is to develop women entrepreneurship on the margins of society who face challenges in accessing public procurement markets, and work towards achieving gender inclusive economic growth of under-served seller groups such as such as women-owned and led MSEs, tribal entrepreneurs, Divyangjan, Startups, SHGs, artisan and weavers. 'Womaniya' neatly aligns with the Government's initiative to set aside a target of three (3) percent in public procurement for women-owned and led MSEs.

GeM has taken a series of steps to develop and roll-out new business processes and functionalities for the promotion of 'Womaniya' on GeM. Notable steps include; the development of dedicated product categories for the seamless listing of handicraft, handloom, khadi, and innovative products, creation of GeM Outlet Stores to promote products from the under-served seller groups, marketplace filters to distinguish products made by 'Womaniya' and SC/ ST entrepreneurs and market icons to help Government buyers identify products made exclusively by 'Womaniya', launch of a new service vertical 'Stitching and Tailoring Services' on the portal to provide women seamstresses in urban and rural areas with excellent hyper-local access to markets' opportunities for delivering office décor/ accessories to Government offices and dress uniforms for ASHA/ Anganwadi workers, schools, hospitals, state police and paramilitary forces, central/ state public sector enterprises and others, sans intermediaries. GeM has inked memorandums of understanding (MoU) with Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) to train, assist and enable women-led micro and small enterprises, women entrepreneurs and SHGs in public procurement, and with Usha Silai School to train and upskill women seamstresses as service-providers in public procurement. Last-mile stakeholders such as Local Bodies, Cooperative Societies, Panchayati Raj institutions, among others and stakeholders' such as corporates, private companies, colleges, scientific and technical research institutions, and universities, among others in public procurement will benefit from the growth and the success of the 'Womaniya' initiative. The 'Womaniya' initiative seeks to address the triple challenge of access to markets', access to finance' and access to value-addition' faced by women entrepreneurs and strives to align the untapped entrepreneurial energy of last-mile producers and service-providers in India with local Government buyers. This will spur hyper-local procurement thereby integrating local value-chains through Vocal for Local and 'Make in India' initiatives of the Government, thereby furthering the aim of ensuring a self-reliant 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'.



OFF 'D' CUFF

Seven Days

Thursday: When the concept of soul was superimposed on ego, ego became synonymous with soul.

Friday: Because freedom comes with great uncertainty, the regularity of rules and routines appear deceptively comforting.

Saturday: Those who think they have nothing left to learn, have yet to begin learning.

Sunday: Love is the highest form of respect.

—Thomas Easley

Monday: We look for what we think we'll see, not for what can be seen.

Tuesday: Because the present moment is in constant renewal, ego cannot attach to it.

Wednesday: We are here physically...just as animals, trees, and rocks. We are not here consciously. We need to be.

Empowerment of farmers through agricultural extension

■ DR BANARSI LAL

Agricultural extension as a profession has completed more than five decades of its existence. Substantial contribution has been made by this profession for the development of farmers. Extension and research are the cardinal pillars of agricultural development of any nation. In order to get the true potential, the country need to go along way to meet the challenges to increase the agricultural and animal production from the available resources, keeping in mind the ecological and environmental sustainability. There is need to tune our technology transfer system in line with the national and international level. Farmer is backed with many sources of extension services. The extension services are provided to the farmers by the government institutes, directorates, research centers, input companies, NGOs, agro-processors, cooperatives etc. The agricultural extension and supported extension services are unique in structure and function. Interestingly, agricultural extension is not restricted to single fixed programme rather it adjusts according to the changing needs of the society. There is need to assess as to how the effectiveness of this profession could be increased to achieve our cherished goal of developing agriculture. To mitigate the challenges in the new millennium, there is an urgent need to redefine the structure and functions of agricultural extension. Also to make agricultural extension more viable and efficient tool of technology transfer, several issues must be addressed so that it can be further meaningful to accommodate with the changing scenario of agricultural research and development in coming years.

In India, about 70 per cent of the farmers are resource poor, comprising marginal and small farmers. They do not fully adopt the technologies recommended by extension workers because of many reasons. Many

times it is found that these recommendations are not compatible with the farming system of the farmers. Much emphasis should be given to this section of farmers while designing and developing the agricultural technologies. It has been observed that the developed technologies must be tuned with the requirements of the farmers in his farming situations. The existing extension approach is questioned for being mainly push type. Sometimes the extension workers take the developed technologies to the farmers irrespective of their applicability and suitability of the farming system. There is a need to identify and delineate the specific farming situation or recommendation domain to which the specific intervention could suit. There is need to develop the appropriate, location specific, ecological sustainable and economically viable technologies that could be compatible and suitable for the resource poor farmers inevitable. Several methods such as farming systems research and extension, broad based approach, technology assessment and refinement (TAR) through institution-village linkage programme etc. have been initiated in this direction. The matching of the technology with the farming systems characteristics are operationalised through such methods. Moreover the traditional system of the farmers need to be appreciated, documented and validated in order to bring them under the domain of appropriate technology. Technology transfer is a process for creating the awareness among the farmers about the new technologies, then generating interest about the given technology, creating conviction so that they can evaluate it within their own agro climatic conditions and finally adopt it to increase the production. It has been observed that there are five factors which mainly limit the process of technology transfer. These include the limited availability of location specific technology and the low degree of ability to understand risk and uncertainty, lack of strong support systems, weak

economic base of the households and farm resources, weak infrastructure and market structure have increased the bottlenecks in technology transfer process. Many models have been developed in India and in abroad for developing effective and functional linkages between researchers and farmers. There is no single extension system which can be described as the best model in all the countries for all the farmers. The extension models need to be drawn, modified and adopted according to the farming system of the farmers. The technology transfer paradigm is mainly of two types namely-i) TOT (transfer of technology), which is simple and indicate the linear relationship between research, extension and farmers. The technologies are transferred through a pipeline. ii) Circular model of TOT (transfer of technology), which helps to bring researchers and farmers much closer through much emphasis on adaptive researches in farmer's field. It helps for the two-way communication and development of multiple options for innovations. Both the models of TOT suggest evolving a paradigm of TOT which could be most appropriately considered by the extension wing. Any agricultural extension system is related to its ability to build and maintain the linkages of various types. A research-Extension-Farmers linkage acts as a backbone for implementing participatory methodologies at the field level. Emphasis is also required for developing linkages with the systems such as NGOs, farmers' organizations, input agencies and other formal and informal knowledge and information systems. It has been observed that there is need to strengthen the linkage between research, extension and farmers. In order to strengthen linkage between research, extension and farmers, there is a need to institutionalize more number of structural mechanisms and simultaneously there frequency of activities has to be kept regular as well as contingent.

The female population of India constitutes

about 48 per cent of the total population. It has been reported that 79.40 per cent of all economically active women are engaged in agriculture as compared to 63.33 per cent of men. Women role in agriculture and livestock farming is very crucial. The technology related to agriculture and livestock farming must reach to the women farmers. It has been observed that the limited impact of new technologies on rural women is due to the factors viz. their neglect by the extension workers who are mostly men, lack of authorities to them, lack of their participation in development process and lack of gender-based technology. This is a global issue and needs more attention as women play the very important role in agriculture. For an effective extension system there is a need to have well defined objectives and priorities of extension programmes, effective linkages with the other organizations such as research, financial institutions, marketing systems, input suppliers etc. Also there is a need of adequate financial support and adequate number and well trained and motivated staff. The provision of regular in-service refresher trainings for the extension workers cannot be ruled out. There is also need to stress on the privatization of agricultural extension services at national level. Also there is a need to identify area and type of farmers, geographic locations to whom private extension system can suit. In Indian system of farming there is a need to mix up public, private, voluntary and cooperative extension efforts. The existing extension system of our country mostly operates on the basis of selected contact farmers, whereas, the resource poor farmers are neglected in the process of technology development and dissemination process. Thus, redefinition in such approach should be in terms of involvement of representatives of all groups of farmers' classified on the basis of resources.

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Festival of Makar Sankranti

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

The festival of Makar Sankranti has great importance in Sanatan Dharma and it is celebrated on the second day after festival of Lohri. The Makar Sankranti is observed and celebrated with great religious and spiritual devotion by crores of Indians. The festival is dedicated to Lord Surya and is celebrated at different places of India differently and it is the shining example of diverse culture and diversity and the unity in diversity is the valuable treasure of grand culture of India and this should be maintained at all costs because the beauty of Indian culture lies in its diversity. This festival is the harbinger of change, positivity, enthusiasm, climate change and new beginning. Makar Sankranti also referred as Uttarayana, Makar or simply Sankranti is a Hindu observance and a festival. Usually falling on 14th January every year, this auspicious occasion marks the transition of sun from the zodiac of Sagittarius (Dhanu) to Capricorn (Makra). Since the sun is regarded to have moved from the southern hemisphere to the northern hemisphere on this day in the Hindu calendar. As mentioned at the outset, the festival of Makar Sankranti is dedicated to the solar deity, Surya and is observed to mark a new beginning. Many native multi-day festivals are organized on this occasion all over India. In fact the whole month of Maagaur Maggar is very pious in Hindu scriptures so much so that a person who dies during this month is said to reach heaven and this is described in the holy Bhagwat Gita and therefore this month has special significance for Hindus. The festivities associated with Makar Sankranti are known by various names, Makar Sankranti in Kerala. Magh Bihu in Assam, Magi Saaji in Himachal Pradesh, Magi Sangrand or Uttarain (Uttarayana) in Jammu, Sakrat in central India, Pongal in Tamil Nadu, Uttarayan in Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh, Ghughuti in Uttarakhand, Dahi Chura in Bihar, Makar Sankranti in Odisha, Karnataka, Goa, West Bengal (also Posh Sankranti or Mokor Sonkranti, Uttar Pradesh also called Khichidi Sankranti, Uttarakhand also called Uttarayan, or simply Sankranti in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, in Gujarat and Rajasthan, it is called Uttarayan. On this day there is the competition of kite flying and the day is celebrated with great fervor. In Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh it is celebrated as Makar

Sankarmama. The festival is celebrated for three days as Pongal. In Tamil Nadu it is called Pongal and is celebrated as the festival of harvesting of crops by the farmers. In Kashmir Makar Sankranti is called Shishar Sankrant and used to be celebrated with great devotion. As already pointed out Makar Sankranti marks the change of the sun into Makar or Capricorn Zodiac. According to Hindu tradition, it is a very auspicious occasion. On this day lakhs of the Hindus and others take a holy dip in the waters of holy Ganga at Haridwar, Allahabad, Kashi and other places. People also to holy dip in other big rivers all over country. It is believed that devotees are freed from sins by taking a dip in sacred waters of Ganges and other rivers. On this day lakhs of devotees offer prayers to sun God after taking a dip in holy water of Ganges and other rivers across the country. Makar Sankranti is being celebrated on 14th and 15th January and there is great fervor and enthusiasm among the lakhs of devotees who take holy dip in Ganges from Haridwar to Bengal. Offering of 'Til' is given to sun God on this day and it is believed that by offering 'Til' happiness comes in the lives of people. In the Gudmukhashwar like areas there is big rush of devotees and 40 lakh to 40 lakh devotees are expected to take holy bath in Ganges at Prayagraj. The festival of Makar Sankranti is celebrated in whole north India with great enthusiasm and fervor. As per Hindu Almanac calendars are of two kinds. One is based on sun and the other on moon. This festival is celebrated on the basis of sun calendar. This year the festival of Makar Sankranti will be observed and celebrated on 15th of January. The entering of the sun in the northern hemisphere has a great value in our life such is said in our scriptures. The days are big as the sun entering into Uttarayan and the working capacity of the people also increase and there is progress and development in the lives of the people. The festival of Makar Sankranti is symbolic of progress, enthusiasm and positivity. On the beginning of Makar Sankranti, the Hindu month of Maag or Makar also starts. This festival is the harbingers of spring season, harvesting of crops and fructifying of trees and plants. The festival of Makar Sankranti is known by different names in different states and it is the symbol and sign of our diversity. We should celebrate the spirit behind this festival and uphold the diversity of Indian culture. In

some parts of the country kite flying is done on this day and children as well as adults take a great joy in flying kites of different colors. The Sankranti Patang date is on 14th and 15th January and one can fly kites from the morning of 14th January. However some astrologers and specialists said that the best time to fly kites in the sky is on 15th of January from morning. Makar Sankranti is a Hindu festival celebrated and observed throughout the country in different forms and ways and this festival is the best symbol of the diverse culture of India. The people of different faiths celebrate their festivals jointly and great each other on the festivals. The Kashmir Pandits celebrate this festival by encircling their homes with lime and by doing this ritual it is believed that all negative energies will vanish from their homes. In the same way the Makar Sankranti is celebrated by the people of India cutting across religious affiliations and this festival helps in the national unity and integration and therefore we should celebrate this festival with great pomp and show and should celebrate the spirit behind the celebration of this festival. Since India is the land of various faiths, cultures, languages and regions and it is our duty to celebrate different festivals jointly to further and strengthen the bonds of national unity. India is a unique land in the whole world where people belonging to different religious faiths live and prosper side by side and the people of different religions celebrate their festivals commonly and this is the chief characteristic of our Ganga-Jammi culture and all the people have the responsibility to celebrate and observe different festivals jointly and in common so that the our unity in diversity is maintained. Makar Sankranti is one such big festival of the Indians through observance of which national integration is furthered and diversity is also strengthened. To conclude let the sun God to whom this festival is dedicated, bless us all and direct our energies to our collective good so that all of us remain contented and happy and spend our days for national and common good. There is no better way to celebrate the festival of Makar Sankranti than to celebrate it in common and jointly to strengthen the unity as well as diversity for which our country is famous throughout the globe.

(The author is a columnist, social and KP activist).

Role of Unani treatment in COVID-19 pandemic

■ DR TOUSEEF KHALIL KAMAL

Since December 2019, world is facing a respiratory pandemic named Coronavirus. COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The term epidemic was coined by Hippocrates who is considered the father of Unani medicine which is based on four humours. In the Unani System of Medicine (USM) equivalent term for the epidemic is Wab'. In classical Unani literature symptoms of Nazla-i-Wab'iyya and Humma-i-Wab'iyya closely resemble the symptoms of COVID-19. Major manifestations of this outbreak are cough, fever, headache, nausea, and breathlessness. This pandemic takes place due to a change in the quality of the surrounding air. We searched different databases electronically using the terms 'COVID-19 or Coronavirus', 'Wab?' or infectious disease', 'Unani immunomodulators', 'Herbal immunomodulators', 'Anti-viral herbal drugs', Herbal fumigation and 'Nazla-i-Wab'iyya or Nazla Wab'iy'. We reviewed the concept of Wab', its prevention, and management strategies available in USM. The emergence of Covid-19 has caused a large global outbreak and is a major public health issue. COVID-19 is that it is highly contagious mainly transmitted by droplets and fomitus. Till date there is no defined protocol for management of COVID-19 in these times of crises. The present control strategies of the disease include interrupting the mode of transmission, reduction of secondary infections by early diagnosis and isolation of cases, providing optimal

care to infected patients, and the development of effective diagnostic, preventive and therapeutic strategies, including vaccines. Holistic approach of AYUSH systems of medicine gives focus on prevention through lifestyle modification, dietary management, prophylactic interventions for improving the immunity and simple remedies based on presentation of the symptoms. In Unani medicine, there is detailed description of wabah (epidemic), Alahidagee (Isolation) and Quarantine. It was Hippocrates who coined the term quarantine and advised restriction of movement for forty days to the suspects. Asbab-e-Sittah Zarooriyah (Six essentials of life) one of the basic principles of Unani can play an important role in overall development of immunity of a person and prevention of disease which will be discussed in full length paper. Fumigation of surroundings with herbs, use of modified and specific diets and Unani drugs to enhance quwat-e-mudabar-e-badan (innate immunity) can play an important role to fight this covid-19 pandemic.

Health experts are time and again insisting on boosting our immunity. Although it has not been proved whether strong immunity helps in treating the novel Coronavirus or not, it may help you have an overall better health. While some people are blessed with good immunity, others are resorting to various natural ways to strengthen their stamina, immune system and overall health. Many of us are practicing regular yoga, breathing exercises and more and even trying natural concoctions like herbal teas, drinks and kadhas. Speaking about kadha, it will not be an

exaggeration if we term it to be one of the oldest and treasured medicinal secrets of India. It is basically a mix of various traditional herbs and spices that help us to keep strong from within.

These herbs also help increase the production of interferons (proteins) and antibodies to generate an immune response against viruses and increase the rate of phagocytosis to destroy microorganisms, thus, increasing immunity from containing viral infections. Dr Shahid Badar, BUMS from Aligarh is an Internal Medicine Specialist and has over 15 years of experience in the medical field (An Unani physician). One of the best Unani Physicians I have ever seen. He is also my GURU (teacher) after discussing with him, advice me to prescribe the Unani kadha (Joshanda-e-Badar) to the patients. Here we bring you an easy immunity-boosting Unani Kadha (Joshanda-e-Badar) recipe that can be prepared with some herbs like 6 gm-Afsanteen, 6 gm-Giloy and 6 gm-Chiraita.

My Personal Views: When I (Dr. Touseef Khalil Kamal) Classical Unani Physician become Covid-19 Positive (With all Sign Symptoms like Fever, Cough, Chest Congestion, Breathing problems etc.) I started Consuming Unani Kadha (Joshanda-e-Badar) Personal formulation twice a day and take proper rest, has helped me to survive against this deadly viral disease and become negative after 15 days (Without taking any Antibiotic). I also prescribed this Unani kadha to so many patients during this pandemic and the result is unbelievable. (My COVID-19 report and

one more report of my Patient are attached with this Article for your reference). In view of the recent surge of COVID-19 trajectory in many countries, it is necessary to take requisite measure to tackle with this deadly disease. Outbreaks of respiratory viral infections like Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, Middle-East Respiratory Syndrome, and Coronavirus Disease-2019 have been a regular occurrence in the past many years. A significant proportion of the morbidity and mortality in influenza is attributed to the co-morbidities and complications induced by the disease, involving the vital organs and physiological functions. In this context, traditional medicines offer effective protective, palliative, and therapeutic benefits, as observed in several studies on various types of influenza, including COVID-19. The Unani herbal decoction comprising of 'Um?b (Ziziphus jujuba Mill. fruit), Sapist?n (Cordia dichotoma G. Forst. fruit), and Behd?na (Cydonia oblonga Mill. seed) was originally prescribed by Hakim Ajmal Khan (1868-1927 AD) for various respiratory ailments as a bronchodilator, anti-inflammatory, and for clearing the respiratory tract. During COVID-19, the decoction was prescribed by the Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy (AYUSH), Government of India, for mild patients in home isolation, and also as a self-care drink for healthy people. Preliminary studies are of the view that the decoction could reduce COVID-19 incidence and prevent severe disease in the population where it was administered.

(The author is a Unani Physician).