

WORLD AUDIO-VISUAL ENTERTAINMENT SUMMIT

The World Audio-Visual Entertainment Summit (WAVES) is an international event that brings together thought leaders, innovators, and industry professionals from across the globe to discuss the rapidly evolving world of audio-visual entertainment. Held annually, the summit provides a platform for discussing new technologies, creative advancements, and market trends that are reshaping how content is created, distributed, and consumed in today's multimedia landscape.

As the entertainment industry continues to experience transformation, with advancements in streaming platforms, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and interactive media, WAVES serves as a critical gathering for those invested in shaping the future of entertainment. The summit typically features keynote speeches, panel discussions, workshops, and networking opportunities, fostering collaboration between content creators, distributors, investors, and technology innovators.

The central theme of WAVES is always focused on exploring emerging trends that have the potential to redefine the future of audio-visual entertainment. Topics of discussion often include the growth of over-the-top (OTT) platforms, the role of artificial intelligence in content creation and personalization, immersive experiences through virtual and augmented reality, and the integration of blockchain technology in content rights management and distribution.

One of the most prominent aspects of the summit is its focus on the growing dominance of OTT platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Disney+, which have revolutionized how audiences consume content. Discussions often delve into how these platforms are disrupting traditional television and film industries, leading to the rise of direct-to-consumer services, new content formats, and innovative business models.

Virtual and augmented reality (VR/AR) are also key focal points, with companies showcasing cutting-edge experiences that allow consumers to interact with content in entirely new ways. This includes everything from immersive gaming experiences to VR concerts and live events that bring a new dimension to storytelling.

WAVES provides a unique opportunity for content creators to showcase their work, network with distributors, and explore new ways to reach global audiences. With the explosion of streaming services and digital content platforms, the summit emphasizes the importance of adapting content for a variety of platforms while maintaining creativity and quality. Panel discussions explore how to best navigate the complexities of global content distribution, regionalization, and localization, all while ensuring that creators' intellectual property rights are respected and protected.

Content creation is also evolving with the rise of user-generated content (UGC) and the increasing importance of social media platforms. From YouTube to TikTok, UGC has become a significant driver of entertainment trends, with creators now able to directly engage with their audiences.

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Completes 10 Years: Driving Women-Led Development for a Viksit Bharat

■ ANN PURNA DEVI



As India marches confidently toward its vision of becoming Viksit Bharat by 2047, the transformative impact of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme is a testament to how far we have come in our transition from women's development to women-led development. Swami Vivekananda once said, "There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing." Inspired by this timeless vision, the Honourable Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, launched the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) scheme on January 22, 2015, in Panipat, Haryana. This landmark initiative sought to address the declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR) in India and ensure that girls and women across the nation have the opportunities, care, and dignity they deserve.

The 2011 Census revealed a deeply concerning Child Sex Ratio of 918, a stark reflection of societal biases and the misuse of diagnostic tools. Through targeted, life-cycle-focused interventions, Beti BachaoBeti Padhao was launched to not only reverse this trend but also lay the foundation for a future where women lead and thrive.

Over the past decade, the scheme has catalyzed significant progress. According to the Health Management Information System, the national Sex Ratio at Birth has improved from 918 in 2014-15 to 930 in 2023-24. Institutional deliveries have surged from 61% in 2014-15 to 97.3% in 2023-24, while first-trimester ante-natal care registrations increased from 61% to 80.5%. Gross enrolment ratios for girls at the secondary level rose from 75.51% in



2014-15 to 79.4% in 2021-22. Additionally, the gap in infant mortality rates between male and female newborns has nearly disappeared, reflecting our commitment to equity in survival and care.

Under the visionary leadership of our Honourable Prime Minister, The Beti Bachao Beti Padhao movement has gone beyond improving statistics; it has redefined the narrative around women's empowerment. Initiatives like the Yashaswini Bike Expedition, a 10,000-km journey by 150 women bikers in October 2023, symbolized the indomitable spirit of India's daughters. The Kanya Shiksha Pravesh Utsav in 2022 re-enrolled nearly 100,786 out-of-school girls, showcasing the power of education in transforming lives. The National Conference on Skilling emphasized the importance of women's active participation in the workforce, bringing

us closer to our vision of women-led development.

As we celebrate ten years of this transformative initiative, it is clear that the mission is far from over. If we are to achieve the vision of Viksit Bharat, it is imperative to ensure that girls and women remain at the heart of our nation-building efforts. India cannot develop till her girls and women are able to live out their full potential. This is the time for us to take decisive action. We must strengthen the implementation of the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act of 1994, address dropout rates in education, expand skill development programs, and provide targeted interventions at every stage of a girl's life.

For the Financial Year 2023-2024, Female Labour Force Participation in India stood at 41.7%. While this is a sig-

nificant increase from previous years, it is still below the Labour Force Participation of Men. Noteworthy also, is the fact that Female Labour Force Participation in the Urban areas is lower than Female Labour Force Participation in the Rural areas of the country. A large number of women in India, are involved in unpaid domestic care work. Our endeavour should be to not only foster an environment for more women to leave the folds of their domestic spheres and take up employment outside the house, but also to create a means to promote care work as a valid career and a profession, so women who are trained in care work, and want to pursue it, can do so while also gaining financial independence and seeing their efforts contribute to the economic growth of the country. According to the World Economic Forum, closing the workforce gender gap could increase global GDP by 20%. For India, this is not just an opportunity-it is a necessity. Women-led development is central to achieving our goal of a trillion-dollar economy and becoming a developed nation by 2047. The Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme is not just a program; it is a movement that has inspired millions and positioned women at the forefront of India's progress.

Under the visionary leadership of our Honourable Prime Minister, we are witnessing a historic transformation. From women's development to women-led development, the daughters of India are rising as changemakers, entrepreneurs, and leaders. They are transforming into the leaders of their own growth story. Together, let us nurture their dreams and empower their journeys, ensuring that when India completes 100 years of independence, it does so as a nation where every woman plays a central role in shaping its destiny.

(The writer is Union Minister for Women and Child Development)

Mahakumbh: The World's Biggest Religious and Economic Extravaganza

■ MANMOHAN DHAR

The Mahakumbh, or Kumbh Mela, is a spectacular confluence of spirituality, tradition, and human connection. Regarded as the world's largest religious gathering, the event sees millions of devotees descend upon the banks of sacred rivers in India, seeking purification through ritual bathing. Yet, beyond its profound religious significance, the Mahakumbh also serves as a massive economic and logistical phenomenon, drawing the attention of governments, businesses, and pilgrims alike. This unique blend of faith and commerce makes it not only a religious extravaganza but also one of the largest human gatherings on the planet.

The Kumbh Mela finds its origins in Hindu mythology, with the name "Kumbh" referring to a mythical pot that contains the nectar of immortality. The festival celebrates the occasion when the gods and demons fought over the pot of nectar, with some of it spilling into four key river locations: (Prayagraj), Haridwar, Ujjain, and Nashik. These cities rotate as the venue for the event every 12 years, with Prayagraj hosting the Mahakumbh every 144 years.

The most sacred ritual during the Kumbh Mela is the snan (holy dip), where devotees immerse themselves in the waters of the Ganges, Yamuna, or other sacred rivers to cleanse their souls

and seek spiritual liberation. For millions, this moment is not just an act of religious devotion but a once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage, an experience that transcends both personal and communal significance.

The Mahakumbh sees the convergence of millions of pilgrims, sadhus (holy men), spiritual leaders, and tourists, creating an atmosphere charged with devotion, introspection, and a deep sense of collective identity. It is a celebration of faith, unity, and the shared belief in the power of divine waters to purify and elevate the human spirit.

While the religious aspect of the Mahakumbh is paramount, the event also has far-reaching economic implications. The scale of the gathering, which can attract over 100 million people in just one iteration of the Mahakumbh, leads to a spike in local, regional, and even national economic activity. What begins as a sacred pilgrimage becomes a dynamic marketplace that serves the diverse needs of those attending the festival.

The Mahakumbh is a powerful driver of local economies, particularly for the host cities. Businesses catering to pilgrims experience a significant boom. Street vendors, food stalls, souvenir sellers, and accommodations - from makeshift tents to luxury hotels - thrive in the months leading up to the event. Local artisans and craftsmen also



benefit, offering religious items like incense, malas (prayer beads), and traditional clothing.

Infrastructure development around the event is another major economic boost. Roads, sanitation facilities, temporary shelters, and healthcare centers are erected to accommodate the millions of visitors. The Indian government, in collaboration with local authorities, allocates large sums for building the necessary infrastructure, which leaves a lasting impact on the region even after the event concludes.

The Mahakumbh's scale also

attracts national attention, with companies seizing the opportunity to promote their brands to a vast and diverse audience. Advertising campaigns, product launches, and promotional events are often tied to the festival's religious themes, making the Kumbh Mela not only a pilgrimage but also a cultural and commercial spectacle.

The event creates thousands of temporary jobs, providing income for workers in various sectors, including hospitality, transportation, security, and sanitation. Skilled and unskilled labor alike is required for the construction

of temporary infrastructure, making the Mahakumbh an important source of employment for local populations.

Organizing the Mahakumbh is an enormous undertaking. The logistics behind hosting such a colossal event are mind-boggling, especially considering the need for smooth transportation, water management, sanitation, healthcare, and security. The Indian government works closely with local authorities, law enforcement agencies, and humanitarian organizations to ensure the safety and well-being of millions of visitors.

Transporting millions of

people to the event locations requires extensive planning and coordination. Special trains, buses, and temporary roads are constructed to handle the influx of visitors, and it is not uncommon for the entire transportation network to be overhauled in the months leading up to the event. The pilgrimage often spans several weeks, with the peak of attendance occurring on auspicious bathing days. On these days, the mass of people can stretch for kilometers along the riverbanks.

Security, too, is a significant concern. Given the scale of the crowd, authorities deploy thousands of police officers to ensure order and prevent potential disasters. Emergency services are heightened, with makeshift hospitals and medical camps set up to provide aid to those in need.

Though the Mahakumbh is rooted in Hindu traditions, its universal themes of spiritual renewal, communal unity, and the quest for inner peace attract people from all walks of life. It is an event that transcends national, cultural, and religious boundaries, drawing global attention to India's rich spiritual heritage.

For many, the Kumbh Mela serves as a reminder of humanity's shared desire for spiritual growth and enlightenment. It also offers a unique window into the lives and practices of India's diverse religious communities. Foreign visitors to the

Mahakumbh not only seek spiritual renewal but also an opportunity to experience one of the world's most extraordinary cultural gatherings firsthand.

As India continues to grow as a global economic and cultural powerhouse, the Mahakumbh is poised to become an even more significant event in the coming decades. With advancements in technology and infrastructure, future Kumbh Melas will likely be more organized and accessible, providing new opportunities for pilgrims and businesses alike.

However, the core essence of the Mahakumbh - its focus on spirituality, renewal, and human connection - will likely remain unchanged. As such, the Mahakumbh stands as a powerful symbol of the enduring strength of religious and cultural traditions, offering both a deep spiritual experience and a remarkable economic phenomenon.

The Mahakumbh is far more than just a religious festival; it is a multifaceted event that brings together faith, commerce, culture, and human spirit. Every twelve years, it creates a temporary city that serves as a reminder of humanity's eternal search for meaning and connection. Whether one views it as a divine pilgrimage, a cultural gathering, or an economic powerhouse, the Mahakumbh undoubtedly remains one of the world's most awe-inspiring and influential spectacles.

Know the medicinal values of Mulathi/Liquorice (Glycyrrhiza glabra Linn)

■ PROF. (DR) R.D. GUPTA

According to Trivedi et al. (1981), India did not grow liquorice upto 1980 and used to import it of worth Rupees 5 crore (Rs. 50 millions) from West Asian countries. It has been reported that liquorice used to cultivate in Punjab and Himalayas ,from the river Chenab eastward. The dried peeled or unpeeled underground stem and roots mainly constitute the drug of commerce. Liquorice roots are used in preparation of medicines in Ayurveda, Unani and Allopathic systems. Roots of liquorice possess a sweet pleasant taste and faint odour, and as such liquorice has been known by the name of "Sweet wood" in English.

Medicinal Values:Liquorice roots are mainly used in the preparation of cough syrups and catarrhal mixture, throat lozenges and pastilles. They have been originally used in the thirst abating substances. Roots of

liquorice are a tonic and mildly laxative.

Liquorice is given in liver, lungs and urinary bladder problems, root is used in scorpion bite. Its decoction is given in inflammatory affections of respiratory system, bowls and catarrh and urino-gentle system, asthma and dysuria. Roots of liquorice are also tonic and mildly laxative. The extract of the roots possesses healing affect on peptic ulcers.

Liquorice is used in manufacture of the confectionary and brewery industries. It is also used in blending, chewing tobacco in the USA. As already stated, dried peeled or unpeeled underground stem and root constitute the drug of commerce which contain, "glycyrrhizin" ranging from 2 to 14 percent in various varieties. The glycyrrhizin is emendable for sweet taste is the liquorice and it is fifty times as weeat as cane sugar and its sweetness is perceptible even in dilution of 1:20,000 parts. As

regards the official standards according to British Pharmacopa, the liquorice roots should contain not less than 20 percent water soluble matter and not more than 10 percent as in unpeeled liquorice and 6 percent ash in peeled liquorice.

It is worthwhile to mention that liquorice is given in combination with many other drugs. For example, it is added to various laxative powders, cough syrup confections, lozenges etc. Root powder given with lemon juice, is a home remedy for cough, colds, pains, breathing problems and bilious fever.Liquorice is any Ayurvedic drug and is born on pharmacopeas. As a matter of fact, liquorice is proved one of the most popular healing herb in Ayurvedic Medicines. It is as popular today as it was 3000 years ago and is freely available today even at the grocers shops. It is a good alternative i.e. it alters the body from diseased negative state to a healthy state.

Liquorice is supposed to be bestowed lasting youth and is a soothing rejuvenator (Rasaya). It is demulcent expectorant and germicide with laxative properties.Liquorice has been used with muscle problem because anti-inflammatory anti-arthritis properties. Due to its strong sweet taste, the herb is sometimes used in recipes to mask the unpleasant taste of another herb. In China liquorice is used for strengthening muscle and bone for increasing physical strength and for curing wounds .The herb stands next to Ginseng in importance in China .

Botanical Description:

Liquorice is a perennial legume and can grow up to a height of 90 to 120 cm. It has compound leaves with 4 to 8 oval shaped leaflets. It also bears axillary clusters of blue flowers. It is considered a native to Southern Europe, North Africa and West Asia. Liquorice also grows in other countries like Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Spain

and Italy, which are the main exporters. Liquorice is a hardy under-shrub forming long cylindrical rigomes and underground stems.

Cultural Practices:

Climate requirement: The liquorice plant requires subtropical warm type of climate.

Soil Requirement: Initial trials conducted in India revealed that liquorice requires fertile sandy loam soils. However, the growth and development was found luxuriant in well drained black cotton soils.

How to grow: Normally the vegetative propagation has been found more successful and rooted cuttings of underground stem of 15 to 20 cm size having3-4 eye buds are planted during July and February in furrows.For land preparation, one deep ploughing should be given duringsummer followed with planking.

Use of manures: Farm yard manure should be applied 40 to 50 cartload-sper hectare at the time of field

preparation. Nitrogen and phosphorous at the rate of 40 kg each should be given before planting as basal dose.

Irrigation: Irrigation is necessary until the plants establish and sprout in the field. Normally, the crops requires 4-5 irrigations after planting.

Pruning and Detopping: The crop should be pruned at 10cm height uniformly from the ground level twice in a year during September-October and February- March.

Harvesting and root yield: Normally the roots are ready for digging in 2.5 to 3.0 years after planting. The roots and rhizomes are cut into pieces of 15 to 20 cm long and 0.6 to 1.8 cm in diameter. The pieces are air dried slowly in shade or under cover in sun.The yield of dried roots varies from 10 to 30 quintals ha-1

(The writer is Ex-Associate Dean Cum Chief Scientist KVK Jammu, SKUAST-J)